

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 24. Week ending 06/09/20

#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. SWT aims to create Community Chest Fund

SWT is aiming to create a new fund to help communities recover from the effects of COVID-19. The proposed Community Chest of £250,000 would be used to support one-off initiatives that contribute to COVID-19 recovery and community cohesion across the district.

The grants are intended to supplement activities and projects run by the voluntary and community sector and wider community groups who are not able to secure mainstream funding from the Council or other sources. One-off grants of up to £5,000 could be awarded, covering up to 75% of the total cost with applicants needing to find at least 25% from their own or other sources, which can include an in-kind contribution.

The Community Chest Scheme would give consideration to initiatives that will help community groups to become sustainable in the longer term; that will help the community to recover from the effects of COVID-19; and are aligned to SWTs corporate priorities of housing and communities, the environment and the economy.

The Council's Scrutiny Committee has considered the report and recommended that the Executive approve the creation of a Community Chest when it meets on 23 September.

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

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

- Monday 7 September - **Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**, 6.15pm. The Agenda details and report packs are available to view by [clicking here](#).
- Wednesday 9 September - **Special Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm. Items on the Agenda include the Council Forward Plan and the Stronger Somerset Business Case. The Agenda details and report packs are available to view by [clicking here](#).
- Thursday 10 September - **Special Meeting of Full Council**, 6.15pm to discuss the Stronger Somerset Business Case, (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 7 September). The Agenda details and reports pack are available to view by [clicking here](#).
- Monday 14 September - **Licensing Committee** - **CANCELLED**
- Wednesday 16 September - **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 11 September)
- Thursday 17 September - **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 14 September)

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. Somerset West Lottery autumn bolt-on prize

Following on from the success of previous national initiatives, the Somerset West Lottery is taking part in the autumn 2020 bolt-on prize draw. Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between 1 September and 31 October will be in with the chance to win one of five Forest Holidays UK to the value of £500 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 Somerset West and Taunton Council.

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

If you know of a good cause wishing to raise funds or would like to buy a ticket contact the [Somerset West Lottery](#) or call 0300 30 20 666

4. Dulverton Weir made winter-fit

After emergency work in June, SWT returned to Dulverton Weir to carry out more significant repairs to prepare it for the winter. Heavy equipment was used to reposition hefty boulders in the weir and fill in holes that had developed during the year. It is envisaged that these repairs will solve the problem of the leat running dry for the immediate future but the Council team will return to carry out more work if necessary.

To find out more about the Dulverton Weir Project, including films of otters on the weir and the leat, please [click here](#) or visit the website at www.dulvertonweir.org.uk

5. Reminder parking charges resumed

Charging was reintroduced in Somerset West and Taunton owned car parks on Monday 31 August. The Council introduced free parking at the start of the coronavirus lockdown and extended the offer as part of its wider plan to support the re-opening of High Streets and help rejuvenate the local economy.

It has taken the decision to start charging again in line with other district councils in Somerset, although key health workers, on duty who display permits provided by their NHS Trust can continue to park for free.

6. Stronger Somerset- Ambitious Plan to Deliver A Stronger Future

To see all the details of the ambitious and exciting plan for reform, please visit www.strongersomerset.co.uk

7. SWP resumes kerbside collections for “wearable” shoes and clothes only.

Kerbside collections of clothes and shoes started again this week, but with tough new conditions. No textiles - bedding or curtains - will be taken, and the clothes and shoes must be of good enough quality to be worn again. Anything of lesser quality should be considered for other uses at home - such as cleaning rags or cloth wipes. Failing that, it should be put in the rubbish and will go to a new Resource Recovery Centre where it will be used to generate electricity.

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) is committed to recycling or reusing everything it collects. These new conditions reflect the near-collapse of the global second-hand market caused by COVID-19 and the rise of disposable fashion.

Textile collections have been suspended in Somerset since April, when COVID-19 saw the national and international markets grind to a halt. While charity shops are normally the best route for good quality textiles, clothes and shoes, many are currently limiting the donations they accept because of the complications that have come with COVID-19.

For information about how to reduce and reuse your waste, visit www.somersetwaste.gov.uk and follow @somersetwaste on Twitter and Facebook

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. 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.

