

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 70 Week ending 08/08/2021

SWT Council's priority strategic themes and outcomes

Somerset West and Taunton Council's four strategic themes are as follows:

- Our Environment and Economy
- A Transparent and Customer Focused Council
- Homes and Communities
- An Enterprising Council

[Click here](#) to view SWT's expected outcomes.

Key Messages this week

1. Self-isolation rules to change from 16 August 2021

From 16 August 2021, in England, if you're fully vaccinated or under 18, you will not need to self-isolate following close contact with someone who has COVID-19. You'll still need to take a PCR test and self-isolate if it's positive.

Please [click here](#) to keep up to date with the latest Government announcements.

2. 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:

- Thursday 12 August – Planning Committee, 1pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 9 August)
- Friday 13 August – Licensing Sub-Committee, 10.30am

- Wednesday 18 August – Executive, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 13 August)

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.

3. SWT Tenants Action Group

SWT's Tenants Action Group hold a fund ring fenced to help support local community groups and organisations which seek to improve the lives of children of SWT tenants aged 0-25. The Children and Youth Initiative Fund provides £20k of grants with a maximum grant of £3k available for each applicant.

Please help the Tenants' Action Group raise awareness of the funding available by spreading the word amongst the many voluntary and community support groups that we work with within the communities. For further information on how to apply, please email the [Housing Performance](#) team.

4. All working together for Minehead

A joint marketing campaign worked up by business leaders in Minehead earlier this summer is now paying dividends as the town reaches peak holiday season.

Minehead BID have used funding from the Emergency Town Centre Recovery Fund created by SWT to help town centres recover from the pandemic to finance a package of initiatives aimed at broadening the attractiveness of Minehead to day visitors and those looking for longer breaks.

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

5. New contract with Homeswapper

Are you a council or housing association tenant? If so, please note that it will no longer be possible to register for mutual exchange or advertise your home for

mutual exchange on Homefinder Somerset. You will still be able to bid for homes that are being advertised by partner landlords.

You can use other websites to seek a mutual exchange such as [Homeswapper](#) or [House Exchange](#). Please contact your landlord for more information. SWT has agreed a new contract with Homeswapper which will be free to access for SWT tenants.

6. How to report fly-tipping

Fly-tipping – dumping rubbish - is an environmental crime. If you fly-tip you can be fined or jailed. It's a blot on our landscape and a threat to wildlife. We can all fight fly-tipping by reporting dumped rubbish and, if possible, who dumped it.

Everyone, including businesses, must be responsible for how they get rid of rubbish, even when it's left your home or premises. If you pay someone to remove your rubbish - man-with-a-van, builders, gardeners, carpet-layers or others - ask to see their waste carrier's licence, and make sure you know where your rubbish will go. If you don't you could be fined.

To report fly-tipping use SWT's [report fly-tipping](#) online form or phone **0300 304 8000**.

For more information check the 'How we can all fight fly-tipping' section on the [Somerset Waste Partnership](#) website.

7. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP) Compost all you can

Turn your garden waste into compost, transforming your unwanted garden waste, vegetable peelings and non-cooked kitchen waste into a free, nutritious material that puts the goodness back into your garden.

If you home compost you could:

- Save money – good compost can make excellent soil conditioner; saving time, money and effort
- Improve your environment – the more you compost the less you send to landfill
- Improve your garden – compost puts nutrition back into the soil, improving your garden or allotment.

You do not even need a compost bin to make compost. You can [compost in situ](#) to add nutrients directly back to your soil in compost trenches or pits.

Please [click here](#) to watch a video about making compost by the Royal Horticultural Society.

Reminder- Suspension of garden waste collections

SWP has reluctantly decided to suspend garden waste collections for six weeks from Monday 2 August. Collections are expected to restart from **Monday 13 September**. Should that date change, SWP will let subscribers know.

If you are a subscriber, you do not need to do anything. Your subscription will be automatically extended by eight weeks, in recognition the disruption.

If your refuse and/or recycling collection is missed...

SWP would like to send you their apologies. Please [click here](#) for guidance on what you can do, should you need to report a missed collection.

