

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 55 Week ending 25/04/2021**

**#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air**

**SWT Council priorities**

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

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

The situation is being reviewed on a daily basis to ensure that the Council follows the [latest advice from Public Health England.](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. **Stronger Somerset - Update on proposal to hold local poll (referendum) on future of local government in Somerset**

The proposal for a local poll (referendum) to give every registered elector in Somerset a vote on the two options for the future shape of local government in the county is now to be considered at a Special Full Council meeting on Friday 30 April at 10am.

You will know that the original item submitted was deferred while the councils sought further legal advice on the matters raised by the Local Government Secretary. Advice has now been received from James Goudie, Queen's Counsel. This advice has been reflected in the proposal going before Members next week.

The proposal recommends the holding of a local poll, with voting online or by post, starting on 18 May and ending on 4 June. Papers for the meeting are available on the SWT website.

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 couple of weeks, which are as follows:

* Tuesday 27 April – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 22 April)
* Wednesday 28 April – **Special Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 23 April)
* Thursday 29 April – **Planning Committee**, 10am (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 26 April)
* Thursday 29 April – **Special Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 26 April)
* Friday 30 April – **Special Full Council**, 10am (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Tuesday 27 April)
* Tuesday 4 May – **Annual Council Meeting**, 12 noon (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 28 April)

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 dateslisted above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.

1. **Purdah – Pre Election Period**

The Pre-Election Period commenced on Monday 22 March and runs until the elections on 6 May.

From the start of the pre-election period, the council must comply with restrictions outlined in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. In addition a Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in 2011 makes clear that particular care should be taken in periods of heightened sensitivity, such as in the run up to an election. The Act defines publicity as “**any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public**.”

Generally, the Act says that we should “**not publish any material which, in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party**.” The Code of Practice recommends that authorities should generally not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters and that publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute.

**Decision making -** In relation to decision making within the council, the position remains that it is ‘business as usual’ unless there are very good reasons why this should not be the case. In the vast majority of cases, the pre-election period will have no impact on normal council business, including the approval of planning decisions.

**What this means**

* The primary restriction is on proactive publicity by the council which particularly relates to candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election.
* The council can still issue media releases on factual matters provided that these do not identify individual councillors or groups of councillors.
* Councillors are still free to respond to enquiries received from the media in a personal capacity.
* Individual councillors can issue their own statements, write letters to the local newspaper(s) for publication, contact the media directly or say what they like in a personal capacity, but must not use council resources to do so.

It is still possible for the council to issue statements on behalf of a councillor holding a key political or civic position provided it relates to important events which are outside the council’s control and can be shown to justify a member response. These occasions are likely to be rare and to be the exception, rather than the rule.

1. [**Retail mentoring programme announced for Minehead**](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/retail-mentoring-programme-announced-for-minehead/)

A free independent retail mentoring programme has been announced for Minehead, facilitated by established retail training consultant, Fran Riseley.

Funded by the Emergency Town Centre Recovery Fund, created by SWT to help town centres in the district recover from the pandemic and administered by the [Minehead Business Improvement District (BID)](https://www.mineheadbid.co.uk/).

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/retail-mentoring-programme-announced-for-minehead/) to read the full SWT press release.

1. **Somerset West Lottery – Summer 2021 bolt-on prize draw**

Following on from the success of previous initiatives, the Somerset West Lottery is taking part in the first of two summer 2021 bolt-on prize draws. Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between 3 May and 26 June 2021, will be in with the chance to win a year’s supply of fresh fruit and vegetables delivered weekly to the doorstep of each of three lucky winners by Boxxfresh, a small family run UK business.

All tickets bought during this timeframe will automatically be entered in to the bonus prize draw, as well as being in with a chance to win up to £25,000 in the weekly lottery run by Somerset West and Taunton Council.

The Somerset West Lottery offers registered good causes the opportunity to raise income for their organisation by selling tickets to members of the public.