A much quieter week last week after the unseasonable storms “Ellen” and “Francis” of the preceding fortnight. SCC have now completed the rural verge maintenance programme with the second cuts of the “A” and “B” road network. Readers will have noticed, though, that grass cutting is still continuing in the towns and built up areas. This work is carried out by the district, town and parish councils, where a greater frequency of cutting is desirable, both from an aesthetic point of view and to also assist with such tasks as litter picking.

On rural roads, cutting is done to maintain sight lines, remove obstructions, and provide a margin for pedestrians to step onto if required and to help the flow of water along road channels. It is done with a flail mounted on the back of a tractor.

In urban areas, where the cutting is more frequent and to a shorter length, the operation is carried out with much smaller, more agile equipment such as sit-on rotary mowers.

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

M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme Update Bulletin - Ruishton Lane

In a previous Newsletter SCC advised that Ruishton Lane would be closed during August for 5 weeks. This would allow Wessex Water to upgrade their system.

Following excavation and inspection by Wessex Water, there is an area of old pipe work that was not shown on the existing utility drawings. These pipes are still live and need to be replaced. Therefore, it has been agreed with Wessex Water to replace this pipe work now. This will ensure continuity of water supply and minimise the disruption for local residents/businesses in the future. **This means the closure of Ruishton Lane will need to be extended until Tuesday 29 September 2020** to complete this essential work and reinstate the road.

Pedestrian and cycle access will be maintained and a diversion route for traffic will be clearly signposted. **The diversion route will be via Cheats Road, Lipe Lane and the A358.** The Diversion route shall remain in place until completion of this work.

Toneway Creech Castle Junction phase 1 early works to begin on 7 September

Advance works to improve cycling and walking facilities near the busy Creech Castle junction in Taunton are due to start soon.

The main [Toneway Creech Castle Junction](#) scheme was initially planned to start in April 2020, but was postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak. It was then agreed to delay the scheme until summer 2021 to support the local economy as it recovers post lockdown. This remains the case, but Alun Griffiths are bringing forward some of the advanced works to improve pedestrian and cycling facilities on the north and south route along the **A38 Bridgwater Road**. They will also be delivering improvements to **Hyde Lane** which has long been subject to flooding and subsidence. Additional drainage will be installed and a new improved carriageway surface to address these issues. **Hyde Lane will be closed from 7 September 2020 for 4 weeks from the turn at Hyde Lane Cottages for approximately 200m.**

What will the work include?

Cycle and pedestrian improvements will begin on the **7 September** until Christmas 2020, the works will consist of:

- Widening of the footway along the A38 north of the junction for a length of approximately 500m
- Provision of off road and on road cycle ways, including the provision of a new Toucan Crossing;
- Provision of associated lighting and way-finding signs; and Carriageway Surfacing.

For additional project information, please visit the Griffiths in the Community website [here](#).

Small businesses to benefit from Kick Start Grant - Tourism and Business Recovery

Small businesses and the tourism sector across Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay are among those who can benefit from the Growth Support Kickstart Grant Scheme offering grants of up to £3,000.

It follows the recent government announcement of a £10 million national investment to kick start the tourism economy and a £20 million national investment to support small business to get going again and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

Application forms for the grant are available on the [Growth Support Kickstart Grant website](#) which was launched at noon on Tuesday 1 September.

To find out more information and guidance about the grant please [click here](#).

Community Support - What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

VCS Newsletter - Survey and Break

SWT will be taking a break from publication during September and will consider the options for autumn 2020.

Thank you to those who have completed the reader survey. It is great to know that the newsletter has been of use and appreciated by those who replied. The survey remains open until **31 August** for anyone still able to respond. [VCS News survey](#).

Good Neighbours Schemes Help Build on COVID-19 Community Spirit

CCS (Community Council for Somerset) is calling on local communities in Somerset to set up Good Neighbours Schemes. This year, the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the towns and villages of Somerset, volunteers turned out in their thousands to support vulnerable people and have been a lifeline for Somerset's communities.

Good Neighbours Schemes aim to build on that fantastic community spirit, bringing people together and helping to maintain the strong relationships and connections within local communities that have been built during the COVID-19 emergency.

The scheme, supported by funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, is intended to connect willing volunteers and helpers with anyone needing support with small one-off tasks, such as lifts to medical appointments, dog walks, or even simply sharing a cup of tea and a friendly chat.

To find out more about the Good Neighbours Scheme and how to set up a volunteer group, please [click here](#).

