

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 119 Weeks ending 04/09/2022**

**SWT Council’s priority strategic themes and outcomes**

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

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

[Click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/corporate-strategy/) to view SWT’s expected outcomes.

**Key Messages this week**

1. **SWT launches new fund for low-income households**

This week, SWT launched a short-term Hardship Fund for low-income families struggling to afford household essentials.

This means-tested benefit fund will be administered by [Citizens’ Advice Taunton](https://citizensadvicetaunton.org.uk/) and [West Somerset Advice](https://www.westsomersetadvice.org.uk/) to provide financial assistance of up to £200 to eligible households across the district.

This fund is not available for emergency food, fuel or energy payments, as this support is available via foodbanks and Central Government support.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-launches-new-fund-for-low-income-households/) to read the full press release.

1. **Democracy and Governance**

**Committee Meetings**

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all SWT [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.

* **SWT Full Council – Tuesday 6 September,** in the JMR at 6.15pm. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=325&MId=3038).
* **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 7 September,** in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 5 September. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website.](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=454&MId=3068)
* **SWT Audit and Governance Committee – Monday 12 September,** in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 8 September. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=455&MId=3030).
* **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 15 September,** in the JMR at 1.00pm. Deadline for public comments or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 13 September.

Meetings will still all be live streamed so that members of the public can watch at home. To watch the live stream when the meeting commences, please visit the SWT website by [clicking here](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.

Please see the dateslisted above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements. Information on speaking at public meetings is available on the SWT [website](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/speaking-at-a-council-meeting/).

1. **SWT to host cost of living crisis support event**

SWT Council’s [Community Employment Hubs](https://www.facebook.com/communityemploymenthubs) service is holding a cost of living crisis support event in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The event will be held between **10am and 2pm on Wednesday, 14 September,** at the [Creative Innovation Centre](https://www.creativeinnovationcentre.co.uk/), Memorial Hall, Taunton, TA1 3PF.

Anyone concerned about the cost-of-living crisis is welcome to attend this one-stop-shop for comprehensive support and advice, and to ask face-to-face questions from a range of organisations that will be present.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-to-host-cost-of-living-crisis-support-event/) to read the full press release.

1. **Emergency Services Day 2022**

SWT council marked national Emergency Services Day with a flag-raising ceremony at Deane House on Friday 2 September. The ceremony was led by the Mayor’s Chaplain, Rev James Clapham with the Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Sue Lees.

National Emergency Services Day takes place on 9 September every year. Two minutes silence is held at 9am (the 9th hour of the 9th day of the 9th month) to remember emergency services personnel who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Raising the 999 Flag, which will also be flown at [West Somerset House](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/contact-us/council-offices/west-somerset-house/) in Williton, provides an opportunity to acknowledge the high-risk work undertaken by emergency services personnel, as well as educating the public and promoting volunteering opportunities.

Further information about Emergency Services Day and the 999 Cenotaph can be found by visiting [999Day.org.uk](https://www.999day.org.uk/) and [999cenotaph.org.uk](https://www.999cenotaph.org.uk/).

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-to-mark-emergency-services-day-2022/) to read the full press release.

1. **District Councils approve joint ecological vision**

SWT has been working in partnership with Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) to produce a joint strategy to reverse the deterioration of habitats and biodiversity across the two districts.

The *Ecological Emergency Vision and Action Plan (EEVAP)*, which set out the Councils' ambitions to deliver ecological enhancement and protection through a framework of key actions and projects, has now been jointly approved.

The *Vision* and *Action Plan* documents can be viewed by visiting either SWT's [Ecological emergency vision and action plan](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/ecological-emergency-vision-and-action-plan/) or SDC's [Ecological Emergency](https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/article/6776/Ecological-Emergency) webpages.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/district-councils-approve-joint-ecological-vision/) to read the full press release.

1. **Have your say on Minehead’s e-scooter trial**

SWT is seeking the views of residents, businesses and visitors to Minehead in response to the town’s e-scooter trial.

Minehead’s e-scooter scheme was introduced in June 2021 and is the second of two trials launched by the Council as part of its commitment towards achieving carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030.

Both schemes are managed by the Council’s e-scooter operator [Zipp Mobility](https://www.zippmobility.com/) and are approved by the [Department for Transport (DfT)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport).

In June 2022, the [DfT](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport) announced an extension of all trials until 31 May 2024 to enable the collection of further data with regards to safety, and to establish best practice for shared micro mobility services.

Consequently, SWT is encouraging both users and non-users specific to Minehead’s trial to have their say.

Any residents, businesses, and visitors to Minehead are welcome to complete the survey using the following link:

<https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/fd6608b5/>

The survey will stay open until **30 September** and the information obtained will help inform SWT and [Zipp Mobility](https://www.zippmobility.com/) on how the scheme can be enhanced.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/have-your-say-on-minehead-s-e-scooter-trial/) to read the full press release.

