

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 59 Week ending 23/05/2021

#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air

SWT Council priorities

Somerset West and Taunton Council's updated priorities during the Coronavirus pandemic are as follows:

- Preserve critical services;
- Safeguard the public;
- Ensure our most vulnerable residents are supported; and
- Planning economic resilience and recovery

The situation is being reviewed on a daily basis to ensure that the Council follows the [latest advice from Public Health England](#).

[Click here](#) to read up to date information on how SWT continues to respond to Coronavirus.

Key Messages this week

1. Stage 3 moving out of lockdown from 17 May 2021

In England, From 17 May, you can socialise indoors in a group of up to 6 people or 2 households, including for overnight stays. Up to 30 people can meet outside. Pubs, theatres and other venues can open indoors. Hotels, hostels and B&Bs can open for people on holiday. [Read the guidance on what you can do.](#)

A new COVID-19 variant is spreading in some parts of England. The latest Public Health England (PHE) data show cases of the Variant of Concern, B.1.617.2, first detected in India, have risen from 520 to 1,313 cases in the UK last week. The variant was confirmed as a 'Variant of Concern' on 7 May after a rise in cases and evidence of spread in some areas. The Government is closely monitoring the variant and taking action along with PHE, NHS Test and Trace and councils.

Remember, there's a chance you might still get or spread COVID-19 even if you have the vaccine. So, even when you've been vaccinated, don't ditch the soap

and fling your mask in the bin – you still need to stick with the important things you've been doing for the past year, like keeping your distance from others, wearing a face covering when required and washing your hands regularly and well. Please [click here](#) for further information.

2. Poll on future of Local Government goes live

PARISH/TOWN

Ballot papers have been dropping through letterboxes this week for the local poll on options for change in local government in Somerset. The poll asks voters to choose between the two options being considered by Government to replace the existing five councils – county council and the four district councils:

- a. One council for Somerset (“One Somerset” – the plan for a single council proposed by Somerset County Council)
- b. Two councils for Somerset: Eastern Somerset and Western Somerset (“Stronger Somerset” the plan for two councils for Somerset – an Eastern and a Western Somerset council – proposed by Somerset West and Taunton Council and the other district councils of Somerset).

The poll is being independently run and verified by Civica Electoral Services on behalf of the four district councils.

The District Council Leaders have written to the Secretary of State to inform him of the poll and its dates and ask that the result of the poll be properly considered as part of the decision-making process on the future of local government in Somerset.

Ballot papers are being posted from Tuesday 18 May, so should be received 20-22 May. **All votes must be received by 5pm on Friday 4 June.**

3. Democracy and Governance

Committee Meetings

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](#). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

A number of Committee meetings are scheduled to take place over the next couple of weeks, which are as follows:

- Wednesday 26 May – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 21 May)
- Wednesday 2 June – **Corporate Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 28 May)

- Thursday 3 June – **Community Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 28 May – due to 31 May being a Bank Holiday)

From 7 May 2021, meetings can no longer be held virtually.

These meetings will take place in the Chamber at Deane House following the Government COVID-19 safety guidelines. As we are very limited to the number of people we can safely get into the Chamber, we are asking people to register if they wish to attend in person.

Information on speaking at public meetings is available on the SWT website. This also gives alternatives to participating without attending in person.

The meetings will still all be live streamed so that members of the public can watch at home. To watch the live stream when the meeting commences please visit the SWT website by [clicking here](#). If you are not able to watch the meeting live, you can also watch it after the meeting.

Contact the Governance Team via governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.

4. Notice of Vacancies

A notice of vacancy has been published for the North Curry and Ruishton ward at Somerset West and Taunton Council following the resignation of Councillor Philip Stone.

To read the full press release please [click here](#).

A Statement of Persons Nominated for the vacancy for the Old Cleeve and District ward at Somerset West and Taunton Council can be found at [District and parish elections \(somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](#)

5. SWT secures Future High Streets funding

SWT has been awarded just under £14m to help deliver its ambitious proposals to transform our high streets into vibrant hubs for future generations.

Confirmation of the funding was made today by the Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick.

The award of £13.9m from the Future High Streets Fund will be used for Active Travel links in Taunton town centre including cycle and pedestrian improvements, as well as contributing towards to the redevelopment of Coal Orchard and Firepool. The award includes a specific allocation towards an outdoor performance space (amphitheatre) at Firepool which is part of the original public realm design for the site, and is in addition to the multi-purpose venue proposal that is subject to ongoing feasibility studies and discussion.