To read the full press release please [click here.](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/somerset-west-lottery-early-summer-2021-bolt-on-prize-draw/)

1. **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](https://my.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-7273c7e8-b6a9-403d-8c31-5a0556ba616c/AF-Stage-0b9c2922-2340-406c-99ea-cea41e828000/definition.json&redirectlink=%2Fen&cancelRedirectLink=%2Fen&consentMessage=yes) online form or phone [**0300 304 8000**](tel:03003048000)

For more information check the ‘How we can all fight fly-tipping’ section on the [Somerset Waste Partnership](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/) website.

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

**‘Podback’ recycling programme**

Households across the UK can now recycle their coffee pods using one recycling scheme. ‘Podback’ is a first of its kind recycling programme for coffee pods set up by Nestlé and Jacobs Douwe Egberts.

Coffee pods or capsules cannot be recycled kerbside in Somerset or at any recycle site. Under Podback, consumers can recycle their Nespresso, NESCAFÉ Dolce Gusto UK & Ireland, Tassimo, L'OR Espresso and Starbucks pods at their nearest drop-off point. There are thousands of drop-off points in local stores across the UK, open seven days a week.

Consumers can order recycling bags directly from any of the participating Podback brands online and these will be available in supermarkets soon. Consumers can also order recycling bags and find their nearest drop-off points via [podback.org.](https://podback.org/?fbclid=IwAR1ATOdw2wfjsHWZXS3GnENxvVcJoi-O79HZNW4iNvEgmM2oWyF787IHvtc) If you are having issues viewing this webpage, you might find it opens effectively in Google Chrome.

**Spuds: Eat ‘em don’t waste ‘em!**

King Ed's to Pink Fir: why waste 'em when you can mash 'em, roast 'em, boil 'em? Millions of potatoes go to waste every day, but these [simple tips](https://bit.ly/2EiN57Z) can help keep all your spuds out of the bin. Just use some TLC and creative flair to save every potato for the plate.

But if you cannot avoid wasting them, add potatoes to your compost bin (they may enjoy it and produce many more spuds), along with all vegetable peelings, tea leaves and coffee grounds.

Or put all food - every last scrap - in your food waste bin as the anaerobic digestion plant turns it all into electricity and farm compost for yet more food.

**Garden waste subscriber or want to be?**

Renew now to avoid any gap in collections via the "Garden Waste Bin and Sacks" tab at the [somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://somersetwaste.gov.uk/?fbclid=IwAR2OWSBWBywbygxxcDJP-jBHUKucE96sHti9O4dEh8yLckDLsIZ61-1Q9rs) My Waste Services menu.

If you have started to collect garden waste, use the same route to buy garden waste sacks until collections resume mid-May, and order pick-ups when you need them.

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

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

**Somerset County Council (SCC)**

**SCC Highway Maintenance Update**

Still fine weather but the persistent northerly and easterly winds are keeping the night-time temperatures down. SCC Highways are continuing to monitor conditions but hopefully we are now near the end of the winter.

The Somerset Rivers Authority/ SCC Highways joint venture to reduce the risk and impacts of flooding in **Kingston St Mary** continues. The trenching has come across some natural springs and they have been intercepted and diverted into the new drainage system. In addition, some unrecorded gas main assets have been identified and this has meant that the design has had to be modified to avoid these. As a consequence, the job has now been extended slightly in time and **Lodes Lane** **will now re-open on 7 May**.

Work will commence on **26 April** at **Irnham Road** in **Minehead**. The carriageway condition is very poor at the top end and SCC Highways will be removing it and laying a new surface. As part of the preparatory works for this, the Highways team will be removing the old, damaged channel blocks and replacing some of the kerbs. The removed items will then be reused on other parts of the highway network. **Irnham Road will be closed from Irnham Mews to Friday Street until 13 May.**

Another carriageway resurfacing scheme that is coming up is on the **A3065 Silk Mills Road in Taunton**. SCC Highways will plane off the old surface and lay a new one at the junction with **Mountway Road and Bishops Hull Hill**. In order to do this work there will be a temporary road closure for three evenings, **Monday 26 to Wednesday 28 April between 6.30pm and 11.30pm**.

