

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 16. Week ending 12/07/20

#StayAlert #Controlthevirus#SaveLives

Up to date information on the Council's response can be found on the SWT website:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/>

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](#).

Key Messages this week

1. Discretionary Business Grant Moves to Priority Three Applications

The previously extended Covid-19 Discretionary Business Grant Scheme closed on 30 June. Of the £2,128,250 available, circa £500k remained.

Following a review of the unsuccessful applicants and comments from businesses who had asked to be included, a further and final widening of the scheme has been agreed to include additional business types. These are broadly retail and tourism related. The scheme will go live on the website at **9am on Friday 10 July** and in addition to the previously qualifying business types the scheme will include:

- Self-contained self-catering holiday accommodation which is subject to Council Tax (this does not include room-only) £2,500 grant.

- All B&Bs (not just those registered with SWT as food premises) £2,500
- Commercial fishing boats, charter fishing boats and charter pleasure boat businesses based within SWT harbours £5,000
- Street traders and market operators which have consents from SWT and live within SWT £2,000
- Taxi/private hire drivers, which are licenced with SWT £2,000
- Mobile retailers £2,500
- Visitor information centres £7,500

SWT will adjust the 'fixed property related costs' threshold for commercial fishing boats, charter fishing boats and charter pleasure boats, mobile retailers, taxi drivers and visitor centres to reflect their lower likely fixed property-related costs.

From the following week, 17 July, **should funds remain**, SWT will widen the scheme further to include the following:

- Any other business which is not assessed for business rates and which can demonstrate hardship caused by COVID-19 and where it is the sole or main source of income for the applicant and is based and operating within SWT, £2,000 grant.

There has been a phased approach to widening the Discretionary Grant Scheme in order to balance demand with the funds that were made available.

Please [click here](#) to read the full details of all eligible businesses that are now included in the scheme from 10 July.

2. Democratic/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.

The next virtual meeting of the Executive takes place on Wednesday 15 July at 6.15pm (Please [click here](#) to view the Agenda and Report Packs). Items on the agenda include:

- Corporate Performance Report for 2019/20
- Hinkley Point C Housing Strategy (Phase 3)

The next Virtual meeting of the Planning Committee takes place on Thursday 16 July at 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 13 July). Items on the agenda include applications relating to Cleeve Hill in Watchet, Bradford On Tone and Norton Fitzwarren.

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](#).

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 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.

SWT Councillors are reminded that if they do not wish to receive paper copies of agendas to please let the Governance Team know.

3. SWT Car Parking Charges

It was agreed at the Full Council Meeting on 7 July to extend the suspension of parking charges in all SWT car parks until **30 August 2020**. The decision was agreed by Members to support independent businesses and encourage shoppers to return to the high streets.

4. Housing Support from SWT

SWT is reaching out to help tenants, landlords and those at risk of homelessness as Coronavirus restrictions begin to ease. The Council is urging anyone with concerns arising from the pandemic to seek advice from its team of specialist officers who are available to give assistance, support and guidance whatever the circumstances.

Help is available for tenants worried about anything from paying the rent, concerned about leaving temporary accommodation when current restrictions are lifted, scared about losing accommodation tied to a job, or in an abusive relationship; and landlords struggling with tenancy issues including failure to pay rent or tenants not adhering to their tenancy conditions.

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

5. Business Engagement Webinars

The SWT Economic Development team has been working hard to support our local businesses through the coronavirus pandemic with a range of grants, advice, and guidance. This has extended to supporting the reopening of our

high streets with practical help, advice and public realm changes to ensure businesses can keep staff and customers safe. SWT is now looking at what can be done to help town centre businesses fully recover and grow back stronger.

SWT is asking businesses for their views and ideas on:

- Shaping the high streets - what they should look like and what type of 'offer' they should have for businesses, shoppers, visitors and residents post COVID-19.
- Support and advice for businesses - what do high street and town centre businesses need to adapt, recover and flourish post COVID-19.