Please [click here](#) to read the full SWT press release.

6. SWT extends e-scooter trial to Minehead

Residents in Minehead will soon be able to choose a green alternative for getting around as SWT extends its e-scooter trial to West Somerset.

The move to include Minehead in the Department for Transport (DfT) approved trial follows a successful launch in Taunton in October 2020 where nearly 8,000 users have already travelled over 66,000 miles, removing the equivalent of 9.1 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere.

The trial in Minehead is expected to go live in June and will run until the end of March 2022. It will be operated by the Council's appointed partner who will also be employing staff locally.

Please [click here](#) to read the full press release.

7. SWT leaving the grass long

If you visit one of Somerset West and Taunton's open spaces you may come across some areas where the grass has been left to grow longer. These are areas that the grass cutting teams have purposely left to help create a better habitat for local wildlife.

While there are areas across the district that have to be cut to specified standards in line with maintenance obligations, SWT recognises the habitat and wildlife benefits of long grass in providing vital shelter for invertebrates to breed, protecting and improving biodiversity and supporting pollinator species.

Please [click here](#) to read the full press release.

8. Relining Crescent North Car Park, Taunton

On **Monday 24 May** the Crescent North car park is going to be re-lined following the patching works that were carried out recently to repair potholes. During this time the car park will need to be closed. Advanced warning signs have been put up this week and the SWT Highways Inspector will cone off the area Sunday evening ready for 8am on Monday. SWT will arrange for a message to be put on Social Media and on the Council's website informing customers of the closure.

9. SWT Housing Update – Contact “My Housing Officer”

SWT has created a new online [Housing Team Contact Request Form](#) to enable SWT housing tenants to contact their relevant Housing Case Manager / tenancy / sheltered housing officer / rent recovery officer for residential properties, including garages. Customers will also be able to contact SWT debt and benefit Case Managers and report Anti-Social Behaviour.

The form will automatically triage customers based on their input with the hope of reducing the number of cases being sent to the incorrect case manager which then can cause delays. The form will also be available to SWT Customer

Champions to complete on behalf of a tenant or as self-service on the [SWT website](#).

10. One lucky Somerset West Lottery player has won £2,000

One lucky Taunton player has won £2,000 in the Saturday 15 May 2021 prize draw. Everyone including the lucky winner above, who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between 03 May and **26 June 2021** will be in with the chance to win a year's supply of fresh fruit and veg delivered weekly to the doorstep of each of three lucky winners by Boxxfresh a small, family run UK business. All tickets bought during this timeframe will automatically be entered in to the bonus prize draw as well as being in with a chance to win up to £25,000 in the weekly lottery run by SWT.

Please [click here](#) for more information and to buy a ticket.

11. Reminder- Debt Advice - Breathing Space

Breathing Space is a government initiative that came into force on 4 May 2021. It aims to provide people struggling with debt (and wider vulnerabilities) a period of protection from debt collection activities, temporarily freezing interest, fees, and enforcement, pausing contact from creditors (in relation to eligible debts), preventing seizure and sale of goods, and preventing some third party deductions. The scheme aims to help people in problem debt to better manage their finances, seek professional debt advice and reach long term sustainable solutions.

Please [click here](#) for more information about managing debt.

12. Reminder- Group exercise returned to leisure centres

Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa, Taunton Swimming Pool, Wellsprings Leisure Centre, and Wellington Sports Centre, run by Everyone Active in partnership with SWT is now open. Group exercise has been given the green light to resume in the penultimate stage of the Government's four-step roadmap.

Please [click here](#) to read the full SWT press release.

13. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP) Garden Waste Collections

Are you wondering why your garden waste wasn't collected?
Did you renew your subscription?

It is not possible to renew an old subscription and there isn't a grace period, but you can restart one instead, being careful to indicate that you already have a garden waste bin. Go online to My Waste Services at somersetwaste.gov.uk to start a new collection subscription, and indicate if you need a garden waste bin delivered.

All restarted and new subscriptions will get 25 fortnightly collections over 12 months (no collection Christmas/New Year).

For all garden waste tasks, go online to the "Garden Waste Bin and Sacks" tab on the My Waste Services menu at somersetwaste.gov.uk.
NB: Remember to put a gap in postcode (AB1 2CD).

For more information on kerbside services, recycling sites, and on COVID-19 and waste, visit: somersetwaste.gov.uk, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter or follow @somersetwaste on Facebook or Twitter.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC) SCC Highway Maintenance Update

The wet weather has continued unabated and is now thankfully forecasted to be brightening up. There have been numerous localised flooding issues across Somerset West and Taunton but no major highway problems.