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

A very changeable week has just passed. SCC Highways certainly need an improvement to more settled conditions as they have a big week of carriageway surface dressing coming up in Somerset West and Taunton, with both the small Combi Unit (working on the minor lanes) and the much larger Main Train (out on the main road network) in operation.

If all goes well with the weather, the week commencing 9 August surface dressing should take place at:

- Neroche Road/Castle Main (running along the top of the Blackdown Hills between B3170 Honiton Road and Castle Neroche)
- Staple Fitzpaine Road (between Castle Neroche and Frost Street)
- Ash Road, Thornfalcon
- B3224, Treborough (running along the top of the Brendon Hills between B3190 Beulah Chapel and Withiel Hill)
- Knotcroft Lane and Mill Lane, Thurloxtou
- Culver Street, Cross Elms Hill and Lilstock Road in the Kilton/Stringston area of Quantock Vale
- New Road between Wootton Courtenay and Tivington
- Mill Cross to Woolcotts, Brompton Regis
- Andrews Hill Cross to Hinam Cross, Dulverton

More information regarding the surface dressing programme, including a short YouTube film, can be found [here](#).

Drainage repairs and improvements continue at B3187 Burn Hill, which is between Langford Budville and Milverton. The temporary road closure will be in place here until **27 August**. Also continuing are the repairs to the damaged running surface of Bullen Ford, where Challick Lane crosses the River Tone, near Chipstable. The road is likely to remain closed here until **20 August**. Another drainage improvement scheme will be starting on 9 August at Huish Cleeve Road, Huish Champflower, again under a temporary road closure lasting until **20 August**.

The rural highway verge cutting programme is now proceeding on the “A” and “B” Class roads for their second safety cut.

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

Harmful or poisonous weeds

SCC are responsible for controlling certain noxious weeds, including ragwort. You can [report noxious weeds here](#).

When you contact SCC, please give them the following information:

- Your name, address and phone number in case we need to contact you
- The location of the weeds. including the road name and parish
- The type of weed (if you know)

Temporary Road Closure: Tancred Street, Taunton

The order becomes effective on 5 August 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months.

The works are expected to commence on **12 August 2021** and last for 5 days (8am-5pm), excluding the weekend, to enable Barden Network Engineering to clear a blockage in an existing duct on behalf of BT.

For any further information about this closure please contact Barden Network Engineering on **01454 281627**. Please note that should you require to view a closure which is more than two weeks ahead you will need to register for free with www.One.Network

Please [click here](#) to view the above road closure.

Reminder- Emergency Road Closures: Honiton Road & Staple Fitzpaine Road

Please be aware that SCC have received notification of emergency road closures at **Honiton Road, Otterford, and Staple Fitzpaine Road, Taunton** which commenced on 19 July 2021 and are expected to last until **20 August 2021** (the closures are between the hours of 00:00 - 23:59).

These works are for **Richard Cole Contracting to fell and clear diseased Ash Trees on behalf of Forestry England.**

For any further information about these closures please contact Richard Cole Contracting on **(01803) 865098**, quoting reference: ttro458739.

Maps of the affected areas (in red), together with the recommended diversion routes (in purple) are shown [here](#).

Useful links to report faults

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.](#)

M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme

Toneway - Creech Castle Junction Improvement Scheme

Contractor, Alun Griffiths Ltd has been appointed to deliver the Toneway Creech Castle Junction improvement scheme on behalf of Somerset County Council. This is a major improvement scheme to reduce congestion and improve access to Taunton by increasing the capacity of the junction. As well as greatly improving this route for motorists, the upgrade includes much better access for pedestrians and cyclists and is a really important part of ensuring the network can cope with the ongoing development at Monkton Heathfield.

Work will begin on **Monday 9 August 2021** and is expected to be complete in Summer 2022. Please [click here](#) for full information.

Taunton Park and Ride – Travel Free

Taunton's park and ride service will be made free of charge as part of a special initiative to encourage use of the park and ride service and, minimise disruption during a major upgrade of the Creech Castle junction.

The £8.3m project was deferred last year because of the pandemic, now work is about to begin on these much-needed improvements for one of Taunton's busiest junctions. The scheme, which starts on Monday 9 August and is due for completion in summer 2022, requires the A38 Bridgwater Road on the north side of the junction to be closed to all traffic for the duration of the works and a diversion will be in place using the new Western Relief Road.