SWT is particularly interested in feedback from our three main town centres - Taunton, Minehead and Wellington and our neighbourhood retail centres - Wiveliscombe, Watchet, Dulverton, Dunster and Porlock.

As an integral part of this work engagement webinars are being planned in Taunton, Wellington and Minehead between **17 and 24 July**.

The webinars will focus on two discussions -

- What do businesses and town centres need to help them to stay open urgently in the next 12 months?
- Reimagining the high streets - How should the high streets be shaped, what they should look like and what they should offer in the future?

If you have any views that you would like to share with SWT please email Openinghighstreets@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Further details on these webinars will be shared on the SWT website when they are finalised.

6. SWT to Build First Zero Carbon Homes

SWT has approved funding to build the first zero carbon affordable homes in the district. The Council aims to build up to 50 zero carbon homes over a number of sites. They will be highly insulated and include onsite renewable heat and energy which will make them very economic for tenants to run.

The decision reflects the Council's policy to deliver actions in support of its climate emergency declaration and its commitment to working towards achieving carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030.

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

7. Council's construction partner receives top accolade

SWT's delivery partner for the regeneration of Coal Orchard has received a top accolade from an independent organisation raising standards in the construction industry.

Midas Construction, part of the Midas Group, received a Certificate of Excellence from the Considerate Constructors Scheme for its care and respect towards the community, the environment, the site appearance and the work force.

Midas Construction started work on the Coal Orchard development in August 2019. The detailed plans to regenerate one of Taunton's prime riverside quarters include a mix of apartments, retail, workspace, and restaurants; and incorporate a riverfront plaza with a stepped terrace to make the most of its position on the River Tone.

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

Keep up to date with the Coal Orchard project [here](#).

8. Somerset West Lottery summer bolt-on prize

Following on from the success of previous national initiatives, the Somerset West Lottery is taking part in the summer 2020 bolt-on prize draw. Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between now and **29 August** will be in with the chance to win one of five B&Q gift cards to the value of £100 courtesy of the external lottery management company Gatherwell.

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. A further bolt on prize draw is planned for winter 2020 with details to be announced.

Please [click here](#) to read the full SWT news article.

9. 5G Planning Notices

Please be aware that in some areas in the South West (Mendip and North Devon) **sharp objects and razor blades** have been found attached to the **back of notices posted by campaigners** objecting to **5G planning applications**.

SWT has not received any 5G applications yet but if you do see any notices of this nature, please report them to SWT by using the [online reporting form](#) and do not attempt to remove them.

10. Independent's Day

It was a big weekend for our cafes, pubs, restaurants, bars, hairdressers, barbers and other businesses across the district, who re-opened safely from Saturday, 4 July. SWT wanted to say a great big 'Welcome Back' to every single one of you.

Please [click here](#) to view a celebratory video to mark the occasion.

11. SWP Sites and Services

All 'business as usual' items are now being accepted across Somerset Waste Partnership's recycling centres. All 16 sites can now take cardboard, as well as

commercial waste and other waste you pay to dispose of - including tyres, gas bottles, soil and hardcore, vehicle parts, plasterboard and asbestos (card payment only).

'Shop-style' social distancing is in place and sites are at times busy. SWP is encouraging people to only come if they really need to and make sure they use their weekly recycling collections - which include cardboard - wherever possible.

Trailers and vans can now access the sites at any time during opening hours, as long as they have the appropriate permit. Sites have experienced long queues at times, especially in the morning.

All SWP sites are now open for their usual summer hours. Queue cams at Bridgwater, Chard, Taunton and Yeovil can be viewed [here](#).

Please [click here](#) for up to date notifications from SWP Somerset.

Urge others to follow [@Somersetwaste](#) on Facebook and Twitter.

Sign up [here](#) to subscribe to e-news.

Partner Engagement - Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

Libraries start to reopen

Libraries are starting to reopen in Somerset as the service begins a phased return with a new personal shopping service being introduced. The first Library to welcome people back was Taunton where doors opened on Monday 6 July. Subject to a review, it will then be introduced in Bridgwater, Frome, Minehead and Yeovil on 13 July. It is hoped all remaining libraries will be able to open again during August.