The rural verge cutting programme enters its third week and the central reservations of the dual carriageways have been cut. SCC Highways are now continuing with the verges on the outsides of the "A" and "B" Class networks.

Despite the poor weather, works completed are:

- drainage works on Millbridge Road, Minehead
- drainage works on Mill Lane, Exebridge
- drainage works in Ash Priors village, near the church
- and footway repairs at Dyers Close, West Buckland.

The carriageway patching programme has also progressed, with completed work on School Road, **Monkton Heathfield**; Langford Lane, **Norton Fitzwarren**; Rectory Road, **Staplegrove**; and East Nynehead Road, **Bradford-on-Tone**.

Drainage improvement works on the **A396 between Dunster and Timberscombe** are continuing with the road closed between 9.30am and 3.30pm each day, Monday to Friday. Regular users of this road will know that SCC Highways had to deploy "Ice" warning signs here on several occasions during the winter and the work is to reduce the amount of standing water on the road. Scheduled completion is 28 May (weather permitting).

In **Minehead** the installation of the new puffin crossing on the **A39 Bircham Road**, outside **West Somerset College**, continues. Temporary traffic signals will control traffic during this operation.

New schemes for the week of **24 - 28 May** are:

Monday 24 May - Complete resurfacing of Slade Lane, **Nettlecombe**

Tuesday 25 May - Resurfacing at Mill Lane, **Brushford**

Wednesday 26 May - Plane out existing surface of Millbridge Road, **Minehead**

Thursday 27 May - Lay the new surface course Millbridge Road, **Minehead**.
Drainage works in Bagley Road, **Wellington**
Friday 28 May - Drainage and resurfacing at Peacehay Lane, **Sampford Arundel**

Temporary road closures will be in place whilst the works are carried out.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk or follow @TravelSomerset on Twitter

Temporary Road Closure: Galmington Road, Taunton

Somerset County Council in exercise of its powers under Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along Galmington Road for a distance of 502m. This Order will enable Western Power Distribution to replace high voltage cable that feeds Musgrove Park Hospital.

Please [click here](#) to view the map of the above road closure; with further information of the alternative route.

The order becomes effective on 27 May 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **1 June 2021 until 2 July 2021 between the hours of (12 midnight - 11.59pm) for a total of 32 days.**

For information about the works being carried out please contact Western Power Distribution on **01823 348592** quoting the reference number ttro448106.

End date amended - Emergency One Way Order Maidenbrook Lane, Taunton

Please be aware that SCC Highways have received notification of an emergency one way order at Maidenbrook Lane, Taunton, which commenced on **17 May 2021 and is expected to last until 6 June 2021** (24hrs). Traffic will travel in a southwards direction.

These works are for CJL Construction Ltd to carry out all construction and associated works in connection with the Western Relief Road.

Please [click here](#) to view the Notice.

Useful links to report faults

Throughout winter, there are more queries about overgrown trees, verges or hedges, blocked drains and street lights that don't work. To report faults in the following areas, please click on the relevant link:-

[Dangerous/Overgrown Tree alongside the public highway](#)
[Report an overgrown verge or hedge on the road](#)
[Street light not working](#)
[Blocked surface water drain on the highway.](#)

Food support for families over May half-term

SCC will provide help to families in need of food support over the May half-term period. A total of £250,000 of funding will be made available to schools in Somerset to fund food vouchers over the May half-term. This will provide vouchers for the 14,509 children in Somerset eligible for Free School Meals, plus an additional allocation which schools can use to provide help to other families who they feel would also benefit from support.

SCC joined forces with the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) to deliver food and fun activities to more than 2,500 children during the Easter holidays. Work is currently underway to expand the programme for the upcoming summer holidays. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

Active Halls Funding

SASP have received funding from Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) to encourage physical activity providers for mid/older aged people to reopen in village and community halls.

SASP will offer grants (of up to £500) to support the reduced income providers make through COVID-19 restrictions such as reduced class numbers due to social distancing and/or confidence issues of their participants. Priority will be given to classes in areas within the top 30% Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) in Somerset. You can check your village and community hall postcode [here](#).

Who can apply?

SASP are seeking applications from instructors who are looking to resume or launch new activity within village halls across Somerset. They hope this funding will support groups or instructors to restart activity post COVID-19 which may not otherwise be viable. Please [click here](#) for full details and to make an application.