1. **Public Notice – Amenity Land known as Wellington Square, Minehead**

**Local Government Act 1972 Section 123(2A)**
**Amenity land known as: Wellington Square, Minehead**

Notice is hereby given that Somerset West and Taunton Council (the Council) intends to dispose by way of Freehold Transfer the following land situated at Wellington Square, Minehead (Land Registry Title Number ST289547) which forms part of the public open spaces held by the Council:

All the land held by the Council in Land Registry Title Number ST289547 known as Wellington Square, Minehead.

The Freehold Transfer will be granted to Minehead Town Council.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/amenity-land-known-as-wellington-square-minehead/) to read the full public notice.

1. **Somerset West Lottery autumn 2022 bolt-on prize**

The Somerset West Lottery is now running the autumn 2022 bolt-on prize draw.

Anyone purchasing one or more tickets between Monday, 5 September and Saturday, 29 October, will automatically be in with a chance of winning a £1,000 voucher to spend at [The Bike Factory](https://www.thebikefactory.co.uk/), courtesy of external lottery management company [Gatherwell](https://gatherwell.co.uk/).

Players do not have to do anything differently as their normal weekly ticket(s) will automatically be entered into this draw.

All tickets bought during this timeframe will automatically be entered into 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 Council.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/somerset-west-lottery-autumn-2022-bolt-on-prize/) to read the full press release.

1. **Taunton Swimming Pool closure**

[Taunton swimming pool](https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/taunton-pool/) will be closed until Friday 9 September for essential maintenance.

Should users wish to swim during this time, they are welcome to use the [Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa.](https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/blackbrook-leisure-centre-spa/)

The pool is due to re-open on Saturday 10 September.

1. **Royal Mail – Industrial action**

Royal Mail will be taking strike action on **Thursday 8 and Friday 9 September.**

What this means for SWT and our customers:

* Incoming mail – there will be no deliveries during these dates.
* Outgoing mail – there will be no collections during these dates.  The local Sorting Office will be closed.  SWT is unable to dispatch business mail via a Royal Mail post box.  Outgoing mail will be delayed.

Significant disruption should be expected, even once strike action has finished.

The advice from Royal Mail is to post your items as early as possible in advance of the strike dates.  For more information regarding the Industrial Action please visit [Royal Mail strike updates | Royal Mail Group Ltd](https://www.royalmail.com/latest-news).

1. **Reminder – Funding available for electric vehicle charge points**

SWT has launched a new round of grant funding to support the installation of electric vehicle charge points (EVCPs) across the district.

Parish and town councils are being invited to apply for grants of up to £1,500 in match funding for installation of the charge points.

Applications from parish and town councils, and community centres, are welcome **before the 30 September 2022**.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/funding-available-for-electric-vehicle-charge-points/) to read the full press release.

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

**More accolades for Recycle More**

SWP’s award-winning Recycle More service has been shortlisted for another major honour.

After landing the LGC environmental services award in July, it’s now in the running for the Best Communications Campaign of the Year title at the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) awards in October.

LARAC is a leading voice for local authorities on recycling and waste, so the shortlisting is more welcome recognition for the hard work of the entire SWP team.

The expanded recycling collections were introduced between October 2020 and July 2022 and amount to the biggest change to recycling in the county for more than a decade.

It was successfully delivered - in tandem with collection contractor, SUEZ - amid all the pressures of the pandemic and the national driver shortage that followed.

It is exceeding its financial and environmental benefits, meaning less rubbish in Somerset’s bins and more recycling in the county’s boxes and new Bright Blue Bags.

Fingers crossed for October.

**New Somerset Council**

**Latest news**

**Local Community Network (LCN) Consultation**

The consultation on LCN boundaries goes live from the 5 of September and will run for 6 weeks (17 October). In-person and online engagement events are planned, and these will be confirmed shortly by communications coming from the programme.

**Specialists appointed to take Somerset arts and culture strategy forward**

Specialist partners have been appointed to help develop a five-year cultural strategy for the new Somerset Council that comes into being in April 2023.

Arts Council England, in partnership with Somerset’s five councils – Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset district councils, plus Somerset County Council – have committed to invest in developing the strategy and have procured the services of cultural consultants, The Fifth Sector.

Since its foundation in 2011, [The Fifth Sector](https://www.thefifthsector.co.uk/) has delivered more than 100 strategic and cultural projects, including cultural strategies and creative investment frameworks for Derby, Liverpool, Manchester, Rushmoor, South Yorkshire and Tees Valley.

Please [click here](https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/specialists-appointed-to-take-somerset-arts-and-culture-strategy-forward/) to read the full press release.

**Reminder - Consultation on council tax support scheme launched**

A consultation on council tax support for the new unitary Somerset Council was launched on the 25 July 2022.

This is the first major policy consultation for the new council, and it proposes that the lowest income households across Somerset get 100% council tax relief.

The consultation runs until 19 September and proposes a simplified approach that will be easier to administer.

The [consultation is now available](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SomersetCTRLIVE/).

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/consultation-on-council-tax-support-scheme-launched/) to read the full press release.