This will have an impact for everyone travelling around Taunton, so SCC has taken the decision to provide the park and ride service at both sites for free from **9 August** until further notice, subject to review.

This will include a Saturday service from **14 August**.

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

Environment Agency

Great British Staycation #WaterWarriors

Blue water, golden sands, gorgeous sunshine... admittedly, we might not get all three this year with ongoing travel restrictions due to Coronavirus but, with this summer set to be the Great British Staycation for holidaymakers, an estimated 30 million people are expected to visit beaches, rivers and lakes (source: RNLI).

If you are one of them and plan to take a dip, you might want to check out the Environment Agency's [Swimfo website](#) to get the most out of your visit. It provides immediate access to information on over 400 bathing waters. We are lucky in England to have a high standard of water quality on the vast majority of our beaches, the latest classifications show over 98% of bathing waters meet the minimum standard of Sufficient and 72% of these meet the highest standard of Excellent.

The data also provides information on the pollution risk – this may increase, for example, on a rainy day – and at some beaches it's possible to forecast when this might happen, so you can be sure to have the most up-to-date information before you take the plunge. You can also get advice on open water swimming – that's swimming anywhere that isn't a public pool - from the guidance produced by the Environment Agency and Public Health England [Swim healthy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

But high standards of water quality don't happen by accident. It's down to everyone who uses water to protect it and the good news is that there are a few simple actions you can take to do that:

- only flush the 3Ps – pee, poo and paper
- never pour fats, oils and grease down the sink
- never flush wet wipes and sanitary products down the loo
- always take your rubbish away from the beach
- always bag and bin your dog's poo
- never pour waste liquids or throw litter down surface water drains

So, whether you are staycating at home or away, be a #WaterWarrior and keep your family, and yourself, safe and protect blue spaces so that everyone can enjoy them. Follow #WaterWarriors on social media for more info.

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Annual Report 2020-21

The Chair of Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is advising the SRA's Annual Report for 2020-21 has just been published. It concentrates on the SRA's many achievements over the past 12 months and also covers progress on some bigger themes and projects since the devastating floods of 2013-14.

Hundreds of places across Somerset have benefitted from extra flood protection and resilience works funded by the SRA. In 2020-21, the SRA spent £3.344 million on actions designed to protect people, properties, businesses and roads, while enhancing local environments, in accordance with the objectives of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan.

Everyone in Somerset is affected directly or indirectly by issues with flooding, so the SRA invests in a wide range of actions countywide to reduce flood risks and increase local resilience when floods do occur.

Please find attached two copies of the Annual Report. The longer version gives a large amount of detail about SRA activities and is helpful for exploring what has been done at a very local level, right down to single fields, ponds, ditches and culverts. It includes around 80 photographs plus other illustrations. The shorter version is more selective, but still very informative and visual.

You can also read the entire text, split up into accessible sections, on the SRA's website. Start at [Somerset Rivers Authority Annual Report 2020-21 - Somerset Rivers Authority](#)

If you have any comments or questions, or would like to know more, please contact Somerset Rivers Authority on sra@somerset.gov.uk or call **01823-355111**.

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

Get Outside in Somerset Campaign

Despite the fact that most people experience a positive effect on their mental state after spending time outside in a green space, few of us are getting enough time spent in nature: a minimum of 20 minutes a day is needed, according to researchers at the University of Exeter Medical School.

So if you're looking for some inspiration, 'Get Outside in Somerset' has created a calendar of fun family-friendly activities for outdoors. For more information, [click here](#).

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Proposed Diversion: Public Bridleway in Parish of Oare

Exmoor National Park Authority is proposing to divert public bridleway WL17/3 which will include upgrading part of public footpath WL17/2 to public bridleway in the parish of Oare. Prior to making an Order ENP would like to hear your views on the proposal.

Please find an attached a summary of the proposal, schedule and proposal plan.

Please return any comments on the proposal by **27 August 2021** to cerirapsey@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or to Ceri Rapsey, Rights of Way Support Officer, Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, TA22 9HL.