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

**A38 Junction Improvement works in Taunton**

Important works are starting in Taunton this month around the **A38 Mary Street, Billetfield and Paul Street junctions**, to support a residential development.

The developer has helped Somerset County Council draft this set of Q&As which hopefully explain what’s happening, why and how this might affect pedestrians and road-users.

Please see the attached Word document for more information.

**Temporary Road Closure: Yallands Hill, Cheddon Fitzpaine**  
The order becomes effective on 29 April 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **5 May 2021** and last for 11 weeks **(24hrs)** to enable CJL Construction Ltd to carry out all construction and associated works in connection with the Western Relief Road.

For any further information about this closure please contact CJL Construction Ltd on **(01934) 853227**, quoting reference: ttro431060TD - S50 - Yallands Hill, Cheddon FP.

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](http://www.One.Network).

**REMINDER- Temporary Road Closure: Castle Street, Taunton**

The order becomes effective on 15 April 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **25 April 2021** and last for 8 hours (7pm – 3am) to enable Wessex Water to carry out critical maintenance to the foul sewer.

For any further information about this closure please contact Wessex Water on

**0345 600 4600** quoting reference: ttro427681TD - WW - Castle Street, Taunton.

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](http://www.One.Network).

**Useful links to report faults**

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

[Dangerous/Overgrown Tree alongside the public highway](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/)

**Clinton’s COVID catch-up focuses on testing**

In this week’s COVID Catch Up, former BBC Points West correspondent Clinton Rogers speaks to staff at a local testing site and a pharmacy in Somerset.

Lateral Flow Testing – regular twice weekly testing for people without symptoms, is now available universally in England. There are many ways in which you can get tested, including collecting kits from local sites and pharmacies or ordering online for delivery to your home.

Regular testing for COVID-19 is important as society opens up again as it helps to identify cases that may have gone undetected and therefore breaks the chain of transmission. Regular testing also helps to identify new strains of COVID-19.

For more information on getting tested, please visit: [Coronavirus – Get a test if you do not have symptoms (somerset.gov.uk)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-lateral-flow-test/)

Please [click here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lr__dfVcoGU) to watch the COVID Catch up playback.

**Somerset Library Service**

**REMINDER- Libraries ready to open up again**

Somerset Libraries’ shelves are crammed with an array of brand-new books with something for everyone. Library members can borrow up to 20 books at a time, all for free! COVID secure measures will still be in place, and charges will still apply to some other items including DVDs and Talking Books.

To check if your membership is still active: use the simple ‘membership checker’ form on [www.somersetlibraries.co.uk](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-communities/libraries/) or pop into your local branch where staff will be happy to help. You can still [join and use the library online](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.somerset.gov.uk%2Flibraries-leisure-and-communities%2Flibraries%2Flibraries-services%2Flibrary-membership%2F&data=04%7C01%7CWebTeam%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cc1e2af57fcf14466a6ba08d8fab606ac%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637535007022951039%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=f1bshskLDFnT%2FP9jj7VN83%2BrEoT49J8B2sv5BN4x9LI%3D&reserved=0). Library membership gives you access to a huge [range of online content](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.somerset.gov.uk%2Flibraries-leisure-and-communities%2Flibraries%2Flibrary-facilities%2Fe-books-e-magazines-and-e-audiobooks%2F&data=04%7C01%7CWebTeam%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cc1e2af57fcf14466a6ba08d8fab606ac%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637535007022951039%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=ADk6gpkLEufof2cDBQkAboww947CMHHR2jratCqvmB8%3D&reserved=0), 1000s of downloadable books, audiobooks, magazines, newspapers and comics – free of charge.

All SCC Libraries are operating NHS Test and Trace, following government legislation. When visiting a library, if you have a smart phone you will need to scan the NHS QR posters located at the entrance.

