

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.**

**Issue 35. Week ending 22/11/20**

**#StayAtHome #ProtectTheNHS #SaveLives**

**Please remember: #Hands #Face #Space**

It is so important to remember the coronavirus basics as we enter autumn and winter:

* **Hands** – Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds
* **Face** – Cover your face in enclosed spaces
* **Space** – Keep 2m apart where possible

**SWT Council priorities**

Somerset West and Taunton Council’s updated priorities during the coronavirus outbreak 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.](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance)

[Click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/) to read up to date information on how SWT continues to respond to coronavirus.

**Key Messages this week**

1. **Parish Council Precepts for 2021/22**

SWT has emailed all parish councils this week enclosing Parish/Town Precept Forms for the 2021/22 Financial Year. Due to the coronavirus and the fact that all SWT staff are working remotely, the completed forms and any queries should be emailed to [parishprecepts@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:parishprecepts@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

If Parish Councils decide to return their precept demand forms using the post, then extra time should be allowed for processing in the digital mailroom. All submissions should be received by **Friday 8 January 2021**.

If you have not received your email, or envision any difficulties in returning the forms before the deadline, please inform SWT at the earliest opportunity.

1. **Democracy and Governance**

**Committee Meetings**

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/council-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 few weeks, which are as follows:

* Monday 23 November – **Tenants Strategic Group**, 6:00pm (deadline for public questions or statements has now passed. Please [click here](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=435&MId=2816) to view the agenda and report packs)
* Tuesday 1 December – **Special Full Council**, 6:15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4:00pm on Thursday 26 November)
* Wednesday 2December – **Scrutiny Committee**, 6:15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4:00pm on Friday 27 November)
* Thursday 3December – **Special Full Council** to consider the Stronger Somerset Business Case 6:15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4:00pm on Monday 30 November)

The meetings will 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](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx). If you are not able to watch the meeting live, you can also watch it after the meeting.

**Members of the public are still able to participate in the meeting by submitting their questions or statement to the Governance Team via** [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk) **and these will be read out by an officer at the meeting.  Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.**

1. **SWT issues further grant support to local businesses**

New national business grants are being made available to support local businesses affected by the recent lockdown period. They are the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) and the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).  
   
Businesses are being encouraged to apply to SWT to receive these new support packages. The Council is busy working on guidance and a grant application process for local businesses in the area who have had to close under the new restrictions. Businesses are advised to bookmark and keep checking the Council’s website for further updates during the coming days, as application processes and forms will going live shortly. 

You can find SWT’s grant information on the  
[Coronavirus (COVID-19) Advice and Information](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/) page of our website by  
clicking on the business advice drop down arrow.

Each local authority across the country has been awarded this additional funding as a one-off payment to support businesses through national lockdowns and any future tiered restrictions.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-issues-further-grant-support-to-local-businesses/) to read the full SWT press release.

1. **Covid-safe staff**

The four district councils in Somerset – Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset – have appointed two additional Covid wardens. They will be on hand across the area to help council staff make sure that residents and businesses are Covid-safe and to offer help and advice.

Based on geography and population centres, the wardens will be out and about across Somerset. They will be issued with the latest technology to help focus on the areas that need additional help and to keep in touch with other council staff. They will be recognisable via their pale blue waterproof coats with COVID Warden clearly marked on the back and will carry masks and sanitizers to hand out if necessary.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/covid-safe-staff/) to read the full SWT press release.

1. **Taunton’s Christmas lights switch-on goes virtual**

SWT and its partners have been busy preparing the town to bring some festive cheer despite the second round of national restrictions. An array of decorative lights have now been installed throughout the town centre, along with the largest Christmas tree the town has seen to date, standing at approximately 35 foot high outside the iconic Market House in the centre of Fore Street.

Accompanying the Christmas tree lights, cross-street canopy lights have also been installed on North Street, High Street and East Street, as well as a festive light display, which will be projected onto the Market House providing an illuminated backdrop to the main tree.