If you would like to meet on site to discuss the proposal prior to making your comments, please do not hesitate to contact the Public Rights of Way and Access Officer, Sue Applegate on **01398 322292**.

Quantock Hills AONB

Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund

The Quantock Hills AONB Service is delivering the Greater Quantock Landscape Development Fund providing grants of up to £5,000 to local communities, farmers, landowners and individuals and landscape enhancement projects.

The fund has been provided by EDF Energy and is part of the mitigation measures associated with the Hinkley Point C development.

Projects could include tree planting, works to manage hedgerows, orchard planting or restoration, planting of wildflower meadows, management of small woodlands, willow pollarding or pond restoration.

Please [click here](#) to find out more information and download the application form.

Farming in Protected Landscapes Fund

To support farmers and land managers protecting the special and unique places that are our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Defra have launched the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme. The programme will

provide funding to farmers and land managers for projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to engage with the landscape and cultural heritage and support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses.

The programme will run from 1 July 2021 and close on 31 March 2024 and applications can be for single year or across more than one year as long as all works will be completed by 31 March 2024. This funding is open to all farmers and land managers within the Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and projects outside the AONB boundary if they can be shown to bring benefit to the AONB.

Please [click here](#) for more information, full application guidance and links to the application forms.

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) Caravan Safety

With holiday traffic and an influx of caravans on the roads - please remember if you're towing a trailer or caravan to reduce your speed.

On a motorway – drive at 60mph not 70mph

On an A-road – drive at 50mph not 60mph

If you haven't used your trailer for a long period, check your tyres and make sure they do not perish.

Water safety

DSFRS attend many water rescues on rivers, lakes and canals. Make sure you know your exact location if you need to dial 999. DSFRS recommend using the [what3words](#) app to help them locate you and others.

If you find yourself in trouble - move to a floating position. Lie on your back and spread out your arms and legs, tilt your head up and out of the water and shout for help. If you can, raise your arm to make people aware.

HM Coastguard Watchet Safety Patrols

HM Coastguard Watchet have again been out on incident safety patrols alongside their colleagues from [HM Coastguard Minehead](#). Whilst out at [Kilve Beach](#) they had to give safety advice to a group of people fossil collecting and whom were hammering at the cliff face with loose overhangs of large rocks above them. Not the best thing to do especially with small children also being present and other innocent bystanders. Collectors should not be hammering at the cliffs.

Other safety advice given also included at [Blue Anchor Beach](#) where groups of people with children were wading through the mud to get to the tide line, often up to their thighs and knees, with the tide flooding back in, ignoring the warning signs at the beach entrances.

Joining with the safety patrols were colleagues from [Avon and Somerset Police Minehead and West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing](#).

HM Coastguard Watchet advise anyone visiting the coast to check the tide times, seek local knowledge and take notice of the warning signs. Remember in a coastal emergency to dial 999 and ask for the coastguard.

HM Coastguard Minehead Beware of Rip Currents

Whilst HM Coastguard Minehead were out on patrol they received a message informing them that there was a 'near miss' with some swimmers getting into difficulty at Blue Anchor Beach.

Entering the water at the slipway just after high water two swimmers were drawn into a rip current that started to drag them out to sea. Thanks to the assistance of some paddle boarders the two swimmers were able to be brought ashore safely. One of the two swimmers brought this to the Coastguard's attention to warn others of the dangers.

The Coastguard have liaised with the local harbour authority at SWT who checked that the necessary warning signs are still in place on the access points to the beach.

The Coastguard would like to remind everyone visiting the beach and local waters to check the tide times, be aware of rip currents including this one at Blue Anchor and to know what to do if you get caught in one. Remember if you see someone in distress on the coast to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

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

Skill Up Somerset Business Apprenticeship Scheme

Government Incentive - £3,000 for Businesses offering Apprenticeship Opportunities
The UK Government announced in the recent budget that they are extending and increasing the payments made to employers who hire new apprentices. Employers in England who hire a new apprentice between 1 April 2021 and **30 September 2021** will receive £3,000 per new hire, compared with £1,500 per new apprentice hire (or £2,000 for those aged 24 and under) under the previous scheme. This is in addition to the existing £1,000 payment the Government provides for all new 16 to 18 year old apprentices and those aged under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, where that applies.