The first day saw a steady stream of customers who came in to return books, pick up their 'Order-and-Collect' items and or use a public computer. After just one day, it is clear that the 'Order-and-Collect' service has been enthusiastically received by library members, with orders and messages coming in fast. As many more shops and other venues start to re-open in Taunton, it is expected that the numbers will grow but Somerset Libraries have also been promoting the new library offer with focused local communications (including regular radio broadcasts on Tone FM), social media posts, press releases and posters/flyers and will continue to work with community agents and partners to help spread the word.

To read more on this story please [click here](#).

Emergency Road Closure: East Street, Fore Street, Taunton

Reference: Fore Street and East Street - COVID-19

Please be aware that to facilitate social distancing and aid pedestrianisation in shopping areas, the emergency road closure at **East Street and Fore Street, Taunton** for approximately 407 metres that commenced on **Monday 15 June 2020** at **00:00** has been extended until **Sunday 15 August 2020** at **23:59**.

Please [click here](#) to view a map of the affected area (in red), together with the recommended diversion route (in purple) is shown below, along with the link to One.Network.

Highway Maintenance Update

A much quieter week on the roads of Somerset West and Taunton as SCC focus on the routine tasks of gully emptying, safety defect repairs and patching. You may well also see the carriageway surface dressing team out and about, carrying out aftercare tasks on the dressings that were laid in June.

SCC Highways has been informed by the West Somerset Railway that they intend to carry out some essential maintenance works to their level crossing gates at **Blue Anchor Station on 13 July 20**. The work will take one hour to complete over a number of staggered closures not taking more than 5 minutes at a time. This will require the road to be closed for these times.

Noxious weeds (including Ragwort)

Under the Noxious Weeds Act 1959, certain noxious weeds, including ragwort, must be removed where they are reported as causing a nuisance to highway users or adjoining landowners.

Invasive species are treated and controlled by SCC as part of a planned programme of works. Known species include; Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed.

Specific sites can receive up to four planned inspections and/or treatments per season. SCC's weed treatment programme normally commences in early / mid-May and is complete by early September, depending on the seasonal growing conditions.

To report noxious or invasive weeds on the highway network please [click here](#) and it will be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Rural verge cutting continues along the "C" and "D" road networks and more information on this can be found on our [Travel Somerset website](#).

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

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (M&CA)

Search. Rescue. Save. Whatever. Wherever. Whenever.

This week the M&CA has been celebrating **Maritime Safety Week 2020** by saying thank you to all the dedicated coastguard volunteers across the UK. Their sacrifice has no limits...

- Day or night - they'll be there in an instant
- Missed birthdays, milestones, anniversaries - without hesitation
- Balancing work, family, play - with saving lives

Maritime and Coastguard do this, so they can be there for you when you need them the most, often accompanied by the RNLI volunteer crews. - thank you to every one of you.

The UK figures for the weekend commencing the 4 July:

Total incidents - 217

Coastguard Rescue Teams - 147

Aircraft - 10 (19 aircraft used)

Lifeboats (RNLI/Independent) - 90

Hovercraft - 0

[#AlwaysOnCall](#) [#999Coastguard](#) [#MaritimeSafetyWeek](#) [#MaritimeSafetyMatters](#)
[#SeafarersWeek](#)

Community Support - What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Newsletter moves to fortnightly

SWT continues to produce an e-newsletter to support the work of the voluntary and community sector across the district. SWT hope you and the VCS have found this newsletter of interest and use. It has not been hard to fill the pages as there is so much happening; much of it really helpful and positive.

The hope of SWT is that those groups continuing to operate are establishing good sources of ongoing support and information, and subscribing to useful publications. Suggestions and useful links are included each edition.

From now on, SWT is dropping back to producing fortnightly newsletters, and would welcome your feedback on the frequency, or even need, for such a newsletter as we move into August. It would be great to hear your thoughts - please email: VCSNewsletter@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk Thank you.