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

**Somerset County Council (SCC)**

**SCC Highway Maintenance Update**

More good weather this week has meant that the gangs have been able to make good progress with safety and scheduled works. SCC Highways have still not had the feared issues of roads melting in the heat and the extreme temperatures are probably unlikely to return now, but the gangs are still on standby with the gritter lorries to dust any affected areas. If you spot any areas that need attention, please let the tea, know on the numbers/links below.

The Toneway at Creech Castle in Taunton is now fully open, and the ribbon was cut to officially open the junction enhancements by The Leader of the County Council Bill Revans and The Transport Lead Member Mike Rigby.

The lack of rain is still helping the team in one regard – the hedges and verges stop growing! The gangs from SWT areas will be helping our neighbouring Somerset districts this week covering for leave/sickness and will return for any urgent works arising.

Reported defects are still low recently which has enabled the gangs to push the planned works forward in the better weather, however, if you spot any issues on the roads this week please don’t hesitate to report it to SCC on [www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/.](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.somerset.gov.uk%2Froads-and-transport%2Freport-a-problem-on-the-road%2F&data=05%7C01%7CKBridgwater%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cd61da1cdb9a44cb9588d08da7c419bec%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637958918474690610%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ZwOZVJjRrldn9GajUWJR5Po7rSJKXpEnNDks1voefYw%3D&reserved=0)or call **0300 123 2224**

This week SCC Highways have successfully completed 126 Safety Defect repairs in SWT (84 in Taunton and 42 in West Somerset).

The bird nesting season has now come to an end so we can expect to see the farmers and other hedge owners begin to cut their roadside hedges.

The new gates for deployment in case of road closure at Cleeve Hill, Watchet has been constructed and will be installed shortly – update will follow.

The surface dressing program is now completed for this Financial Year.

**Works for week commencing 5 September 2022 are: -**

* **New works:** installation of new cattle grid at **Staple Plain, West Quantoxhead** (Road closure with pedestrian access via the bridleway. Emergency vehicle access will be maintained)
* **New works:** resurfacing of urban footway at **Crufts Meadow/Tristram Drive/Arundells Way Creech St Michael, Taunton** (commencing Monday 5 Sept for 5 days)
* **Completed:** drainage works at **Weacombe Lane, Bicknoller** (Carriageway open – just some minor lining works to complete)
* **Completed**: installation of 5 new cattle grid gates on **Exmoor**
* **Completed:** Drainage works at **Chilcombe Lane, Bicknoller**
* **Completed:** Drainage works at **Peacehay Lane, Sampford Arundel** (10-day temporary road closure, commenced Monday 27June)
* **Completed**: Replacing post and rail fencing **Cothelstone Hill, Bishops Lydeard**
* **Completed:** Resurfacing works at **Cher and Quirke Street, Minehead**
* **Completed:** Verge Works (concrete channel) at **Blackwater Lane, Wiveliscombe**
* **Completed:** Drainage works at **Holywell Lake, Wellington**
* **Completed:** Footway works at **Grange Drive Taunton**
* **Completed:** Works at **Chip Lane and Outer Circle Taunton**
* **Completed:** Footway resurfacing in at **Bradford on Tone Rd, Taunton**
* **Completed:** Carriageway patching at **A396 Bridgetown**

For information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit [www.travelsomerset.co.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk) or follow [@TravelSomerset](https://twitter.com/search?q=%40TravelSomerset&src=recent_search_click) on Twitter.

**Reporting a problem on the road**

Alerting SCC to potholes or a host of other problems on the road is now easier and quicker – and you can track its progress after you’ve reported it.

Gone is the need to make phone calls or send emails - thanks to a new upgraded online system with an improved interactive map, members of the public can report a problem 24/7 and the Highways team will get on the case. From potholes, blocked drains and broken manhole covers, to overgrown vegetation, damaged pavements or cycle paths, faulty traffic lights or missing markings - they can all be reported in just minutes from a smartphone, tablet or computer.

The full range and how to report is available here  [www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/.](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/)

The new development means that if you’re reporting a fault, you can now track its progress. If it’s safe to pull over, all you need to do is take a quick picture of the fault, then visit the Report It site on your phone, answer a few simple questions and upload your picture. You’ll be sent a link which enables you to track its progress.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2021/12/13/reporting-a-problem-on-the-road-is-now-a-hole-lot-easier/) to read the full press release.

**Revamped £8.3m Toneway junction now operational**

Thursday 1 September saw the re-opening of Bridgwater Road in Taunton as the new Creech Castle/Toneway junction became operational.

The multi-million-pound revamp of this crucial intersection is being delivered on time and on budget and will see improved traffic flow through the County Town’s main transport artery as well as vastly improved access for cyclists and pedestrians.

Work on the Toneway/Creech Castle junction project includes additional lanes on the approach to the junction, as well as new crossings for those on foot and bike.