You can submit your application at any time, subject to funds still being available. No applications will be considered if submitted after 5pm on **Monday 31 May 2021**. If you have any questions about the fund please contact [SASP](#).

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Exmoor Welcomes Back Tourists

Exmoor National Park is welcoming tourists back following confirmation from the Prime Minister last week that Coronavirus restrictions would continue to cautiously ease. Many more hospitality and tourism providers on Exmoor have now reopened.

ENP's message to everyone is: love it or lose it – please do so responsibly and safely. Figures from last year's visitor economy survey starkly reflected the impact of the pandemic:

- Accommodation & hospitality providers lost income of up to 50% on average.
- Attractions & activity providers lost over two-thirds of income.
- 60 percent of employment on Exmoor is directly supported by tourism.

Exmoor National Park Centres are open 10am - 5pm throughout spring and summer to help you plan your Exmoor adventure. For more information please [click here](#).

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Sprinklers

Did you know?

In the UK there has never been a fire death in a building with a fully maintained sprinkler system. Evidence shows that as well as saving businesses millions of pounds each year, sprinklers also save lives in domestic properties.

They increase firefighter safety by making conditions much safer to fight a fire. DSFRS are delighted that recent changes in legislation will see domestic sprinklers fitted in all domestic new builds over 11 metres tall. They encourage all housing providers and developers to consider fitting sprinklers. Around the country and within the counties of Devon and Somerset DSFRS have seen devastating fires resulting in many fire deaths that could have been prevented if sprinklers had been fitted.

Please [click here](#) for further information.

Battery Operated Mobility Aids

Managing Fire Safety

Managing Fire Safety is a constantly changing area as new and emerging risks become apparent. An area SWT Housing has yet to resolve is that of Mobility Scooters, E-Scooters and E-Bike storage. In the last few years, there has been a significant increase in the type and style of mobility scooters available. Some of these give the user a better quality of life allowing them to travel distances previously requiring expensive taxi rides. Housing providers need to consider how these scooters are used and stored, due to the fire safety challenges they bring.

Dorset Fire Service prepared a [YouTube clip](#), showing how fast and how toxic a mobility scooter fire can become. E-Scooters and E-bikes are newer ways to travel and have great environmental credentials with smaller batteries, so they pose a lower fire risk. However the risk still exists and needs to be managed.

Recently SWT Housing Compliance team has been working with Tenancy Management to help address issues identified with storage and charging of these items in communal areas and directly outside blocks of flats. Longer-term solutions are being considered by SWT to include an assessment of properties to determine which are suitable for scooter storage internally or in designated storage to comply with mobility scooter storage guidelines.

Reminder- Short Survey

Do you live in Devon or Somerset?

What are the risks in your area?

How can Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service make you feel safer?

Take part in DSFRS's [short survey](#) to help them shape the next five years. Know someone who is not online and who would like to get involved? Ask them to call **01392 261287** – DSFRS would like to hear from them too.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Be prepared for the weather

Our weather can change quicker than lightning in a matter of days. Sometimes hours. No matter the season. If you're planning a staycation or trip to the coast this summer, always prepare for all weather extremes and changeable conditions.

During summer storms and bad weather:

- Know your limits. If the sea is rough, don't go in. If the conditions change while in the water, get out and wait until it's calm
- Stay back: wave dodging is for sunny days with gentle waves – just 15cm of water can knock you off your feet
- Don't take risks for a seaside storm pic – keep back from cliff edges, piers, harbour walls and other exposed areas.

Whatever the weather, always take a fully charged phone so you can call for help if you need it. In an emergency at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

HM Coastguard Watchet Update

This week HM Coastguard Watchet have been out practising the setting up of their cliff rescue equipment. Cliff rescue technicians not only descend down to rescue / secure anyone stranded on a cliff face including animals, but also can be recovered up, or further descend down onto the beach or into a lifeboat.

As well as harnesses to secure a human casualty, cliff stretchers are used for those seriously injured which can also be winched by rescue helicopters. They also have specialist animal rescue bags which can be used to place large dogs inside, securing them safely whilst being rescued from a cliff face or beach stranding.

HM Coastguard Watchet remind anyone who gets stuck on a cliff face or gets stranded by the tide, not to panic, not to climb into more danger, or descend to try and rescue a beloved pet, but instead to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

With strategically placed Coastguard Rescue Stations, Rescue Helicopters and assistance from colleagues in the RNLI the early tasking to coastal emergencies ensures the best possible chance of a swift resolution and rescue of someone in distress.