In a change to the usual format, the lights will be switched on remotely by the Mayor of Taunton, Councillor Fran Smith, via video link from her home at **6:00pm on Sunday, 22 November**.

To stay COVID-safe, the Council is encouraging residents to follow its Facebook page [@SWTCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil) to watch the switch-on in real-time from the comfort of their own homes.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/taunton-s-christmas-lights-switch-on-goes-virtual/) to read the full SWT press release.

[Click here](https://www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/videos/tauntons-largest-ever-christmas-tree-2020/420199752704537/?__so__=permalink&__rv__=related_videos) to watch Taunton's largest ever Christmas tree, on its journey from being picked to being decorated in #Taunton town centre.

1. **Over 1,000 e-scooter journeys completed in first week of Taunton trial**

SWT has announced that over 1,000 journeys were completed during the first full week of the Taunton e-scooter trial operated by Zipp Mobility. In addition, statistics from the period 1 to 8 November reveal that 1211 new users have signed up to use the e-scooters bringing the total number of registered users to 1607.

As part of their commitment to support key workers during the Coronavirus pandemic SWT and Zipp Mobility have installed three new parking bays at Musgrove Park Hospital and amended the operating hours to 6:30am to 10:30pm to help meet the needs of staff.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/over-1-000-e-scooter-journeys-completed-in-first-week-of-taunton-trial/) to read the full SWT press release.

1. **Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)**

**Festive shoppers: think outside the box**

SWP is asking online shoppers to think outside the box this month. With COVID lockdown closing all but essential shops and Christmas and Black Friday coming soon, mass online shopping looks likely to generate tonnes of extra cardboard packaging.

Cardboard is recycled from the kerb every week, but producing it and collection crews. SWP is asking people to consider options that not only give boxes a miss, but give loved ones something to look forward to in 2021, such as:

* vouchers for restaurants, attractions or experiences,
* digital subscriptions to newspapers, magazines or streaming services
* memberships for trusts or clubs that give you free days out

Whether it is a meal out, a day out, or a pampering treatment – if you shop local you will also be helping support our hard-pressed businesses in these tough times. Boxed or not, thinking local is a good idea anyway. It is not just the big national or international retailers which can deliver to your door and local companies are more likely to keep packaging to a minimum.

Somerset’s local authorities are all encouraging people to shop local in the coming weeks and beyond. Last year, SWP’s kerbside collections picked-up 12,223 tonnes of cardboard, with increases before and after the festive season. During April, May and June this year COVID saw 24% jump in cardboard collected – an extra 650 tonnes – compared to 2019 figures.

To keep up to date with recycling sites, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter at www.somersetwaste.gov.uk and follow @Somersetwaste on Facebook or Twitter

1. **Stronger Somerset**

You will find the Stronger Somerset campaign [microsite](http://www.strongersomerset.co.uk/) contains recently updated information, as well as the proposal and executive summary. You can also sign up to receive the Stronger Somerset newsletter by [clicking here.](https://www.strongersomerset.co.uk/call-to-action)

In order to gauge opinion and appetite for unitary authorities in Somerset, (and specifically support for the Stronger Somerset proposals), the four District Councils have commissioned a telephone public survey which is being conducted by [Ipsos MORI](https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk).

**Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas**

**Somerset County Council (SCC)**

**Highway Maintenance Update**

SCC Highways are currently focusing on the routine tasks of gully emptying, safety defect repairs and patching. The weather has been quite dismal recently but one thing that it has not been is cold. Highways winter service is one of the key functions that SCC Highways perform; their gritting lorries are all serviced and ready to go, salt barns at depots are fully stocked, staff rotas drawn up and training days held.

There was a brief spell of cold weather at the start of November and salt runs took place in some parts of the county on the nights of the 3, 4 and 5 November. On any given night, all of Somerset’s Precautionary Salting Network is not necessarily treated. This is because the county is divided up into four separate weather domains. SCC Highways receive a specific winter forecast for each of the four domains and decisions as to whether to salt or not are made separately for each one. Here in Somerset West and Taunton, SCC Highway’s weather domains are Exmoor & Quantock, Blackdown & Southern and Levels & Central. This reflects the diverse landscape and topography of our area.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit our website [www.travelsomerset.co.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk) or follow @TravelSomerset on Twitter.