A key feature of the project involved widening of the Bathpool Bridge on the A38 Bridgwater Road, which has been closed since August 2021 to enable the work to be undertaken. This is to increase the capacity at the junction because of local development and growth and widen cycling and pedestrian facilities.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/09/01/revamped-8-3m-toneway-junction-now-operational/) to read the full press release.

**Essential safety features to be improved on cliff-top road**

Work to update safety measures on a spectacular coastal road near Watchet begins this month with the installation of new safety gates and advanced signage.

The scheme on the B3191 Cleeve Hill Road is based on flood gates installed on the Somerset Levels and will prevent access either side of the narrowest section of the road in the event of an alarm being triggered which warns of possible movement of the cliff. The road forms part of the coastal footpath and there will also be a signed diversion route for footpath users incorporated into the scheme.

Work commences on Monday 5 September and is expected to last for 5 days. During the works the road will be closed between 8.00am to 5.00 pm daily but will be open at all other times

Currently the monitoring system detects movement of the cliff and sends out messages to activate signage and teams carry out a closure. Unfortunately, this signage is often moved by drivers for vehicles to pass through which can be extremely dangerous.

The new system will see large gates placed across the road and locked into position when alarms are triggered. In addition, there will also be two advanced signs on the Blue Anchor side to warn oncoming traffic of the closure and one advanced sign on the Watchet side. Site investigations will then be carried out and the road reopened as quickly as possible.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/08/18/new-blue-anchor-to-watchet-coast-path-route-agreed/) to read the full press release.

**Temporary Road Closures**

**Belvedere Road, Taunton**

SCC in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along;

Belvedere Road - from the junction with Beaufort Road, south eastwards for a total distance of 25 metres. This Order will enable BT Openreach to carry out poling works.

**The works are expected to commence on 5 September 2022 and last until 9 September 2022 between the hours of 9:30am - 3:30pm for a total of 5 days.**

Please [click here](https://one.network/?tm=129078600) to view the map and alternative routes. The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services is permitted on this occasion.

**Sampford Moor Road, Wellington**

SCC in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along;

Sampford Moor Road - from the junction with Brimstone Lane, north eastwards for a total distance of 497 metres. This Order will enable Wessex Water to carry out works to renew stop tap.

**The works are expected to commence on 7 September 2022 and last until September 2022 between the hours of midnight until 11:59pm for a total of 3 days.**

Please [click here](https://one.network/?tm=128720903) to view the map and alternative routes. The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services **is not permitted** on this occasion.

**Priory Avenue Taunton**

SCC in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along;

Priory Avenue - from the junction with St Augustine Street, westwards for a distance of 60 metres. This Order will enable Wessex Water to carry out new connection standard works.

**The works are expected to commence on 8 September 2022 and last until 9 September 2022 between the hours of 6.00pm – 6.00am for a total of 1 night.**

Please [click here](https://one.network/?tm=129184744) to view the map and alternative routes. The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services **is not permitted** on this occasion.

**North End, Creech St Michael**

SCC in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an [Order](https://api-gb.one.network/downloads/tm/1111/03-notice-2_128846920_3470958_40cab68516.pdf) prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along;

North End - from outside no 29 North End to outside no 1 North End for a total distance of 42 metres. This Order will enable Jurassic Fibre to carry out works to dig down on the grass verge and install a JFL pole

**The works are expected to commence on 10 September 2022 and last until 11 September 2022 between the hours of 8:00am - 5:00pm for a total of 2 days.**

Please [click here](https://one.network/?tm=128846920) to view the map and alternative routes. The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Service vehicles through the site is permitted on this occasion.

**Think Travel Can Help**

A one-stop travel information website has been launched by Somerset County Council to support more local people to access public and community transport.

If you don’t own a car - or want to leave it at home and travel more sustainably, Think Travel can help you with your transport options. Whether it’s getting to the doctors, shops, travelling to work, college, or school, or just into town to meet friends or family, the new travel planner shows you what’s available. It covers public transport, community transport, the Slinky demand responsive transport service and car sharing.

To start your search, all you need to do is enter your journey start point and destination in the planner and Think Travel will find the available options for you.

As well as information on train and bus services, there’s also a dedicated car sharing notice board you can sign up to, where offers or requests for car sharing journeys can be posted.

The aim is to grow this facility and encourage local car sharing networks to evolve.

You can check out “Think Travel” here: <https://somerset.thinktravel.info>.

**Discounted fare set to be introduced on Park and Ride**

A new £1 bus fare becomes effective on Taunton’s Park and Ride service from the beginning of September to coincide with the expected reopening of the Toneway junction.

The service will cost just £1 for a single and £2 for a return from Monday 5 September in line with a new fare structure to be introduced for the whole of Taunton later this year as part of SCC’s Bus Service Improvement Plan. Children (5-16) will be able to travel half price and concessionary bus pass holders can travel free after 9.30am weekdays and all day on Saturday.

The Council waived fares for the service while the £8.3 million Toneway Creech Castle works were in progress, starting from August 2021, to help cut congestion by encouraging more people to use the service. In the last year, at their peak, numbers using it have increased nearly fivefold from around 2,323 a week in July 2021 to 11,381 a week in July 2022.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/08/23/discounted-fare-set-to-be-introduced-on-park-and-ride/) to read the full press release.