**REMINDER- Somerset Libraries iPad loaning scheme**

Jobseekers and anyone looking to develop new skills for employment can borrow an iPad for free from Bridgwater, Minehead or Taunton Library for up to 6 weeks.

The tablets are pre-loaded with links, information and support for anyone in Somerset currently looking for employment, or if you think you may need to be looking soon. These are ‘data-enabled’ iPads which means you don’t even need to have internet access at home to use them.

Additional free ‘wrap-around’ support is available from the Positive People Programme, including a 24/7 helpline, one-to-one digital support, virtual job clubs and workshops. To register your interest and find out more please [click here](https://glassboxtaunton.co.uk/tablet-loaning-information/).

**Forestry England**

**Find your local forest**

1,500 woods and forests are under the care of Forestry England. Some may be less busy than others as restrictions ease. Consider visiting in the early morning or in the evening. You’ll be able to really appreciate quieter forest trails and stunning horizons. Find your local forest on the [Forestry England website](https://www.forestryengland.uk/visit?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=brand&utm_content=national&fbclid=IwAR2v9BXnjKZx7fdQMUyEdJ1B0jSCuBioLe4qNMai5moAZACUmwGbm2YFCfE).

**Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA)**

**Enhanced Programme 2021-22**

There is no one single solution to Somerset’s flooding challenges, and everyone in the county is affected in different ways. The SRA therefore invests in a wide range of activities across river catchments, towns, villages, rural areas and roads at risk of flooding.

The SRA’s new 2021-22 programme allocates £3.44 million to 21 projects. Some of these projects are localised, some will benefit the entire county. Please find attached a 2-page PDF of a press release about the new programme.

For those who would like to know more details, you will find attached a longer account of all 21 projects as a PDF. Alternatively, the same information can be read online [here](https://www.somersetriversauthority.org.uk/flood-risk-work/sra-enhanced-programme-works-2021-22/).

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please get in touch by emailing Somerset Rivers Authority on [sra@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sra@somerset.gov.uk) or calling **01823 355111**.

**The Exmoor Society**

**Last chance to enter poetry competition for adults 2021**

In 2018, The Exmoor Society decided to reintroduce a poetry competition as part of its 60th anniversary celebrations in recognition that Exmoor has long been an inspiration for artists and writers – especially poets. The competition generated a lot of interest and consequently The Exmoor Society has decided to hold the competition annually.

The 2021 competition is now open to anyone aged over 16 years-of-age for original poems inspired by any aspect of Exmoor – be it topical, historical, archaeological, literary, recreational, spiritual or relating to flora or fauna, dark skies, landscape, etc.

[Click here](https://www.exmoorsociety.com/content/competitions-awards/poetry-competition-for-adults) to enter The Exmoor Society Poetry Competition for Adults.

The competition’s closing date is midnight on **30 April 2021.**

**Exmoor National Park (ENP)**

**Self-Guided Walking Routes launched on Exmoor**

Exmoor National Park have created a series of ten easy-going, self-guided walks to help people discover the incredible scenery, wildlife and history of the National Park, following the easing of travel restrictions on 12 April and reopening of many shops, outdoor hospitality and attractions, and self-contained accommodation.

From the heather-clad heights of Dunkery Beacon and shaded ancient oak woodlands of Horner, to the riverside beauty of Heddon’s Mouth and romance of the Doone Valley, the routes take in different aspects of Exmoor’s distinctive landscape and history. Each is accompanied by OS mapping plus a short video available at [exmoorwalks.org](https://exmoorwalks.org/).

In recent years the National Park Authority has also put significant investment into the rights of way network and particularly some of Exmoor’s most iconic long distance walking routes – The Two Moors Way, The Coleridge Way and the South West Coast Path being among the most well-known. Thanks to this sustained effort, and despite increased extreme weather patterns and visitor pressure, the condition of Exmoor’s rights of way network is perhaps the best it’s ever been.

To read the full press release and find out more please [click here](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/press-room/press-room/news-2021/new-self-guided-walking-routes-launched-on-exmoor).

**Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS)**

**Water Safety and Drinking**

35% of accidental drowning victims, aged 15-29 years old, had alcohol in their bloodstream. DSFRS know it's been a while since the pubs have been open, but they ask you to please take care if you're drinking or walking near water. Maybe take a different route home, or walk with a friend to help keep each other out of harm's way.

**Moorland Fire Risk**

Due to the continued dry spell of weather, there is an increasing risk of moorland fires across the Southwest. Fires spread quickly across moorland vegetation and can be devastating to the landscape and wildlife, especially ground nesting birds. Fires also put livestock and members of the public at risk and with the winds expected to increase over the coming days: **No open fires please.**

To help the National Parks protect against the devastating impact of fire do not have open fires as part of your picnic or backpack camping at any time. It can get out of control quickly and start a moorland fire.

To help reduce the risk of fires further, please:

* Do not discard cigarettes, matches or lighters from cars or whilst out hiking across the moors.
* Beware that glass bottles left on the ground can start fires. Take your litter home.

**High Fire Risk**

During this long period of dry weather there is a significant risk of wildfires on Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor.

Please:

* Do not use portable BBQs or camping stoves
* Take notice of any advisory or warning signs
* Follow directions from National Park Ranger and Emergency Services

If you see anything suspicious please phone the police on 101.

In the event of seeing a fire, please report it quickly to the fire service on 999 with the location, so that they can take action.

**Maritime and Coastguard Agency**

**Multi- Agency Rescue at Hurlstone Point**

The Coastguard Watchet were recently tasked by the ambulance service following reports of a male having fallen 30 metres whilst climbing. Initially tasked to the woods at Culvercliffe, Minehead they were soon diverted following a recall from the casualty’s friends who confirmed they were further down the coast at Hurlstone Point, near Porlock.

First on scene to the remote location was the Coastguard Rescue Helicopter “Rescue 187” from St Athan in South Wales where the winched paramedic immediately deployed to assist the injured male. Soon after, the two Minehead Lifeboats were on scene and put ashore some of their crew whilst Coastguards from Watchet and Lynmouth Coastguard Search and Rescue made their way down the cliff path from above to assist.

Maintaining radio communication links from above the Coastguard Officer in Charge and Ambulance Service Incident Commander coordinated the response with the aircrew of the Rescue Helicopter. The air ambulance which had also been tasked and had landed near the original location at Culvercliffe was released as the casualty was going to be evacuated by the coastguard helicopter direct to the specialist trauma centre at Southmead Hospital in Bristol.

Together with the lifeboat crew, Coastguards assisted with the carry of the stretcher from the base of the cliff to the helicopter, where the 35 year old male was conveyed for urgent medical treatment.

Locals and visitors are warned not to climb cliff faces. The stability of the rock varies around the coast: without proper training and climbing equipment including ropes, it makes any attempt at free climbing extremely dangerous. When venturing onto remote locations, the ability to know exactly where you are located can be aided by a grid reference from a map or mapping app, or use of the [what3words app on smart phones.](https://www.facebook.com/what3words/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWna_Tq37c9OZ2aOcj2MNFvn28QAXwngWrXFWdSZ90bkvaRbyIXV-hG-Sm1QxUWsH_P0Oc_wZXW_zgGSgyLUvZS5Im9KHWmg2I0fk5sTHb20sWMMqTooWcd_YAm99kjChtlTnfnuU6WmINUCGIX3AWMjD5CNby8p1GZqfBvP9d0Jw&__tn__=kK-y-R)

In a coastal emergency remember to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

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

**Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

**Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

**Community Building Training Webinars**

The CCS has a full calendar of events for Somerset Community Buildings.

With life starting to ease the team have been working up a series of training webinars to keep your facility progressing.

The CCS has a list of calendar events scheduled to occur between April – September.

Topics include:

* Long Road out of lock down – 4 step roadmap out of lockdown
* Trustee’s roles and responsibilities
* Governing Documents and How to update them
* Meetings & AGMs
* Incorporation for Community Buildings

Working together the CCS know our amazing facilities will come out stronger on the other side. Please [click here](https://ccslovesomerset.org/community-buildings-events-2021/) to book your space today.