**Useful links to report faults**

As the clocks have now changed and it’s getting dark earlier, 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](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-problem-with-a-tree-by-the-road/#If-a-tree-outside-your-house-needs-pruning,-please-contact-us)

[Report an overgrown verge or hedge on the road](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-an-overgrown-verge-or-hedge-on-the-road/)

[Street light not working](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-with-a-street-light/)

[Blocked surface water drain on the highway.](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-blocked-drain-on-the-road/)

**Step Up Somerset**

During these uncertain economic times, Step Up Somerset is a one-stop-shop for people and businesses looking for support, advice and information about employment, skills, careers and apprenticeships in the county. The site has resources to help anyone looking to realise the next step of their career ambitions, as well as support for people looking for work, worried about money, or facing redundancy. For more information, visit: [www.stepupsomerset.org.uk](http://www.stepupsomerset.org.uk/)

**#StayHomeForSomerset**

You may have spotted the #StayHomeForSomerset campaign featured on BBC Points West last week. Somerset County Council (SCC) is asking everyone in the county to pull together to keep Coronavirus at bay and support the campaign. SCC want to fire up the amazing community spirit shown in Somerset throughout the lockdown earlier this year – and recognise that “we are all in this together.”

From now until **2** **December**, SCC is asking people to take a “selfie” featuring the name of, or photo of, who they are staying home for. It could be to protect a vulnerable family member or friend or because you want to protect the NHS from extra pressure. The photos can then be uploaded to social media using the hashtag **#StayHomeForSomerset**

**REMINDER- Somerset Skills and Learning (SS&L)**

SS&L have over 50 free (subject to eligibility) online courses and workshops, from qualifications, career support and self-development, to health and wellbeing, fun activities and much more, all available in your own home. Grab a cuppa and browse the [courses and workshops](https://www.sslcourses.co.uk/courses/query/W3sibmFtZSI6ImtleXdvcmRzIiwidmFsdWUiOiIifSx7Im5hbWUiOiJjb3Vyc2VfY2F0ZWdvcnkiLCJ2YWx1ZSI6IiJ9LHsibmFtZSI6ImNvdXJzZV9sb2NhdGlvbiIsInZhbHVlIjoiMzY5In1d/)– there really is something for everyone!

The online courses are the perfect opportunity to begin studying a new subject or to improve your knowledge and skills. Choose from short workshops that easily fit around your other commitments or a distance learning qualification that you can start at a time that’s right for you and study at your own pace. Plus, you’ll have the support of expert local tutors over the phone and online.

Simply go ahead and enrol on your chosen course via the website or if you need any advice, please phone **0330 332 7997**, use Live Chat or the [contact us form](https://www.sslcourses.co.uk/contact/).

And remember to [stay connected](https://www.sslcourses.co.uk/newsletter/) for updates, as there’s always more to come!

**REMINDER- Virtual Careers Fair for the Care Sector**

A virtual careers fair for the **Care Sector** has been arranged for **24 November 2020 from 11:00am – 1:00pm**, via Zoom, where organisations, businesses and training providers will be sharing their opportunities.

Youtube videos from each participant are now available in preparation for the actual event, which can be accessed [here](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3sPqMDdSCI--aIRaa0YyMA). On the day of the event organisations, businesses and training providers will host a virtual room for discussions with those who are interested to have an informal chat. Tickets can be booked via this [Eventbrite link](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/virtual-careers-fair-for-care-west-somersettaunton-wellington-tickets-123450274093). (Please find attached a flyer for your ease of reference)

**Exmoor National Park**

**Photographers capture Exmoor’s Dark Skies**

Prize-winners have been announced for the [Exmoor at Night photography competition](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/enjoying/stargazing/dark-skies-festival), run by Exmoor National Park Authority as part of the annual Exmoor Dark Skies Festival this October.