**New Blue Anchor to Watchet coast path route agreed**

SCC in partnership with local landowners and managers, have agreed a new route for the England Coast Path between Watchet and Blue Anchor.

This section of the trail has been closed since a cliff fall in 2020 resulted in a section of the path close to Warren Farm being lost to the sea, as well as smaller sections on the trail showing signs of coastal instability.

After the initial temporary closure of the path SCC assessed the area to establish the potential for future falls and began discussions to find a new, safer route in case of further erosion.

With the new route agreed, work will be starting soon to clear the route and prepare the surface, and add fingerposts, waymarks and signage to mark the trail. Once the works are complete, it is hoped the England Coast Path can be re-opened later this year.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/08/18/new-blue-anchor-to-watchet-coast-path-route-agreed/) to read the full press release.

**Somerset Prepared Partnership**

**Nominations open for Somerset’s Community Resilience Award**

Do you know someone who has helped their community be prepared for emergencies?

A new award has been launched to celebrate people or groups that have made their communities more resilient. The winner will be announced at the 2022 Somerset Community Resilience Day on **October 13, at West Monkton Village Hall.**

Nominations are invited from Somerset residents, for groups or individuals that have made a difference in helping their community: for example, local flood groups, parish or town councillors who can be counted on to think ahead, or someone who has helped to make sure vulnerable people can get help in an emergency.

The event will run from 10am - 4pm, with presentations in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. Participants can come for the whole or part of the day, with registration on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/somerset-prepared-community-resilience-day-tickets-365901058917).

To find out more or nominate someone for the Somerset Community Resilience Award, see the Somerset Prepared website <http://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/> or get in touch at info@somersetprepared.org.uk.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/08/10/nominations-open-for-somersets-community-resilience-award/) to read the full press release.

**Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP)**

**New Exmoor Business Guides launched**

A suite of new guides to ‘***Doing Business on Exmoor***’ have been launched with the support of the Community Renewal Fund.

The three-part interactive toolkit aims to help guide local businesses operating within and around the National Park. They provide practical ideas and information, bringing together a range of Exmoor specific resources in one place to help businesses to make the most of the opportunities afforded by the area.

Please [click here](https://myemail.constantcontact.com/News-from-Exmoor-National-Park--New-Exmoor-business-guides-launched.html?soid=1102765974837&aid=SrxpMz7GWrU) to read the full press release.

**Exmoor Dark Skies Festival 13 – 30 October**

Exmoor’s dark skies are some of the best in the UK. They have minimal light pollution and on a cloudless night you can see literally thousands of stars and astronomical sights such as the Milky Way with the naked eye. In 2011 Exmoor was designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve by the International Dark Sky Association.

Booking for all events of the popular Exmoor Dark Skies Festival is now open. Returning for its sixth year, the late October festival, sponsored by SBA (Somerset Business Agency) CIC, is set to be the biggest ever with over fifty events taking place all over the National Park.

The programme of events has been released online at [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/stargazing](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001nvMLu2C_6sOZdMRyj1vHxqV_Gkc4P6Qx0cajjtsiJlR3ULHnClFdsRWUUDxLOO515tmgfBaXf28ajPfnZT1DDFxur8209lal3g7-G7JQwpX-ugMIizroNZHwOWntNgZ24OqGA03c_QivfYgTiUP0VuiOOI9eQCmC87V36wVo5qGmNuQK5If9kg==&c=H3lQnu26ardktVaq0Juo0UODyi6kEuF-AsPgePWR4hVGEEdZVrZ1fQ==&ch=jcKips6VpNOAxEAvnh9JE3rdMV_ky-t1Gts-G_MfJSOdgWIJCx7Ihw==).

As well as details online ([www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/darkskiesfestival](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/darkskiesfestival) ) a free printed programme with details of all events is now available from National Park Centres at Lynmouth, Dunster and Dulverton which are open 7 days a week.

Planetarium sessions inside a huge inflatable dome are returning to the festival line-up after a 2- year break. The sessions can inspire all ages with a 360-degree immersive space experience but particularly capture the imagination of children.

Please [click here](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/press-room/press-room/news-2022/dark-skies-festival-2022-programme-announced) to read the full press release.

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

**Help DSFRS to recruit on-call firefighters**

Most fire stations are crewed by on-call firefighters. On-call firefighters do the same emergency work as wholetime firefighters, but they can also have other jobs too.

DSFRS urgently need to recruit more on-call firefighters in certain places across Devon and Somerset as they sometimes do not have enough to crew a fire engine in that town.

It can be difficult as people must be within five minutes of the fire station when they are on-duty. These days people often need to work in a different place to where they live or have other commitments on their time.

DSFRS has done a lot to make the role more attractive for people, such as introducing a new pay scheme which means firefighters get paid for being available rather than just when they attend an incident.