**Spark Somerset**

**REMINDER- Community Food Forums**

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

Next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 28 April**, and again on **Wednesday 26 May.** Please [click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-food-forum-tickets-138922566135) to find out more and book.

**Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)**

**Last chance to apply for the Somerset Coronavirus Fund**

Could a grant help your voluntary group, community group or charity prepare for life after Coronavirus? Grants are now available for small charities and community groups in Somerset that have been affected by the Coronavirus outbreak.

Examples of how you could use the money include:

* preparing your premises for reopening
* preparing your staff and volunteers to deliver new or old services
* changing a service so it can be delivered differently
* creating more time for managers to think about future plans
* buying new tools or resources to support people.

Find out more & apply [here](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/coronavirusrecovery) before **Thursday 29 April 2021.**

**Health and Welfare**

**Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) issues new advice on COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women**

The JCVI has advised that pregnant women should be offered the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the rest of the population, based on their age and clinical risk group.

There have been no specific safety concerns identified with any brand of COVID-19 vaccines in relation to pregnancy. [Real-world data from the United States](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafepregnancyregistry.html) shows that around 90,000 pregnant women have been vaccinated, mainly with mRNA vaccines including Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, without any safety concerns being raised.

Based on this data, the JCVI advises that it’s preferable for pregnant women in the UK to be offered the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccines, where available.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-issues-new-advice-on-covid-19-vaccination-for-pregnant-women) for further information.

**REMINDER- Over-45s now able to book their COVID-19 vaccination**

Everybody in cohorts 1 to 9 has been offered a vaccine, with people aged 45 to 49 now invited to book their appointments. Use this service to book a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination or manage your appointments.

**Who can use this service?**

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

* you are aged 45 or over
* you are at [high risk from coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/who-is-at-high-risk-from-coronavirus-clinically-extremely-vulnerable/) (clinically extremely vulnerable)
* you have a condition that puts you at higher risk (clinically vulnerable)
* you have a learning disability
* you get a Carer's Allowance, get support following an assessment by your

local authority or your GP record shows you are a carer

If you are eligible to use this service but cannot get an appointment, speak to your GP surgery. Please [click here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/who-can-get-the-vaccine/) to find out more about who is eligible to have a Coronavirus vaccination.

**REMINDER- Order your free COVID-19 rapid lateral flow tests**

You can use this service to order free packs of rapid lateral flow tests to be sent to your home in England. A pack of tests contains 7 tests. You can order one pack per household each day.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests?fbclid=IwAR2Gz7M-EdRU2suvvtphFEvdKcWW-kU5d8kVWHXYmKE1-TIXAS2_7hYp_yE) to order your rapid lateral flow tests.

**NHS COVID-19 application (app)**

**Individuals must check in to be alerted of potential exposure**

In line with new regulations, when a group enters a hospitality venue, *every individual* must check ineither by scanning the official NHS QR code poster with the NHS COVID-19 app, or by providing their contact details. Previously, only the lead member of the group needed to provide contact details to check in.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/twice-weekly-rapid-testing-to-be-available-to-everyone-in-england) for more information.

**Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**

**Legionella risks during the Coronavirus pandemic**

When buildings reopen after lockdown, it is essential that water systems are not put back into use without considering the risks of Legionnaires’ disease. There is an increased risk of waterborne pathogens such as Legionella bacteria being present as a consequence of the conditions that lockdown may have created. As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, there is the potential for an increased number of people to be susceptible to Legionnaires’ disease due to a compromised respiratory system during or after infection with COVID-19.

Employers, the self-employed and people in control of premises, such as landlords, have a duty to protect people by identifying and controlling risks associated with legionella.

If your building was closed or has reduced occupancy during the Coronavirus pandemic, water system stagnation can occur due to lack of use, increasing the risks of Legionnaires' disease.