Community Support – What help is out there? Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

HRH The Earl of Wessex visits Somerset Community Foundation

SCF welcomed His Royal Highness The Earl of Wessex on The Royal Bath and West Showground, during his recent visit to Somerset. The Earl asked how the

voluntary sector dealt with the pandemic in Somerset, and heard about the incredible local community response, and how the charity and voluntary sector in Somerset responded so swiftly and nimbly to the immediate need at a local level, with many organisations adapting their services almost overnight.

The Earl was then introduced to representatives from six groups who were funded by SCF to help them deliver their vital services and support to the community during the crisis, and His Royal Highness spent time with each organisation, asking questions about their work. The groups were:

- SWEDA (Somerset and Wessex Eating Disorders)
- Nova Sports
- Taunton Scrubbers
- Taunton East Development Trust
- Dulverton Good Neighbours
- Quantock Food Bank

Any community group or charitable organisation wishing to apply for funding should visit the [SCF website](#) where they can find guidance on how to make an application.

Heart of the South West LEP Community Led Development Survey

Community led development is where people with a shared local vision and/or goals drive action and change within their locality. A survey has been commissioned by the Heart of the South West LEP to inform the development of a future community led Rural Productivity Programme. The survey is being conducted by the Diverse Regeneration Company CIC.

Please [click here](#) to take part in the survey and to find out more information.

Somerset Community Food Growing Grant- Closing date 26 May 2021 at 5pm

Somerset Community Food is a grass-roots charity which supports a network of community food projects. Their [new website](#) is now live and contains both a map of known community growing projects and a section for additional resources. In addition, there is news, events and [funding](#) sections as well as the option of a regular email newsletter.

A new funding stream has been launched this month. The grant is open to support community-led food projects in Somerset, which focus on growing food as a community effort but may also include related activities such as training, cooking sessions, and community meals. Projects must be volunteer-based, with the aim of growing food for the immediate community.

Please [click here](#) to read the Growing Grant funding page for full details and to make an application.

Spark Somerset

Advice and Support for Voluntary Groups

Spark Somerset is the local infrastructure charity providing free support and advice to voluntary sector groups and organisations across the county. They also run the Volunteer Service, [Spark a Change](#), helping hundreds of people in Somerset to volunteer each year.

If you are a voluntary group or organisation and you'd like to talk about how Spark Somerset could support you then please get in touch with your advisor for the Taunton and West Somerset area, Jenny Hannis on jenny.hannis@sparksomerset.org.uk or **07971 912452**.

REMINDER- Community Food Forums

Are you involved with a local food bank or community fridge? Would you like to know how to set one up, or find out what support is available? Then go along to Spark Somerset's regular Community Food Forums. They're an opportunity celebrate the valuable work taking place across Somerset, share ideas and information and discuss common interests. Meet via Zoom on the last Wednesday of the month.

Next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 26 May**. Please [click here](#) to find out more and book.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Meal and food boxes

Meal and food boxes are available in your community. Anyone can request a meal or food box, regardless of your financial situation. You can access these free meals by contacting your local Village Agent call – **01823 331222**. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Do you need an emergency delivery of fuel?

The CCS Oil Scheme partners AF Affinity have a great scheme where they can deliver a fast, emergency parcel of fuel to tide you over until you can get a full delivery!

Call them on **01603 881888** between 9am – 4.30pm to order or email somersetbuying@af-affinity.co.uk. For more information, [click here](#).

Step up Somerset

Reminder- Aged 15-18 and unsure what career to path to take?

Making career decisions can be intimidating and challenging, but there are lots of people and resources to help you. Get help transitioning from education to work with Step up Somerset. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Employment Hubs

Reminder- Hinkley Point C Virtual Drop-In

Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) are teaming up with Under Construction Sedgemoor for the next virtual Drop-In which will be taking place on **Wednesday 26 May between 10.30am – 11.30am**

This is a free event but you must [register for a ticket](#).

Once registered, links to join the Microsoft Teams Event will be sent out a couple days ahead of the Virtual Drop-In along with information and guidance.

For more information please contact:

Sedgemoor area: Outreach@Sedgemoor.gov.uk

Somerset West and Taunton area:

employmentsupport@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Reminder- Need help with getting back into employment?

Newly unemployed or out of work for a while? At risk of redundancy? Looking for new skills, career progression or starting your own business?

For support, a chat and a virtual cup of tea, please [click here](#) or you can email: employmentsupport@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

You can also find out more information on the [SWT website](#).