They would be really grateful if you could take a few minutes to fill out [this survey](https://online1.snapsurveys.com/40wqw2) so that they can better understand peoples' perceptions of the on-call firefighter role.

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

**Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

**Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)**

**Somerset Cost of Living Crisis Appeal Launched**

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) has launched their Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal with an urgent call for donations which will help fund local charities helping local people living in poverty through the cost-of-living crisis.

With inflation at a 40-year high and energy bills rocketing, thousands of Somerset households are facing incredibly tough times ahead. The Somerset Cost-of-Living Fund, which will open for applications from local charities soon, will provide rapid support to local charities and community organisations across the county of Somerset, many of whom are already experiencing record numbers of people seeking help.

SCF is pleased to announce that the appeal has already been boosted with an initial donation of £50,000 from Somerset County Council.

The charity is now inviting local people, businesses and organisations who can and wish to help, to donate to the Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal today to help SCF provide funding to vital local charities supporting local people in poverty. Visit: [www.somersetcf.org.uk/costofliving](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/costofliving) or call 01749 344949.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/somerset-cost-of-living-crisis-appeal-launched) to read the full press release.

**Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP)**

**World Suicide Prevention Day – Walk for Life**

**Saturday 10 September – 10.00am**

Join SASP on World Suicide Prevention Day in a [Walk for a Life](https://walkforalife.org.uk/) event - to remember those we have lost, raise awareness and encourage and empower people in Somerset to take action to prevent suicide.

Location: Stragglers Coffee House at the Somerset County Cricket Ground in St. James Street, Taunton TA1 1JT, following a wheelchair/pushchair friendly loop around Taunton, ending back at the Cricket Ground.

Free parking is available at the venue and there will be accessible toilets. There will also be various activities and talks during the day and refreshments will be available to purchase.

SASP will also be launching the new Orange Button Community Scheme on this day, so come along to find out how you can reduce the stigma around suicide and help in the drive to prevent all suicides in Somerset.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/08/24/walk-for-a-life-this-suicide-prevention-day/) to read the full press release.

**Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

**September’s Talking Café Facebook Live Events**

Watch LIVE every Wednesday at 1.00pm and ask questions in the comments for instant answers.

**7 September** [Age UK Somerset](https://www.facebook.com/AgeUKSomerset)

 Exercise classes and services available in Somerset.

**14 September** Somerset Micro Enterprise Support

 Helping people to become self-employed Micro-Providers.

**21 September** [Somerset Waste Partnership](https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWaste/)

 Somerset Recycling Week – Get involved.

**28 September** [Somerset Carers](https://www.facebook.com/somersetcarers/)

What to expect from going to a Carers Group and how to find them in Somerset.

Don't forget you can search for previous live recordings by subject here: [https://somersetagents.org/talking-cafes-live](https://somersetagents.org/talking-cafes-live?fbclid=IwAR1gVyNP2-gu1TrBFwDAhAc0Ud_j1hDWYzd0EiRFWrmSXAs9PFETBZFYTg8) - just select the topic that interests you from the drop-down menu and all relevant Talking Cafe recordings will be available!

**Minehead and Coast Development Trust**

**Minehead Bay Festival – Saturday 3 September**

Minehead Bay Festival will be celebrating Minehead's local art, culture and wellness scene, featuring activities for all the family from circus performances and entertainment, live music, dance performances, street artists, pro skaters, art and craft activities, sand sculpting workshops and much more.

You can expect a fun day out engaging with the local community and enjoying a great day packed with art and culture!

If you would like to volunteer please [click here](https://www.sparkachange.org.uk/o/Minehead-and-Coast-Development-Trust/opportunities/Volunteer-Marshals-for-Minehead-Bay-Festival/55909?r=3137038&fbclid=IwAR09rDHJ3atLfmM_9SoplWZA-MWnvLq4y-RkREoSDNAnyqhtTEJML3Vkb-M) for more information.

**Community Employment Hubs**

**Pathways to work**

The Employment Hubs are a free employment support service covering Taunton, West Somerset and Wellington.

The SWT Community employment hubs offer bespoke individual support towards work for **anyone** whether employed, unemployed or facing redundancy or those who wish to upskill or thinking about a career change.

A Youth Hub is operational at the Minehead EYE (Aimed at ages 16-25). Throughout COVID-19, the Hubs provided support via online and telephone and this continues in addition to the face to face (appointment) sessions. All referrals can be made via employmentsupport@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/hinkley-point-c/community-employment-hubs/) to visit the website and find out more information.

**Citizens Advice West Somerset**

**Opportunity Boost Scheme**

As part of the Somerset Recovery Fund, the Opportunity Boost Scheme project, is still open for applications.

To qualify you must be a resident in Somerset and over 16. Not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking activities via your local Job Centre, and if you are working you should have a pre-Covid salary of less than £25,000.

The purpose of the Opportunity Boost Scheme is to assist with, accessing work training or learning and or to improve the employment opportunities of applicants

The grant can cover travel, work equipment, workwear, childcare, or learning materials. Please [click here](https://www.westsomersetadvice.org.uk/?p=1380) for more information.