To find out more about Apprenticeships and the incentives available please refer to the [Skill Up Somerset website](#).

Somerset Business Education Partnership Career Opportunities

Somerset Education Business Partnership connects employers with education providers so that young people are aware of local career opportunities and develop the skills needed to thrive at work.

Research has shown that young people who have contact with employers whilst at school are significantly less likely to become Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) - and can expect to earn more money once they are in full-time employment.

To find out more please visit the [Somerset Business Education Partnership website](#)

Spark Somerset Reminder- Introducing Spark iT!

In partnership with Barclays Bank and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust, Spark are delighted to announce the launch of [Spark iT](#), a new project which aims to tackle digital exclusion in Somerset and help people to access health care online.

The Spark iT Helpdesk is now live, and anybody in Somerset who is digitally excluded can get in touch for free IT support with a range of activities. This might include using IT equipment, connecting with others online or accessing local support and services that could improve their health and wellbeing.

The Helpdesk is available Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm on **01458 550977**. Please share the details with anybody you know who could benefit from this exciting new service. Spark are also recruiting a bank of Digital Champion volunteers who will receive training from the Barclays Digital Eagles and offer additional 1-2-1 support.

For further information about Spark iT, please click [here](#) or email Verity Baum, Digital Inclusion Project Manager, verity.baum@sparksomerset.org.uk.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Who cares for the carers?

Do you look after someone else? Or know of a person that does? In Somerset there are around 66,000 people who are classed as unpaid carers, and it is estimated that 1 in 3 of us will become a carer at some point in our lives.

Would you know where to turn if you suddenly had to care for someone else? Or if looking out for someone evolved into looking after someone?

Who cares for the Carers? The CCS do.

At [Somerset Carers](#), Village Agents are ready to support you at any and every stage of your caring journey. Support isn't intervention. Support is a listening ear, advice to help you see the wood for the trees, connecting to the right services, respite help, an occasional supply of food to give you a break and more.

Support is making your life easier. Please raise your hand and be seen, raise your hand and be heard. Please [click here](#) to watch a helpful video.

Please call CCS's Carers Advice Line on **0800 3168600**, or email carers@somersetccc.org.uk

Website: www.somersetcarers.org

Please share this information with anyone you think would benefit.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) HPC Community Fund Small Grants Programme

The HPC Community Fund Small Grants Programme supports projects and work that will help mitigate the impacts and increase the opportunities of the Hinkley Point C project in your community.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for organisations or community groups with an annual income of less than £100,000.

If you run a local community project in Somerset and would like to find out more about funding opportunities from the HPC Community Fund, please contact Peter on **01749 344949** or email peter.stolze@somersetcf.org.uk

National Citizens Service (NCS) Community Youth Project – Summer programme

NCS exists to engage, unite and empower young people, building their confidence so they can go out there and achieve their dreams, no matter where they're from or what their background is. From the life skills they develop to the friends they make, the NCS ambition is clear – they want to give teenagers an opportunity to unleash their potential, to build their self-belief and get them prepped for life after school.

As part of their summer project a group of young people have been working with SWT and the Halcon Link Centre to do some community work centred around the Viridor (Asda Park) and Creechbarrow Road. They began the week by raising their own funds via cake sales and charitable donations, and then went on to do some grounds maintenance work – hedge trimming and grass cutting. They finished off the project by planting some flowers and refreshing the paintwork on some of the installations. The improvements have drawn positive comments from visitors and users of the park alike.

This is the second time that the NCS have worked in the Halcon area and it's a really great example of partners coming together to improve a community.

Please [click here](#) to visit the website and find out more about the NCS.

Reminder- Food Resilience

Hubbub – Community Fridges

Reducing Food Waste and Empowering Communities

A community fridge is a space where everyone can share surplus food, including donations from local food businesses, producers, households and gardens.

Hubbub coordinates the world's largest Community Fridge Network with over 150 community fridges running around the UK, and in partnership with the [Co-op](#) they will be supporting a further 100 across the UK throughout the year.