Inspiring and supporting social action in your community

SPARK Somerset are hosting a Forum along with **Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)** on the **15 September** aimed at Parish and Town Councils. It will be an opportunity to showcase some of the Councils in Somerset who really engaged in the COVID-19 response in their communities, co-ordinating local efforts and experimenting with new ways of working.

SPARK and SALC are hoping that this will initiate a conversation about how parishes can work better with the communities they serve and capitalise on the volunteering legacy from the pandemic.

To register for this event which is open to Somerset Parish and Town Councils please [click here](#).

Great British September Clean

Earlier this year The **Keep Britain Tidy Campaign** was blown away by the support from everyone - volunteers, local authorities, charities and businesses - for the Great British Spring Clean, which was due to take place from 20 March - 13 April. With more than 680,000 volunteers promising to give up their time, the enthusiasm and excitement it generated exceeded all expectations.

However, with the main priority to make sure everyone stayed safe and well, this year's campaign was postponed due to COVID-19.

Now it's back and here's how you can get involved and show support for the Great British September Clean:

11 to 27 September - [Great British September Clean](#)

18 to 25 September - [Great British Beach Clean](#)

DEFRA are encouraging as many people and businesses as possible to participate, whilst following government guidance.

Health and Welfare

Looking after your Mental Health

It's completely normal for people to be feeling a wide range of emotions including worried, anxious, frustrated and scared. Please [click here](#) to find information about how to help manage these emotions, promote your wellbeing and build positive actions into your day.

Take Part in Coronavirus Research

Find out about coronavirus health research studies and how you may be able to take part. Research you can take part in can be found by clicking on the links below:

- [Coronavirus vaccine research](#)
- [Donate blood plasma if you've had coronavirus](#)

Get the latest NHS information and advice about coronavirus by [clicking 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. What activities and out-of-school clubs can my child attend?

A. Providers who run community activities, holiday clubs, after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school provision for children can now operate with [protective measures](#) in place. Children are able to attend settings such as

tuition and learning centres, many types of extracurricular clubs (e.g. dance classes, gymnastics training, football coaching), uniformed youth organisations (e.g. Scouts, Guides and cadet forces), supplementary schools, private language schools and religious settings offering education (for example madrassahs, yeshivas, and Sunday schools), provided they are only operating in premises legally able to be open.

Q. Can I attend an out-of-school setting to watch my child in a live performance?

A. Live performances are currently permitted but only where strict coronavirus security measures are able to be implemented safely. This includes for the performers, the audience and anyone supporting the performance.

Ahead of attending, you should check with the provider organising the live performance what steps have been taken to mitigate the risk of transmission. The protective measures providers put in place should be in line with those outlined in the [performing arts guidance](#), for example limiting the size of the audience to allow social distancing to be maintained and only operating in a venue with adequate ventilation.

Crime / Safeguarding

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

WANTED: New PCSOs to join Avon and Somerset Police

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are part of neighbourhood police teams and work with colleagues from across the organisation to reduce crime and provide a visible and reassuring presence in neighbourhoods. They build relationships with local people to understand the policing issues that matter to them most and work with schools, colleges, community leaders, businesses and other groups to listen, engage and provide support on a wide range of policing issues. PCSOs are community champions and problem solvers who make a positive impact.

Avon and Somerset Police launched a campaign to recruit new PCSOs on the 3 September. They are seeking talented people from a wide range of backgrounds for a rewarding career where they can be the difference by playing a vital role in supporting, protecting and engaging with local communities.

To find out more information and to apply please [click here](#).

Tougher fines for serious breaches of coronavirus restrictions

Tougher measures targeting the most serious breaches of social distancing restrictions have now come into effect. If you're organising an illegal rave, unlicensed music event, or any other unlawful gathering of 30 people or more, you could face a £10,000 fine. Fines of £100 can continue to be issued to those who participate in illegal gatherings and those who have already received a fine will see the amount doubled on each offence, up to a maximum of £3,200.

For your safety and the safety of others, do not attend unlawful events. They are not organised with your safety in mind.

Police will take action against unauthorised Car Meets

Unauthorised car meets can cause significant impact on local residents and businesses and tackling the issue is a top priority for the A&SP neighbourhood teams.

Early intervention is key to preventing community tension and managing any potential issues with anti-social or illegal activity

If you spot signs of these types of events starting, please report this immediately to A&SP by calling 101.

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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