**Health and Welfare**

**SCC Public Health**

**Know your numbers and reduce the risk of serious illness**

SCC’s Public Health Team is encouraging Somerset residents to get their blood pressure checked for [‘Know Your Numbers’ week](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI2NjM2IiwidHRzeGVycTFtamtrY29nMGtvOGcwZ2trODRvZ2t3YzAiLCIxNTk1IiwiMWE1NjNkNmYxOGRlIixmYWxzZV0).

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The national campaign, **5 - 11 September 2022**, aims to raise awareness of high blood pressure [(hypertension)](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI2NjM2IiwidHRzeGVycTFtamtrY29nMGtvOGcwZ2trODRvZ2t3YzAiLCIxNTk1IiwiOTdjMjk1NDhiMmE3IixmYWxzZV0), encouraging all UK adults to check their blood pressure at home over a week. In Somerset it is estimated that there are about 50,000 people with hypertension who do not know they have it.

The dangers of high blood pressure can be easily mitigated with the right medications and lifestyle changes. The monitors can also be used by people who know they have diagnosed hypertension to check if their lifestyle changes and treatments are keeping their blood pressure in the normal range and provide an update for their GP.

The Public Health Team have worked with the library service in Somerset to put in place a convenient, easy and **free** to access service – providing blood pressure monitoring kits that can be loaned from libraries across the county. The kits can be loaned for a fortnight allowing people to check their blood pressure, ‘at rest’, in their own home.

Anyone who then discovers that they do have high blood pressure can take their results to their GP or other appropriate health professional, who can advise on the best intervention.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/08/22/knowing-your-numbers-can-reduce-the-risk-of-serious-illness/) to read the full press release.

**Spreading hope on World Suicide Prevention Day**

**In preparation for this year’s World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September, SCC’s Public Health team are asking members of the public to share quotes, lyrics or poems that have helped them to get through difficult times in their lives.**

Contributions will then be compiled in to a digital ‘Book of Hope’, together with signposting to local mental health services and support. The project will be unveiled at an event [‘Walk For A Life’](https://fb.me/e/1EqLXt3co)at Somerset County Cricket Ground on **Saturday 10 September**.

**New COVID-19 Dashboard**

As a result of recent changes to policy, the number of detected cases alone no longer provides an accurate or consistent indication of the prevalence of COVID-19 in our community.

As a result of this, detailed cases data such as the map and district level figures have been removed from the SCC and NHS in Somerset Dashboard. Cases are still shown on the chart; however, it now includes additional information (ONS Prevalence\*) that may give a better indication of the actual number of people with COVID. Testing data has also been added to provide further context.

The hospital admissions data also now includes mechanical ventilation bed patients who are positive as a better indicator of serious illness being treated. The OPEL level on this page provides a snapshot of how the health and care system overall is managing.

Everyone in Somerset is being asked to get up to date with the [COVID-19 vaccinations they are eligible for](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI2NjM2IiwidHRzeGVycTFtamtrY29nMGtvOGcwZ2trODRvZ2t3YzAiLCIxNTM5IiwiM2ZkNTZjNjJjZDRiIixmYWxzZV0). These remain the best form of defence against the COVID-19 and influenza viruses. It’s not too late to catch up if you or someone you know has missed boosters or even first doses for the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Vaccinations**

The Autumn Booster vaccination programme starts on the 5 September and all clinics are likely to become very busy. If you have yet to have your 1st, 2nd or initial booster, please consider getting it now.

[Bookings](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/?fbclid=IwAR02RTM42KjAhziRYQFTersQ3hMqRALX_WfdfmAg7zMCSz7k1lLQulDVSw8) can be made at a wide number of clinics across Somerset.

[Walk-in appointments](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site?fbclid=IwAR1680EqtAbeFjLUOgcsmTkETb8rHRoOQKURkaMT86viae01v_U2grjfjEA) are additionally being offered at Tower Vaccination Centre in Taunton on specific days.

[The vaccination page](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-vaccinations/) now provides more overall strategic vision of how the vaccination programme has been implemented and provides an indication of the effective level of immunity provided to our community by boosters and third doses.

The current version of the dashboard can be accessed at any time[here](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/covid-19-dashboard/).

**Living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19**

The [Government has published important advice](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI2NjM2IiwidHRzeGVycTFtamtrY29nMGtvOGcwZ2trODRvZ2t3YzAiLCIxNDE5IiwiMTA5MGQ5NzhlMTg5IixmYWxzZV0) for people with symptoms of respiratory infections, such as COVID-19; people with a positive COVID-19 test result and their contacts; and advice on safer behaviours for everyone.

There are simple things you can do in your daily life that will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, such as flu and protect those at highest risk.