The Community Fridge Network offers free guidance to groups wanting to set up their own community fridge, and provides comprehensive support, design assets, peer support, health and safety templates as well as discounted fridges and freezers

Applications are now open for the Co-op Community Fridge fund, which means up to **£4,000** is available to support groups across the UK to establish a new Community Fridge. If you want to take part in this exciting opportunity, feed your community and help the environment, Hubbub want to hear from you. Applications will be welcomed until **9am on 16 August**.

Please [click here](#) to visit the website and find out more about the application process.

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

Clinton takes a health check

Now we are moving into a more open society, it is a good time to look at our lifestyle – potentially a few of us have drifted into a slightly less healthy way of living over the last 18 months due to lockdown – drinking more, eating a less healthy diet and exercising less.

One of the ways you can take stock, providing you don't have long term health issues, and if you are aged between 40 and 74 is to book a health check. In the latest [Covid Catch up film](#) Clinton discusses this and takes a health check himself.

Large vaccination site relocates to Haynes Motor Museum

Last week, more changes were seen in the Somerset COVID vaccination programme, as the large vaccination site at the Bath and West Showground moved to Haynes Motor Museum in Sparkford.

Across the county, both first and second doses of the COVID vaccine will continue to be offered to everyone aged over 18, with more than 775,630 jabs given so far (as at 25 July 2021).

For anyone who still requires a vaccination, visit the pop-up vaccination clinic which will be available at the Bath & West Country Festival on **27 – 29 August**.

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

Reminder- Seeing your GP or going to hospital? Masks must be worn

Everyone accessing or visiting healthcare settings must continue to wear a face covering and follow social distancing rules. Although COVID-19 restrictions have ended in many settings in England, Public Health England's infection prevention control guidelines and hospital visiting guidance remain in place for all staff and visitors.

That means NHS visitor guidance remains unchanged across all health services including hospitals, GP practices, dental practices, optometrists and pharmacies to ensure patients and staff are protected.

All COVID-19 Restrictions in England now lifted

Please refer to the links below for the latest Coronavirus-related advice, help and guidance, should you need any help in the future.

- [Order your lateral flow tests online](#)
- [How to do a COVID-19 lateral flow test](#)
- [Log your lateral flow results here](#)
- [Book or request a PCR test online](#)
- [List of local pharmacies offering lateral flow testing](#)
- [Somerset COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan Dashboard](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- [NHS – Help and Advice](#)

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.

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
- Somerset Domestic Abuse helpline - 0800 69 49 999

FAQS

Q. I have a relative living in the USA. Can they travel to the UK to visit me without having to quarantine?

A. The Government has announced that passengers arriving from amber countries who have been fully vaccinated in Europe (EU Member States, European Free Trade Association countries and the European microstate countries of Andorra, Monaco and Vatican City) and the USA will not have to quarantine when entering England.

Passengers who are fully vaccinated in the EU with vaccines authorised by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) or in the USA with vaccines authorised by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), or in the Swiss vaccination programme, will be able to travel to England without having to quarantine or take a day eight test on arrival.

Q. I have had both vaccinations, but I am feeling unwell. Is it possible that I have COVID-19?

A. There are still cases of COVID-19 in England and there is a risk you could catch or pass on the virus, even if you are fully vaccinated. You are encouraged to exercise caution and consider the risks. While no situation is risk free, there are actions we can take to protect ourselves and others around us.

If you develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), self-isolate immediately and [get a PCR test](#), even if your symptoms are mild. You should self-isolate at home while you book the test and wait for the results. You must self-isolate if you test positive. Your isolation period includes the day your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you do not have symptoms), and the next 10 full days. This is [the law](#).

The most important symptoms of COVID-19 are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, COVID-19 will be a mild illness. However, if you have any of the symptoms above, even if your symptoms are mild, stay at home and [arrange to have a test](#).

You must also self-isolate if you are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace, for example if you have come into contact with someone who has tested positive. This remains [the law](#), regardless of your vaccination status.

Crime / Safeguarding

Action Fraud

Digital COVID-19 passport scam

People in Somerset should beware of the latest Coronavirus scam, which asks people for payment in exchange for a 'Coronavirus digital passport'. The email claims to come from the NHS and says it will "allow you to travel safely and freely around the world without having to self-isolate" if you've had a COVID-19 vaccine or have recently recovered from the virus. It asks people to click a button to access their "digital passport" which then takes you to a fake NHS website asking for personal information and payment details.