You should review your [risk assessment](https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/what-you-must-do.htm) and manage the legionella risks when you:

* reinstate a water system or start using it again
* restart some types of [air conditioning units](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm#air-conditioning)

If the water system is still used regularly, maintain the appropriate measures to prevent legionella growth. You can find out what Legionnaires' disease is, where it comes from, how people get it and symptoms and treatment by reading the HSE guidance [What is Legionnaires' disease?](https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/what-is.htm).

To find out more information please [click here.](https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/legionella-risks-during-coronavirus-outbreak.htm)

**Enjoy the great outdoors responsibly**

Now that restrictions are easing, it’s important to keep following the rules while still enjoying the new freedoms – and the current sunny weather.

You can now in meet in groups of up to six people – or two households – out in the open, including private gardens.

Please keep travel to a minimum, avoid unnecessary journeys and try to combine trips if that’s possible. If you need to travel, walk or cycle where possible, and plan ahead to avoid busy times and routes if you use public transport. This will allow you to practise social distancing while you travel. If you need to use public transport, you should follow the safer [travel guidance.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#public-transport)

Before setting off, do check if facilities are open to visitors – for example, car parks and toilets. Do not park on verges or block gates as this restricts access for other vehicles. When in the countryside, please follow the [Countryside Code](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code).

More detailed information and guidance can be found [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-on-accessing-green-spaces-safely).

**MS Awareness Week 2021**

MS Awareness Week 2021 runs from 19-25 April. It's a chance to raise awareness of multiple sclerosis, and spread the word. #LetsTalkMS.

MS can be tough, and for many people talking about it can be challenging. Whether you’re opening up to a friend after being newly diagnosed, or finding the right words to describe symptoms to an employer. Sometimes it feels easier not to say anything at all.

That’s why this MS Awareness Week The MS Society is saying #LetsTalkMS.

Help break the silence around MS…

Choosing when you talk about MS is different person to person. And factors like your culture, age, where you live or attitudes from friends and colleagues can all play a part. What was it like for you?

[Click here](https://www.mssociety.org.uk/get-involved/ms-awareness-week) to discover the tools to feel confident about speaking up and to read stories of how others found their voice.

**Latest Vaccination data for Somerset**

You can check Somerset’s vaccination data on the Coronavirus dashboard. The information provided by the NHS will be added every Friday. Please [click here](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/covid-19-dashboard/) to view the latest figures relating to doses that have been administered in Somerset.

The dashboard provides an overview of Coronavirus cases, a map, the R number and more detailed district-level information.

**REMINDER - Please don’t drop your guard once vaccinated**

While there are many things that we are still discovering about COVID-19, one thing that we know for certain is that it can be destroyed with simple soap and hot water. That’s the reason that the ‘hands’ part of the ‘Hands, Face, Space and Fresh Air’ message is such an important part of our ‘toolkit’ for tackling the virus and preventing its spread. The golden rules are: wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water; wear a face covering when required and keeping a social distance of at least two metres.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2021/01/29/please-dont-drop-your-guard-once-vaccinated/) for more information.

**The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline**

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

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

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

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

If you would like to find out more about the Corona helpers, offer assistance, or need support please visit [www.corona-helpers.co.uk](http://www.corona-helpers.co.uk)

**Need to seek help during these tough times?**

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 in these tough times:

* Samaritans - 116 123
* CALM - 0800 58 58 58
* ChildLine - 0800 1111
* Anxiety UK - 03444 775 774
* Mind - 0300 123 3393
* National Domestic Abuse helpline - 0808 2000 247

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

**Links to the most up to date COVID-19 guidance can be found here**

[Somerset COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan Dashboard](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/#latest)

<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**. **When are the remaining students returning to university?**

**A.** The Government has confirmed that all university students who have not yet returned to campus and in-person teaching will be able to do so from **17 May 2021**. The timing aligns with step three of the Government’s roadmap, where restrictions on social contact and indoor mixing will be further eased.