Things you can choose to do are:

* Get vaccinated.
* Wear a face covering or a face mask.
* Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors.
* Stay at home if you have [symptoms](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI1MjEiLCIxbWRhbWxvZnRhbjRnb2d3ODRrZ2s0azhzOHdzd3c0YyIsIjE0MTciLCI3MDMyNWYxYzNmODEiLGZhbHNlXQ)
* Cover your coughs and sneezes
* Practise good hygiene:

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, you are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19-and-have-not-taken-a-covid-19-test) to read the guidance on what to do if you have symptoms but have not taken a test.

**Healthy Start Vouchers**

If you’re more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk.

Check if you're eligible by applying today. If you’re eligible, you’ll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. Pre-payment will be uploaded onto this card every 4 weeks. You can use your card to buy:

* plain liquid cow’s milk
* fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
* fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
* infant formula milk based on cow’s milk

You can also use your card to collect:

* Healthy Start vitamins – these support you during pregnancy and breastfeeding
* Vitamin drops for babies and young children – these are suitable from birth to 4 years old

Information on how to apply for the scheme and for anyone who wants to check if

they’re eligible to apply can be found at [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI1MjEiLCIxbWRhbWxvZnRhbjRnb2d3ODRrZ2s0azhzOHdzd3c0YyIsIjE1NDUiLCJiZmY5YzE1NWZiM2QiLGZhbHNlXQ).

**HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)**

**Childcare Choices**

As children return to school after summer holidays, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding families who may be missing out on Tax-Free Childcare to register.

Families receive up to £500 every three months (£2,000 a year) per child, or £1,000 (£4,000 a year) if their child is disabled, helping towards the cost of before and after-school clubs, childminders and nurseries, holiday clubs and other approved childcare schemes.

More than one million families in the UK are entitled to some form of government childcare support and the government is encouraging those eligible to not miss out on their entitlements.

Please [click here](https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/) find out more from the Child Care Choices website.

**Need to seek help?**

If you, or someone you know are feeling like things are too much, please know that you / they don’t have to be alone. Here are some numbers of organisations that can help:

* Samaritans - 116 123
* CALM - 0800 58 58 58
* ChildLine - 0800 1111
* Anxiety UK - 03444 775 774
* Mind - 0300 123 3393
* Somerset Domestic Abuse helpline - 0800 69 49 999

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner (PCC)**

**Knife Crime Survey**

Please find a link below to an anonymous Knife Crime survey being carried out by the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner.

Collecting wider data about knife crime can inform the work of the Violence Reduction Unit and help prevent further incidents, so the PCC is taking this opportunity to gain further insights into residents’ experiences and views on this important concern. [Please share this link with your communities.](https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/news/2022/08/pcc-invites-communities-to-take-part-in-new-knife-crime-survey/)

**Road Safety Fund**

Avon and Somerset Police funds the Road Safety Fund to help community programmes prevent injuries caused by road traffic accidents.

The Fund aims to:

* improve road safety in local communities to reduce accidents and casualty figures.
* provide better education and training for children, young people, learners and inexperienced drivers.
* reduce the economic and the personal costs of fatalities and serious injuries.

The fund is open to local community and voluntary organisations in the Avon and Somerset police force area.

Speed Indication Devices or Vehicle Activated Signs are normally funded by Somerset County Council. Find out how to [apply for a Speed Indication Device](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/apply/police-community-trust/road-safety-fund/apply-for-a-speed-indication-device/).

The Road Safety Fund does not cover funding for Community SpeedWatch. Find out how to apply for [Community SpeedWatch Scheme funding.](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/services/watch-community-schemes/community-speedwatch/)

Grants of up to £5,000 are available.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/apply/police-community-trust/road-safety-fund/) to visit the website and find out more.

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Two teenagers arrested following stabbing in Taunton**

ASP arrested two teenage boys on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm with intent following an incident in Taunton this week (Tuesday 30 August).

The two teenagers, aged 14 and 15, were arrested during the early hours of Wednesday 31 August and were questioned by detectives.

Officers were called to Hamilton Park, off Hamilton Road, at around 8pm on Tuesday after a man was stabbed.

The victim, aged 52, was taken to hospital after receiving initial treatment from officers. His injuries are not thought to be life-threatening or life-changing, and he was later discharged to recover at home.

Officers from the Neighbourhood Policing Team are continuing to carry out patrols of the area to provide reassurance to the community.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2022/08/two-teenagers-arrested-following-stabbing-in-taunton/?fbclid=IwAR3e8yT4B84p1V_UpuSc7KFn_8GkVoHbVkeYoRzqUaVOn6PE28IYbi6IL9c) to read the full press release.

**For Neighbourhood Policing Updates…**

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

* [Minehead and West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing](https://www.facebook.com/aspmineheadwestsomerset)
* [Wellington Neighbourhood Policing](https://www.facebook.com/aspwellington)
* [Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](https://www.facebook.com/ASPTaunton)
* [Sedgemoor and Hinkley Point Neighbourhood Policing](https://www.facebook.com/aspsedgemoor)
* [Rural Affairs Unit – Avon and Somerset Police.](https://www.facebook.com/aspruralaffairsunit)

**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.