Photographers were invited to celebrate and capture the truly dark skies, amazing nocturnal wildlife and tranquillity of Exmoor National Park across numerous categories.

A selection of the winning photos will be published in *Exmoor Magazine* and can be seen at: [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/darkskiesfestival](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001_ngQHfippfIDjsBILgwj5P3wfWhodhi8d-Zp4Aut2x2ZeXKQFakpNIZoZ_7mBj_zKAOzFeQGzyC2GFgSZ92iJD8xxOPVNakQx0SCFq6ah8CeRtNVa4z8C2fkDgOv_25eyUPUTKliWUEc-r7-peYXEuzE7efAMRaUTjQOiagAEEqk7efRAQniwZaizJNu-61T&c=PXIllO0WBFS446-i2d3f2YwIWTJMsDKEG_CdyvXv9DmAJJ6r16Z8Qg==&ch=TRtVZlWBZVMwSf8iW7tJ-ynRfZayO-WbB0CacwydzhICOLMLidKysw==).

To read the full press release please [click here](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/press-room/press-room/news-2020/photographers-capture-exmoors-dark-skies).

**Exmoor Search and Rescue Team Vehicle Appeal**

Exmoor Search & Rescue Team is fundraising for a new Incident Control Vehicle, urgently needed to maintain critical operational capabilities. They need to raise £5,000 to meet a fundraising target of £75,000 to cover the purchase and conversion costs of a new vehicle, which it is hoped to unveil early next year.

Like all Mountain Rescue Teams in England and Wales, Exmoor Search & Rescue Team is a volunteer-run charity. Over the past few years, they’ve been fundraising for a new Incident Control Vehicle which is urgently needed to replace the current vehicle, which is falling into disrepair. Unfortunately, due to increasing running costs of the Team and other critical projects, the fundraising efforts have been hampered. Recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has abruptly interrupted normal sources of fundraising and forced the Team to reallocate funds to essential equipment, such as PPE and decontamination products, to maintain the Teams operational capabilities.

The Incident Control Vehicle is a specially converted vehicle from which the Team coordinates search and rescue deployments; it’s a critical part of the Teams resources and enables Exmoor Search and Rescue to provide a 24/7 rescue service.

The link to the Crowdfunder appeal and more information can be found [here](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/exmoor-search-rescue-team-vehicle-appeal?fbclid=IwAR1d0Sx0haH6oLL9gmrDm6Xgfo6N2xi7ESMYEYMubMHPLymKSybybH7LvgU).

Injured, ill or lost on the hill or moorland? Dial 999 and ask for #MountainRescue!

[**Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service**](https://www.facebook.com/dsfireupdates/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWEWD7oNxZSE2MNxcu1c69VC7TSBf7dRW8dwFCSfoq58pssona4jnytI23XXeMfA5qAktQO5TDCDISoQI6QN_64b-AmAT76Eg6-rWcDSo14aBIEfvyxjAyxMF3SXZnxS-5mvVeFH_VPyw2Y-8skQ7m97kQHEkFuYaSYdeR87a1h0Q&__tn__=-UC%2CP-R)

**World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims**

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service honoured the victims of road traffic collisions on World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims (15 November 2020).

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service are one of the 19 members of the South West Peninsula Road Safety Partnership (SWPRSP) who have all agreed to a 'Vision Zero' ambition to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on our roads by 2040. They pledge to do everything in their power to prevent future suffering. With your help, they want to bring the number of fatal and serious crashes to zero.

Please [click here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjwShzEYWrs&utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=SocialSignIn) to watch the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims campaign video.

**Environment Agency (EA)**

**Annual Flood Action Campaign**

Over the last 12 months we have seen some significant levels of rainfall. February 2020 was the wettest February on record for England and the fifth wettest of any calendar month since 1862. In England 154.9mm rainfall fell, 258% of the average rainfall for the month. And just recently, the 3October was the wettest day for UK wide rainfall since records began.