Progression to step three of the roadmap will be dependent on a review of the latest data and the impact of step two on the four key tests.

When the students return, all students and staff are encouraged to take three supervised tests (three to five days apart) at an asymptomatic testing site on campus, where this is available. Students will also have access to home testing kits throughout the summer term through both the government’s offer of free rapid lateral flow devices tests twice a week and through the ‘University Collect’ service. Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/remaining-university-students-to-return-to-campus-from-step-3-of-the-roadmap-no-earlier-than-17-may) for further information.

**Q. Can I book my driving test now?**

**A.** You can [book your driving test](https://www.gov.uk/book-driving-test) online. When you arrange your test, you’ll need to say if there’s a [good reason you cannot wear a face covering](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-driving-tests-and-theory-tests#wearing-a-face-covering) when you take your test. You might not be able to take a test at your preferred test centre. Before you attend your driving test, it’s best to take a rapid lateral flow test if you do not have COVID-19 symptoms. You can read more about taking a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test before your driving test in England [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/take-a-covid-19-rapid-lateral-flow-test-before-your-driving-test-england).

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**National Stalking Awareness Week April 19 – 23 2021**

The 19 April marked the first day of National Stalking Awareness Week – which, this year, will be dedicated towards ‘unmasking stalking’. Throughout the week A&SP will be supporting partners to highlight the impact COVID-19 has had on victims of stalking and harassment, while also looking at the changes in stalker behaviour since the start of the pandemic.

In 2020, stalking and harassment accounted for 11.2% of recorded crimes. By working with partners A&SP are able to gain a better understanding of this type of crime, which ultimately will help the police tackle the issue. The life-changing impact stalking and harassment can have on victims has been recognised and the police are committed to putting an end to it. [#NSAW2021](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/nsaw2021?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU5PTkv0jPnnW6lIMzn14SMR4VaYGchdsHRzuPoDeTPPn5IPrDu2mB5sKD2QOl-rArxqFi32wB2BnndceQhN_IRnKMgN5Frpi93EtOjd8Xg3mA4wzTEfjY8QAYyM0GMKRx3_wnQ1X_NRuz-UtKIeZy-8rBUx5vKOEitp9t950e9Eg&__tn__=*NK-R)

For more information visit: [https://www.suzylamplugh.org/](https://www.suzylamplugh.org/?fbclid=IwAR0Qc7pWEe1dUGSLgwFVACNkNXq2HHjCMMSQlqRZ3OnoXp_IQHnowI_hjmA)

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

**Bristol violent disorder – Further Appeal for Information**

Helicopter footage and CCTV of the violent disorder which took place in Bristol on 21 March is being released alongside 18 more images of people detectives want to identify.

The images – which have been added to the A&SP [online gallery](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/images-released-as-part-of-investigation-into-bristol-disorder/) – are the fourth set to be released to the public. They include 14 new images and four alternative images of people who have already featured in the online gallery.

Forty-four officers were assaulted during the disorder – 39 of which sustained injuries as a result. One other officer was also injured but not as a result of an assault. Multiple police vehicles were also damaged, including two police vans which were set on fire, and the glass exterior of the Bridewell Police Station was smashed.

To read the full press statement and view the video footage please [click here](mailto:www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2021/04/bristol-violent-disorder-inquiry-helicopter-footage-cctv-and-new-images-released/).

**A&SP Elections for Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)**

The election for the next PCC for Avon and Somerset takes place on **6 May 2021.** The role of the PCCs is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. They are responsible for the totality of policing. PCCs aim to cut crime and deliver an effective and efficient police service within their force area.

To find out more about the election and the prospective candidates please [click here](https://aspccelections.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR1bqGeOJ_gVsaGKq7BOU-4rmLovVzo3LAnU2nNW4FOaMlT0PrNdcCb4Igw).

**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.](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.

**#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air**

***Attachments:***

*A38 Junction Improvement works in Taunton Word document*

*SRA Detailed PDF about Enhanced Programme 2021-22*

*SRA Enhanced Programme 2021-22 press release summary*