If you receive this email, please forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk If you have disclosed bank account details you should contact your bank immediately and [notify Action Fraud](#).

Royal Mail

"Missing Parcel" or "Outstanding Payment" Scams

There are renewed warnings to be aware of delivery scams and phishing emails claiming to be from DPD and Royal Mail. Fraudsters are sending texts and emails

that claim delivery drivers were "unable to deliver your parcel" as "you weren't in or there was no safe place to leave it", or that there is an outstanding charge on the package. The message then gives instructions on how to arrange another delivery, leading to websites that request a small payment to rearrange the delivery.

If payment is made the recipient, then receives a phone call within a few days from someone claiming to be from their bank to inform them about suspicious transactions on their account.

They are then instructed their bank account may be compromised and instructed to transfer their money to an 'alternative secure account' to prevent further losses. Criminals carrying out this scam are able to use a tactic known as "spoofing" to make the call or text appear genuine by cloning the phone number, or sender ID, used by the bank.

If you receive a suspicious email, text message, telephone call or discover a Royal Mail branded website which you think is fraudulent, please report it to reportascam@royalmail.com.

For suspicious emails, forward the email to reportascam@royalmail.com, do not click on any links or attachments and then delete it from your inbox.

For suspicious text messages, please send Royal Mail a screenshot of the message to reportascam@royalmail.com.

For suspicious calls or websites, please include the phone number or website address in the body of the email.

You can report suspicious texts you have received but not acted upon, by forwarding the original message to 7726, which spells SPAM on your keypad.

If you have been the victim of a payment scam, you can get a crime reference number by reporting it to your local Police station.

If you have clicked on a link, provided any personal data like your bank account details on a website or over the phone or you're concerned that you've been compromised, you should also report the scam to [Action Fraud](#), the national fraud reporting centre.

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Dementia Safeguarding Scheme

More than 1000 wearable tech wristbands have now been handed out as part of the Avon and Somerset Dementia Safeguarding Scheme, launched last year in collaboration with the Senior Citizen Liaison Team Charity.

The bracelets, developed by emergency services and charities in the Avon area, store essential information about the wearer including their name and next of kin. This information can be used by emergency services, health professionals or community members to get the wearer back to safety should they be found whilst lost or confused.

The information can be accessed by an app when a mobile is held nearby. There are still plenty of wristbands available to the public and care homes, free of charge thanks to charitable funding. To apply for a wristband, visit the [Dementia Safeguarding Scheme](#) (also known as the Herbert Protocol). Further information can be found [here](#).

Always follow the Water Safety Code

With the weather being warmer, it has been tempting to look for the nearest place to cool off and river and harbour jumping is a popular activity in the summer months. The police are advising you to stay safe around water. Vigilance can save lives and water-related accidents can be easily avoided.

- **Stop and Think**

Take time to assess your surroundings. Look for the dangers and always research local signs and advice. Don't jump or dive in as the depth may vary and there can be unseen hazards (we've all seen the odd shopping trolley in the river, imagine what else could be down there?)

Don't use the lifesaving equipment as a toy. It's called lifesaving equipment for a reason and you may put someone else's life in danger

Don't go near weirs, locks, pipes and sluices. These and some other water features are often linked with strong currents

- **Stay Together**

When around water always go with friends or family. Swim at a lifeguarded venue. Inland and coastal waters can be very cold, no matter how warm the weather. Those going into cold water can get cramp and experience breathing difficulties very quickly.

- **In an emergency – Call 999**

Ask for the Fire and Rescue Service when inland and the Coastguard if at the coast. Don't enter the water to rescue. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.

- **Float to live**

If you fall in or become tired – stay calm, float on your back and call for help.

Please remain vigilant and stay safe.

For further Neighbourhood Policing Updates...

For regular updates on events/campaigns and what is happening in your area, please keep an eye on the relevant policing Facebook pages detailed below:

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

Attachment:

SRA Annual Report PDF (Full length version)

SRA Annual Report PDF (Summary version)

ENP summary of the proposal, schedule and proposal plan