Health and Welfare

Mental Health Survey for Children and Young People

Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group Mental Health team and Young Somerset are launching their first survey for children and young people's mental health. It is aimed at children and young people aged 8-18 years old to gather their feedback on Mental Health Services in Somerset.

The survey consists of 10 questions, mostly multiple choice, asking young people questions on their Mental Health, and how they may utilise Mental Health Support Services within the County.

The survey went live on Monday 6 July and the closing date will be **Sunday 9 August**. The aim of the survey will be to understand what children and young people in Somerset feel is working well, not so well and what could be improved in regards to early intervention low level mental health services, with also getting a flavour of how they are currently feeling and what they use to improve their wellbeing.

From the survey the team are hoping to gather some young person focus groups where they can ask more questions around early intervention and their current, fast moving digital offer.

To find out more and participate in the survey, please [click here](#).

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

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.

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](#)

[NHS - Help and Advice](#)

FAQS

Q. I continue to shield due to a medical condition. How much longer am I expected to do this?

A. From 1 August, the Government will pause shielding unless the transmission of COVID-19 in the community starts to rise significantly.

This means from the 1 August:

- the Government will no longer be advising you to shield and you can go to work, as long as the workplace is COVID-secure - but carry on working from home if you can.
- the support from the National Shielding Service of free food parcels, medicine deliveries and care will stop
- NHS Volunteer Responders will carry on delivering the food you buy, prescriptions and essential items to you if you need it
- you will still be eligible for priority supermarket slots (if you have registered by 17 July)

This guidance will be updated with these changes on 1 August. Please [click here](#) to read the up to date advice from Government.

Q. Can I stay away overnight in my camper van?

A. As from 4 July the Government allowed people to stay overnight away from their main place of residence. This includes staying overnight in a second home, hotels, bed and breakfasts or campsites.

It is worth noting that campsites and other hospitality businesses can only open if they meet the coronavirus guidelines and demonstrate they are Covid-19 secure so don't expect every campsite to open at the moment.

Camping is only allowed at designated reputable camping sites. Wild camping at this moment in time is prohibited.

Crime / Safeguarding Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Raves prevented and gatherings disrupted thanks to help from communities

Multiple unlicensed music events were prevented and several large gatherings disrupted across the force area over the weekend.

A significant policing plan had been put in place to ensure the police were able to respond quickly to emerging issues and crimes as bars and restaurants opened for the first time in more than three months.

As expected, demand for their services did increase but thankfully there were no significant incidents of disorder.

The full A&SP press release can be viewed [here](#).

Anti-Social Behaviour near Wimbleball Lake

A&SP have had multiple reports regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the area of Wimbleball Lake. People have been gathering on mass in the area and recently there have been thefts of outboard motors from boats.

The police are increasing their patrols and are giving safety advice regarding people who feel the need to jump off Bessom Bridge into the lake.

If you have information about the theft of outboard motors or you are approached to buy a motor, please report it by calling the Police on **101** or email them using the Beat team [contact form](#).

BBC West Radio Bristol with John Darvall

On Tuesday 7 July PCC Sue Mountstevens and Chief Constable Andy Marsh answered questions LIVE on BBC Radio Bristol ranging from bike thefts to stop and search powers. If you missed it, you can listen via BBC Sounds online by clicking [here](#).

PCSO Facebook Live

PCSO Katherine Williams and Linda Brooks held their Facebook Live Beat Surgery this week and answered a variety of questions on subjects such as inconsiderate parking and the operation of drones. Although the surgery is no longer live it can be viewed [here](#).

Who are the Neighbourhood Beat Team in my Area?

If you want to know who your local Beat are or what is happening in your area, then go to the Avon and Somerset Police [website](#), and enter your address on the homepage. Here you can get the latest crime statistics, view local policing priorities and see a calendar of events your local policing team will be attending. You can also view Forcewide news and national campaigns.

Finally

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.

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