We don’t know what weather this winter will bring us but the EA are ready to take action wherever it is needed. As well as making sure our rivers are clear from debris and our flood risk assets are maintained, EA teams and key partners have been carrying out incident response training to ensure they can deal with whatever weather comes our way.

As part of the EA’s annual Flood Action Campaign, the EA is urging you to check your flood risk and know what to do in the event of a flood. There are some simple steps you can take to do this:

* Find out if you’re at risk of flooding - check your postcode on the Government’s [website](https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk)
* In many flood risk areas, you can sign up for [flood warnings](https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings?_ga=2.163385530.745501603.1602494682-1289965729.1602257303). These warn of the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater. You’ll be alerted by phone, email or text when flooding is expected.
* The best way to protect yourself from flooding is to know what to do in advance – download and save a simple [Prepare, Act, Survive plan](https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/what-to-do-in-a-flood) so you’ll know what to do when there’s a flood warning in your area.

For more information about the work the EA undertake please click [here](https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2020/11/10/were-ready-for-winter-are-you/).

**First Bus – Download Mobile App**

Following the UK Government's announcement of a second lockdown from Thursday 5 November, First Bus want to reassure customers that they are working with Government and local authorities to ensure their buses are running to take people to school, university and enable those who need to travel to do so.  
  
**Use the First Bus App:**Not only can you buy your tickets in advance, but you can plan your journey, check live bus times, track your bus and check live seat capacity. To help you travel with confidence First Bus have developed new functionality in the [Mobile App](https://www.firstgroup.com/). With the latest update, version you can now track your bus live on a map so you know exactly where it is and when it will get to your stop. What’s more, each bus now displays in real time how many empty seats, and wheelchair spaces there are - to help you plan your journey.

**Pay contactless:** To avoid handling money, go contactless and pay either with a contactless card, Google or Apple Pay.

**Keep your distance from others:** To help you keep a safe distance from other passengers, First Bus have marked out which seats aren’t available to sit on. For more information visit the Coronavirus page [here](https://click.bus.firstgroup.com/?qs=7248b1f20fed698ac9813e1aa78df777748a6e6445ce4f462371ae2aa91ec5b83df26907a914e3bb7d1a6a9647def29eb228a6871c455787).

**Service levels**  
For the vast majority of services First Bus don’t expect to make any changes, but if they do, you’ll find the latest information for your local area on the [website](https://click.bus.firstgroup.com/?qs=7248b1f20fed698ab886def36d15f912d4e6759f15e2c67883e4e171ad9d73ff0d6947257d6e7e4152fd45e3ea66beba69f3842b761ec168).

**Community Support – What help is out there?**

**Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

**Could you run a Community Pantry? Are you interested in joining the pilot scheme?**

The idea of a Community Pantry is to share good but excess food from going to landfill, by making it available to the community at low cost. A pilot scheme was recently launched in Sedgemoor, (set up by the Sedgemoor District Council's Community Services team in partnership with the charity FareShare Southwest) and we at SWT are seeking a group or groups to pilot the scheme across the district.

There will be support with planning and training, and set up costs are likely to be covered from a central fund, however groups and venues are needed that can act as a small distribution hub, as well as 2-4 other host venues.

The scheme does not operate like a food bank, and it is hoped and likely the pantries will work well as a next step for those who have used a food bank, as well as others keen to avoid food waste and live economically. Pantry members pay £3.00.

A virtual event is scheduled to take place on **Thursday, 26 November at 3:00pm.**

For further information on how you can get involved or to attend the virtual event, please email Helen Phillips on [H.Phillips@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:H.Phillips@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

**Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

**Food for thought!**

Are YOU providing meals or access to food to your local community?

Do you want to start helping those in need?

CCS can help with funding, advice, equipment & ingredients!

Smart Communities could provide you with the tools to set up a food bank, collection services or funds to purchase Fridges, Freezers and other equipment to help you store food safely, and help stock them for the people in your local area.

The Somerset Food Resilience Taskforce, CCS and Somerset County Council have been working together to increase food security for residents in Somerset. CCS Village Agents and volunteers have delivered nearly 1,000 meals to families in need to help prevent holiday hunger, and have also recently delivered nearly a tonne of donated potatoes to people in need, distributed through 10 community groups.