Young Somerset

Reminder- Somerset Big Tent Festival (for professionals)

Somerset Big Tent is a Voluntary Community Social Enterprise alliance helping children and young people build their wellbeing, facilitated by Young Somerset.

An online event is being held on **Thursday 27 May at 2pm – 5pm**.

This event is aimed at professionals and is open for anyone to attend. [Click here](#) to book a place.

Young Somerset is also running an evening event which will be aimed at young people, if you are interested in this you can [book on here](#).

[Click here](#) to find out more about the work of the Somerset Big Tent.

Help and support for businesses affected by COVID-19

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has made available webinars and videos about the support available to businesses to help them deal with the economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak.

HMRC cover the following government schemes:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Job Retention Scheme
- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Rebate Scheme

Please [click here](#) for further information.

Health and Welfare

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Action Week 2021

Dementia Action Week is **17 – 23 May 2021**. Led by Alzheimer's Society, Dementia Action Week is a national event that sees the public coming together to take action to improve the lives of people affected by dementia. This Dementia Action Week, Alzheimer's Society is asking you to help cure the care system by urging government to reform social care now.

Please [click here](#) to see how you or your organisation can get involved.

If you are worried or need support, please call Dementia Connect support line on **0333 150 3456** to speak with an expert adviser. You can also join the conversation with other people affected by dementia by joining the online community, [Talking Point](#).

The Alzheimer's Society have [guidance to help you navigate the complex social care system](#), including where to go for further help and information. There is also health and social care and other dementia-related [printed and digital factsheets](#) available.

The Alzheimer's Society website also has in-depth support and guidance on [coronavirus and dementia](#).

Lyme Disease UK (LDUK) Reminder - May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month

May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month, which means Lyme Disease UK are launching their annual Wake Up To Lyme Campaign. This year, the campaign will be entirely online due to the pandemic and LDUK's got a brand new look! Head to wakeuptolyme.com for details.

Lyme Disease UK are an excellent source of the most up to date advice on prevention and treatment so please have a good look at their website and point other people in their direction if tick bites are a concern. So whilst it is important to remove the tick as soon as possible, it is equally as important that the tick is removed correctly.

Please [click here](#) to learn how to remove ticks safely.

People aged 34 or over can now book their COVID-19 vaccination

Everybody in cohorts 1 to 9 has been offered a vaccine, with people aged 34 and over now invited to book their appointments. Use this service to book a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination or manage your appointments.

Who can use this service?

You can only use this service if any of the following apply:

- you are aged 34 or over
- you'll turn 34 before 1 July 2021

- you are at [high risk from coronavirus](#) (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- you have a condition that puts you at higher risk (clinically vulnerable)
- you have a learning disability
- you get a Carer's Allowance, get support following an assessment by your local authority or your GP record shows you are a carer

Please [click here](#) for further information and to book your vaccination.

Reminder- Lateral Flow Testing Available in Local Pharmacies

Everyone in England who is not currently displaying symptoms of COVID-19 infection, can access free Lateral Flow tests to enable them to test twice weekly. Test kits can be collected from the following pharmacies and test centres in the SWT district:

- Alcombe Pharmacy, 65 Alcombe Road, **Minehead**, TA24 6BD
- Porlock Pharmacy, High St, **Porlock**, TA24 8PT
- Quantock Pharmacy, 11 Swain Street, **Watchet**, TA23 0AB
- Creech Medical Centre, Hyde Lane, **Taunton**, TA2 5QW
- Staplegrove Pharmacy, Unit 1&2 Livingstone Way, Staplegrove, **Taunton**, TA2 5QW
- Broughton House, Blackbrook Park Avenue, **Taunton**, TA1 2PP
- Jhoots Blackbrook, Blackbrook Medical Centre, Lisieux Way, **Taunton**, TA1 2LB

A full list of participating pharmacies can be found [here](#). If you are unable to get to a pharmacy or test centre to collect a test kit, you can order a home testing kit to be sent to your home [here](#).

If you are taking a Lateral Flow test, please report to your managers how often you are testing.

Reminder- How to do a lateral flow test at home

Everyone in Somerset over the age of 16 can now get free rapid Lateral Flow Device (LFD) COVID-19 tests and should be using them twice a week. These tests are important to do regularly because they detect people who are carrying Coronavirus but haven't got any symptoms, so could be spreading it unknowingly. The tests are quick and easy, and the results are usually back within an hour.

Please [click here](#) to view a video that provides a great demonstration of the correct testing technique.