So, if you think your community could support those in need locally get in touch either by calling **01823 331 222**: or visit [www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk/food](http://www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk/food)  or email [ccssmartcomm@somersetrcc.org.uk](mailto:ccssmartcomm@somersetrcc.org.uk)

**REMINDER- Covid-19 Community Champions**

Spark Somerset is working in partnership with SASP (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership) to set up the Covid Community Champions Network. The network will give local people a role in helping their community to get up to date information and make the right choices to stay healthy.

Spark Somerset are particularly keen to involve people living or working with communities that might find it hard to get the right information about how to stay happy and healthy at the moment, and areas where Covid infections rates are highest in Somerset.

If you, or someone you know who might be interested in a becoming a Covid Champion, you can find more information and can sign up [here](https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/volunteer).

If you’d like to discuss how your organisation might support the network, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with [Spark Somerset](https://www.sparksomerset.org.uk/volunteer).

**Health and Welfare**

**Save the Date – Listening Event for Men’s Mental Health Project in Somerset**

Second Step has just launched a new project in Somerset to develop awareness and understanding of men’s mental health in the community. Second Step also want to create spaces for men to talk about their own mental health and connect with local services and networks. The project is funded through an NHS England grant with support from Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health at Somerset County Council. Before going live Second Step is really keen to hear from a diverse range of organisations and individuals to understand **what you feel** is needed in Somerset.

Second Step will be running two listening events via Zoom on **Thursday 26 November at 10:30am and 1:30pm.**, the sessions will be facilitated by Matt Day Social Prescribing Coordinator from SPARK Somerset. Professor David Gunnell, from the University of Bristol, will be the key note speaker to start the sessions.

Second Step have three questions they would like you to respond to in small facilitated breakout groups, gaining your valuable insights into what you feel and know is needed in Somerset to support men’s mental health.

**Please click on the link to get your free tickets via Eventbrite:**

**26 November:**

**MORNING (10:30am)** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/listening-event-for-mens-mental-health-project-in-somerset-tickets-128754615521>

**AFTERNOON (1:30pm)** <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/listening-event-for-mens-mental-health-project-in-somerset-tickets-128859731927>

The Zoom events will last no more than 1.5 hours, but please feel free to “dip out” if you need to. Second Step will be following these events on **Tuesday 1December** with a third session for men with lived experience to attend.

Please feel free to share this information with any other organisations or men that you feel would like to attend and share their views.

**Contact a Samaritan**

The Samaritans are working together to make sure fewer people die by suicide. Every seven seconds, they respond to a call for help. No judgement. No pressure. They are there for anyone who needs someone

Whatever you're going through, a Samaritan will face it with you, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Call **116 123** for free.

**The Somerset Mindline**

Open 24 hours a day for mental health and emotional wellbeing support: **01823 276 892**. [Mindline](https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/adult-one-to-one-support/mindline/) is also for people that may just want a chat with a friendly ear to talk about their day.

**Don’t forget your flu jab**

Everyone who is in an ‘at risk’ group is being encouraged to claim their free flu vaccine and join the record number of people who have already had theirs.High numbers of people from across Somerset are already leading the way by taking up the offer of a flu vaccine – and so protecting the vulnerable people in their lives.

SCC is urging everyone who has booked a vaccine to keep to their appointment – despite being in a second lockdown government guidance does allow you to leave home for a medical appointment – it is safe to do so, with strict social distancing and hygiene procedures in place.

Many of us will carry the flu virus without showing symptoms and could unknowingly pass it on to the most vulnerable people in our community. Vaccination helps to reduce spread to the wider public and demand on the wider health system at a time when Coronavirus is already putting it under pressure.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-who-should-have-it-this-winter-and-why/the-flu-vaccination-winter-2020-to-2021-who-should-have-it-and-why) to view the full list of vulnerable groups who are also eligible for the free vaccination.

**The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline**

If you are self-isolating or need extra help, a 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
* 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 [click here](https://www.corona-helpers.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR3xuF8InwovdJVpUU8Jg1wwdJW748d9W-YE0LShwvxInP4_eUTIybQfZ2g).

**Please Download the NHS Test and Trace app**

You can now [download the NHS Test and Trace app](https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/what-the-app-does.html) and help control the spread of coronavirus and protect yourself and your loved ones as case numbers rise.

The more people who download the app and contribute to the data will assist with monitoring and tracking the spread of the virus; this will enable Public Health England to allocate resources accordingly. The app will also advise you to self-isolate if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case. It will also enable you to check symptoms, book a free test if needed and get your test results.

**Travel Restrictions**

The guidance for travelling abroad is constantly being updated by Government.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-travel-corridors) to read the latest information relating to the travel corridors.

**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**

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

[Public Health England](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england)

[NHS – Help and Advice](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

**FAQS**

**Q. I’ve recovered from Coronavirus. How can I contribute to the ongoing scientific research?**

**A.** As part of a national research response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the NHS are leading a programme to collect blood plasma from people who've had from coronavirus. This plasma is being used in national clinical trials to improve the recovery of people with COVID-19. If you've had coronavirus, please consider volunteering. The NHS need even more plasma donors to help respond to the increasing need for treatments. Please [click here](https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/how-you-can-help/convalescent-plasma-clinical-trial/) for more information on how you can get involved.

**Q. With the second national lockdown upon us, my children have been spending a lot more time online. What can I do to help keep them safe?**

**A.** Avon and Somerset Police are renewing their call to parents to be aware of their children’s online activity, following a recent increase in reports of young children falling victim to sexual predators who target them online.

Over recent years, the Police have seen a continued increase in online child abuse and exploitation and consequently, Avon and Somerset Police is engaging with and supporting child victims of abuse and their families, as well as disrupting offenders.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2020/11/children-as-young-as-11-being-targeted-by-sexual-predators-online/) for further information, website references and resources for support, and top tips on how to keep your children safe when they are online.

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)**

**Police urge communities to look out for signs of domestic abuse**

As we start the second national lockdown of the year, A&SP is encouraging communities to look out for one another and know the signs of abuse. It’s important that we learn to recognise the signs of someone being abused, manipulated and controlled.

Domestic abuse can happen to anyone. It happens in all types of relationships, regardless of race, ethnic or religious group, class, disability, sexuality, lifestyle, nationality or age. The police want to remind people that we all have a responsibility to look out for one another, and to recognise the signs of someone being manipulated and abused. It can happen to anyone, anywhere, and at any time.

Domestic abuse can also take many different forms – physical, emotional, psychological, sexual or financial. Psychological and emotional abuse is known as coercive control. This type of abuse can be difficult to spot but can make victims question their worth, limit their contact with friends and family, and make victims feel they can’t cope alone. The police also want to remind victims of domestic abuse that you are not alone and they can help you.

We urge anyone who is in an abusive relationship, or anyone who suspects someone they know to be in an abusive relationship to speak to us by calling 101.

**If you or someone else you know is in immediate danger – call 999.**

If you can’t speak, call 999 and dial 55, this will alert the phone operator who will put you straight through to the police. If you aren’t comfortable talking to the police, we encourage you to speak to a specialist service in your area.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2020/11/avon-and-somerset-police-urges-communities-to-look-out-for-signs-of-domestic-abuse/) for further information and to read more on how to recognise the signs of an abusive relationship. For more information about organisations and services for domestic abuse victims, please visit: [www.thisisnotanexcuse.org](http://www.thisisnotanexcuse.org/)

**Finally**

It is important to keep up to date with the latest [information and advice from the government.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public)

For quick up to date information regarding SWT services please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/ or Twitter @swtcouncil

Please see our dedicated [webpage](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-information-and-advice/) for updates.

If you have concerns about your own health and coronavirus please visit the [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/) website.

**#StayAtHome #ProtectTheNHS #SaveLives**

***Attachment:***

*Virtual Careers Fair for Care Flyer*