A box contains 7 test packets. You can order one box per household each day. [Please click here to order your rapid lateral flow tests.](#) **Please remember** – if you are taking the tests at home it is very important for you to [log your results here](#). Please make sure that if you are symptomatic in any way take a confirmatory PCR test as quickly as possible.

Reminder- Do you need to book a PCR test?

Somerset residents are being reminded that they need to book a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) if they are showing symptoms of COVID-19 or have tested positive using a 'lateral flow' (rapid) test kit.

You can [book or request a PCR test online](#) or by calling 119.

Vaccinated? You still need to take care

Vaccination is a vital part of moving out of the Coronavirus pandemic, so getting your vaccine when offered is something to celebrate. Although the COVID-19 vaccine gives the best protection against becoming seriously ill if you catch Coronavirus, it's important to remember that it doesn't make you invincible.

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective, but it doesn't take full effect immediately. The first dose should give you good protection from three or four weeks after you've had it. But you need to have the two doses to give you longer lasting protection.

Latest Vaccination data for Somerset

You can check Somerset's vaccination data on the Coronavirus dashboard. The information provided by the NHS will be added every Friday. Please [click here](#) to view the latest figures relating to doses that have been administered in Somerset. The dashboard provides an overview of Coronavirus cases, a map, the R number and more detailed district-level information.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

This single phone number is available for anyone in Somerset who needs coronavirus-related support from their councils. The **0300 790 6275** number is available seven days per week 8am – 6pm.

Anyone who can't find help within their own local networks and volunteers, can use this number to get help and advice around:

- Personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions
- Support for the homeless
- Emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious
- Transport to medical appointments including vaccinations
- Waste collection and disposal
- Financial support

This number won't cover medical advice, for which people will need to continue to use the 111 NHS phone number if they cannot get help online.

If you would like to find out more about the Corona helpers, offer assistance, or need support please visit www.corona-helpers.co.uk

Need to seek help?

If you, or someone you know are feeling like things are too much, please know that you / they don't have to be alone. Here are some numbers of organisations that can help:

- Samaritans - 116 123
- CALM - 0800 58 58 58
- ChildLine - 0800 1111
- Anxiety UK - 03444 775 774

- Mind - 0300 123 3393
- National Domestic Abuse helpline - 0808 2000 247

Please refer to the websites below for the latest advice, help and guidance:

Links to the most up to date COVID-19 guidance can be found here
[Somerset COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan Dashboard](#)
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
[Public Health England](#)
[NHS – Help and Advice](#)

FAQS

- Q. I'm planning on hosting a public meeting. I've taken steps to address Health and Safety regulations, and appropriate COVID-19 risk assessments. Am I responsible for providing COVID-19 testing to the attendees?**
- A.** The gov.uk website has some really useful information on returning to an office setting, and this includes holding a public meeting. Please see the information sheet attached. If you are planning on holding a public meeting you would not be responsible for providing testing to the attendees. However, you would need to keep a record of everyone in attendance along with their contact details for Test and Trace. It is also a good idea to ask people to complete a pre-attendance screening questionnaire and you can signpost people to lateral flow testing (see above section).
- Q. Am I allowed to hug my friends and family outside of my bubble?**
- A.** Somerset's residents are encouraged to enjoy new freedoms like hugging and socialising indoors – but to do so carefully, as lockdown rules are further eased.
 The rules have been relaxed to enable people to socialise in limited numbers, hug loved ones, and visit pubs and restaurants indoors. But with Somerset still seeing high numbers of COVID-19 cases in some areas, the county's Public Health leaders are calling on residents to remain on their guard while enjoying the new freedoms. Please [click here](#) to read more.
- Q. What precautions should I be aware of when planning or booking a domestic flight within the UK?**
- A.** You do not need to take COVID-19 tests or complete a passenger locator form before boarding domestic flights within the UK. If you have travelled internationally in the previous 10 days, you must follow the rules for the part of the UK you are travelling to. This includes taking COVID-19 tests and quarantining as required in [England](#), [Northern Ireland](#), [Scotland](#) or [Wales](#).

You should not travel on a domestic flight if you have any [COVID-19 symptoms](#), or have had any in the last 7 days.

Please [click here](#) for further information, however, be mindful that the regulations may change, subject to Government restrictions.

Crime / Safeguarding

West Somerset Business Group Virtual Networking Session

West Somerset Business Group are hosting a virtual networking session aimed at businesses in West Somerset. This is an opportunity to hear from guest speaker, Trudi Zimmer, who will talk about keeping safe from fraud and scams; there will also be time to share knowledge, experiences and expand your network.

Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 6.30pm - 7.30pm.

Please [click here](#) to book your place at the online event.

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP) Thank You – Keep Playing Your Part

As the third stage of the roadmap out of lockdown approaches, A&SP are thanking the public for playing their part throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Sticking to the regulations has helped stop the spread of the virus and every act of kindness has strengthened communities, reducing isolation and making them more resilient to crime.

From Monday 17 May, contact between people in different households has returned. It also means more people being out and about, shopping, socialising and spending more time in public spaces – both indoors and outdoors. But as life slowly returns to normality A&SP are encouraging the public to keep being neighbourly and carrying out the acts of kindness demonstrated since the first lockdown.

From painting rainbows and clapping for key workers, to helping neighbours with food deliveries and sticking to the COVID regulations, this year has seen communities come together with one common purpose – to save lives.

Please [click here](#) to read the full A&SP message.

County Lines and Cuckooing

County Lines is the name given to gangs and organised criminal networks who move illegal drugs out of bigger cities and into smaller towns. County Lines drug dealers have continued to operate throughout the pandemic, using children to transport and sell class A drugs.

Please [click here](#) to listen to a teenager's story of how he was groomed into selling drugs by a County Lines gang. For more information about reporting concerns about County Lines and Cuckooing, please [click here](#).

Facebook Live – Catch Up

The [Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](#) team recently held a Facebook Live session which focussed on County Lines. This took place on Thursday 20 May, but you can catch up with it [here](#).

As well as explaining fully what County Lines means, the Live also talks about the impact on local communities and who to turn to for help.

Report concerns about County Lines and Cuckooing:
[https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/.../concerns.../...](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/.../concerns.../)

Fearless is a site where you can access non-judgmental information and advice about crime and criminality: <https://www.fearless.org/en/campaigns/county-lines>.

Charity committed to the prevention of child exploitation across the South West of England: <https://www.escapeline.org.uk/>

St Giles Trust helps vulnerable young people who are criminally exploited through gangs, serious violence and offending: <https://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/.../child-criminal.../>

Young people are being exploited and are losing hope, but it's not always obvious. A&SP award-winning [#LookCloser](#) campaign, developed in partnership with the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre and British Transport Police, encourages everyone to learn the signs of child exploitation and how to report it if worried: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/.../spotting-signs>

Motorists warned following recent catalytic converter thefts in SWT district

A&SP are asking motorists to be vigilant following a recent increase in thefts of catalytic converters from vehicles in the district of Somerset West and Taunton. Officers have been seeing an increase in thefts in recent weeks, occurring during daylight hours as well as overnight.

Catalytic converters are positioned underneath a vehicle and can take less than a minute to cut and remove. They are attractive to thieves due to the current high prices of the metals inside them such as platinum, palladium or rhodium. Unfortunately, they can be very expensive for victims to replace, particularly in newer vehicles. While hybrid cars such as the Toyota Prius are particularly likely to be targeted for their catalytic converters, we're currently receiving reports about thefts from various types of vehicles.

If you see someone acting suspiciously around a vehicle, report it to police on 101. Ideally, provide a vehicle registration/make/model and colour, and a description of the suspects. If you witness a crime in progress, call 999.

BikeRegister

Free BikeRegister Bike Marking event at French Weir Park, Taunton

A&SP will be at French Weir Park, Taunton on **Sunday 23 May from 10am – 1pm** to mark your bikes for FREE! To find out more about BikeRegister please [click here](#).

Free BikeRegister Bike Marking event at Wimbleball Lake

A&SP will be at Wimbleball Lake, Brompton Regis to mark your bikes using BikeRegister, all they need is your bike, your email address and your bike frame number and about 5 minutes of your time. This will be held on **Sunday 30 May 2021 at 11am**. Please [click here](#) to sign up to this event.

Other neighbourhood policing teams will be bike marking in the future. Please keep an eye on the relevant policing Facebook pages detailed below:

- [Minehead and West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing](#)
- [Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](#)
- [Wellington Neighbourhood Policing](#)

Finally

The below link may be useful to you, should there be a requirement to convert files to jpg format: <https://www.adobe.com/uk/acrobat/online/pdf-to-jpg.html>

It is important to keep up to date with the latest [information and advice from the Government](#).

For quick up to date information regarding SWT services please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/ or Twitter [@swtcouncil](https://twitter.com/swtcouncil)
Please see our dedicated [webpage](#) for updates.

If you have concerns about your own health and Coronavirus please visit the [NHS](#) website.

#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air

Attachment: