

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 139 Weeks ending 05/02/2023**

**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. **Check your Voter ID for Taunton Town Council elections**

Elections for the new Taunton Town Council take place in May – and, for the first time, residents in Taunton will need to show accepted photographic ID to vote in person at a polling station.

Taunton Town Council will come into being on 1 April 2023. This is an historic moment for the town and Somerset as a whole.

Until now, Taunton has been the only “unparished” area in Somerset – the only town without a grassroots council.

The new Town Council will elect the Mayor and Deputy and take on responsibility for all the civic regalia, such as the chain of office.

Elections on 4 May 2023 will be for 20 councillors in 14 wards.

The election coincides with the national introduction of Voter ID. This means people will need to show photo ID before they can be given their ballot paper if voting at a polling station.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/check-your-voter-id-for-taunton-town-council-elections/) 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 7 February 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=3040&x=1). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 3 February.
* **SWT Executive – Wednesday 15 February 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 13 February.

Meetings in the JMR will 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. **Free “Meet the Experts” event for food and drink businesses**

SWT and Sedgemoor District Councils have teamed up to organise a series of events specifically designed for businesses in the food and drink sector.

The next event is “Meet the Experts food and drink workshops” at J25 Holiday Inn on **Thursday, 9 February 2023, between 10am and 1pm on a drop-in basis.**

Businesses will have the opportunity to attend expert and industry specialist workshops – Photography, Intellectual Property, Allergens Food Labelling and procurement – but these need to be booked in advance via the councils [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/meet-the-experts-event-1529759) page.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/free-meet-the-experts-event-for-food-and-drink-businesses/) to read the full press release.

1. **Town/Parish Councillors and Clerks Training**

Two free sessions remain for Town/Parish Councillors and Clerks who wish to attend training on:

* Standards Regime including Code of Conduct & Interests​
* Somerset Code of Conduct​
* Social Media and pitfalls to avoid​
* Recording of Council meetings
* Confidentiality
* Being a Councillor versus being an individual
* Disrespect versus freedom of speech
* Public perception and risk

These sessions will take place online and the dates are:-

**Thursday 9 February at 6pm**

**Wednesday 8 March at 6pm**

Please circulate this information to all your Parish Councillors.

To book a place, and to be sent the link to the session please email monitoringofficer@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

1. **Changes proposed for selected tennis courts in Taunton**

SWT is asking the public to have their say on refurbishment and future maintenance proposals for its tennis courts at [Vivary Park](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/large-parks-in-taunton/vivary-park/) and [Taunton Green, Cheddon Road](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/neighbourhood-parks/taunton-green/), in Taunton.

SWT has been offered over £100,000 of grant funding from the [Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)](https://www.lta.org.uk/) and the Government’s [Department for Digital, Community Media and Sport (DCMS)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-digital-culture-media-sport), which would allow high-end play surface and perimeter fence upgrades for the twin courts at Vivary Park and to two of the three courts at Taunton Green.

The survey, along with further information about the proposals, will be available until **Monday, 27 February,** and can be completed by visiting the Council’s [consultation portal](https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/tennis-courts/). Alternatively, paper copies are available at [Deane House](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/contact-us/council-offices/deane-house/) and [Taunton Visitor Centre](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/contact-us/council-offices/taunton-visitor-centre/).

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/changes-proposed-for-selected-tennis-courts-in-taunton/) to read the full press release.

1. **SWT starts process to quash planning decision**

SWT is seeking to quash a planning decision made in error.

The Council received an application (ref: 45/22/0010) for a proposed change of use of the Blue Ball Inn, Cockercombe Road, Bagborough, from a Public House to Holiday Accommodation with Ancillary Bar (C3) and Community Use (F1 & F2).

Due to an administrative error, planning permission was granted under delegated powers for the change of use on 19 December 2022 without the proper legal authority to do so.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-starts-process-to-quash-planning-decision/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - SWT intervenes to safeguard historic water towers**

SWT has taken direct action to protect two Grade II\* listed water towers at Rockwell Green, near Wellington.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-intervenes-to-safeguard-historic-water-towers/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - Wellington Place Plan consultation has begun**

The public consultation on the Draft Place Plan for Wellington started on Monday 23 January 2023 giving residents and businesses a chance to have their say on how they think the town should look in the future.

Members of the public are now being invited to contribute to the statutory consultation which aims to identify possible areas for growth while allowing Wellington to retain its unique sense of place.

The consultation runs for four weeks from **23 January until 20 February** and can be found at [yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/](https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/). SWT is also holding drop-in sessions at the Pop-Up Shop in Wellington (31 Fore St, Wellington, TA21 8AG) on the following dates:

* Wednesday, 8 February, 15:00 to 19:00
* Thursday, 16 February, 15:00 to 19:00

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/wellington-place-plan-consultation-set-to-begin/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - SWT to unveil spectacular Dragon Sculpture**

SWT will be unleashing the “Taunton Dragon” in Taunton High Street on Saturday 11 February 2023.

The spectacular 4-metre-high public art sculpture created by local chainsaw artist [Matthew Crabb](https://en-gb.facebook.com/matthewcrabbsculpturestudio/), will be unveiled by the Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Sue Lees, and the Chair of SWT, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-to-unveil-spectacular-dragon-sculpture/) to read the full press release.

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

Finished with your vape? Don’t throw it in the bin! It can be recycled through kerbside collections or at recycling sites

**Kerbside collections:**

* If your vape is not designed to be taken apart, then provided it is empty, put it in an open bag (like a carrier bag) along with any other small electricals for recycling and put that alongside or on top of one of your recycling boxes.
* If your vape is the type where you can remove and replace the battery, then remove the battery. Put the battery in a small, tied bag for battery collection at kerbside. Put the vape itself in an open bag (like a carrier bag) with any other electricals for collection and put that alongside or on top of your recycling boxes where they are easily seen.

\*collections of small electricals and batteries are not available for some households on communal collections. Please take them to a recycling site.

**Recycling sites**

* If your vape is not designed to be taken apart, or you are unable to remove the battery, the whole unit should be put in the battery bank.
* If your vape is the type where you can remove and replace the battery, please remove the battery before going to the recycling site. Please put the battery in the battery bank and the vape unit in the small electricals skip.

You can check collection days for now and the rest of the year using the online My Collection Day feature [somersetwaste.gov.uk.](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/)

Download a calendar for printing or, better still, download it into the calendar on your device and get automatic reminders of your collection days.

Snow, ice and freezing temperatures can disrupt collections so please bear with us in the event of severe weather.

Crews will return as soon as possible for any missed collections. If conditions are bad we may not be able to meet our usual ‘return in two days’ target.

If severe weather is forecast, residents may wish to ‘clear the decks’ before the festive period so you have room in your recycling boxes and refuse bin.

Recycle everything you can in your next collection. If you are able, you may want to take black bag refuse to a recycling site so your bin is empty when the festive season starts.

For information on the repair cafés and Fixy reuse van, see: [somersetwaste.gov.uk/share-and-repair](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fsomersetwaste.gov.uk%2Fshare-and-repair%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2dCaq9h4OkMHVGCgw7xajk6aZHquyajj8mO5oF1wdxDVi_YOGL6Co5Z8w&h=AT1xKgFoQdEG0X026XnzWUhz5vk1OODvGWet1-kq0L-NOn6ZvmA2DMMkKZ7wdPjIgCBt9KTj9iIIFdyjR-Wn0rlzO-38TzwbauWTaI42fsO0yBEEpiYCXI7KbFttayWJFw&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT3zScXuyg6TPHK5hxzYzBRVNwGVK3mOTBgmErhTS0eQpnH68zXrEbuVMH4QAM9vru1uBkeHG3eC_7vB1cMEm-Rsvmy5kRzxFQ9mYCHzYVTHMwF1bJZA9rDQ4gK6Hk7oswYVCI2uYZHv4BWAkz24QJ5APkTsBBGy_lXBy4fi6GjstxeQJx1ksFwz-RTUGKAYlRUoDoOS_M8HNg).

**New Somerset Council**

**Latest news**

**Final chance to have your say on budget consultation 2023/24**

The consultation on the proposed budget for the new council will be coming to an end on the 10 February.

Please [click here](https://somerset.inconsult.uk/budget/consultationHome?fbclid=IwAR2hU-xCdu7ppJPKeTqxXA6nObjiSDxu2ebjNkhpxkrTe2upR7vdIKGsFdc) to participate in the consultation.

**Have your say on new Somerset Council planning consultation process**

Somerset residents are being invited to have their say on the new Somerset Council’s approach to planning matters.

The five current Somerset councils (Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council) are consulting the public on a draft ‘Statement of Community Involvement’ (SCI) – a single approach to planning which will be formally adopted by the new Somerset Council.

The SCI is designed to set out how Somerset Council, as the Local Planning Authority, will engage and consult with the community and stakeholders on all planning matters.

It will cite who the Council will consult with through the various stages of Local Plan preparation and what consultation methods should be used.

**The consultation will run until Thursday 16 March 2023**.

To view the current draft of the new Statement of Community Involvement and complete the survey, please visit [somerset.inconsult.uk/sci/consultationHome](https://somerset.inconsult.uk/sci/consultationHome).

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/02/have-your-say-on-how-new-somerset-council-will-consult-on-planning-and-development/) to read the full press release.

**Business mentors needed to help Somerset thrive**

An ambitious mentoring programme is being launched to make the expertise of the county’s most knowledgeable business-people available to businesses across Somerset.

Please [click here](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-and-economy/somerset-business-mentoring-programme/) to read the full press release.

**City, Town and Parish Council Working Group – You are welcome to attend!**

Did you know that the LCN Team hold fortnightly catchups exclusively for Clerks and Chairs from across Somerset?

Simply drop an email to LCN@somerset.gov.uk with your name and contact details, placing *‘C, T&PC Working Group’* in the subject title.

The team understand the timing won’t suit everyone all the time, so they will distribute the meeting minutes to you once you are signed-up.

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

**Somerset County Council (SCC)**

**SCC Highways maintenance update**

A very busy couple of weeks for the gangs, ranging from flood works on the Somerset Levels to very low temperatures. Whilst there is still a lot of water seepage from fields and hedgerows, SCC gritters have been out salting the roads on the Primary Network up to 2 times per day. Thankfully the weather should be calmer this week and this will allow the gangs to catch up on safety works. The A361 from Taunton to Glastonbury is now fully open as is New Road, East Lyng - Cutts Rd will follow in the next couple of days after sweeping/inspection as the flooding subsided considerably last week.

SCC Safety Defects numbers are rising fast due to the freeze/thaw actions on the road causing potholes, therefore the planned work programmes may be pushed back slightly this week whilst the teams catch up.

Our Contractors gangs have successfully repaired 278 safety defects this week with 153 in Taunton Area and 125 in West Somerset which is a huge number!

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.**

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.

The current planned SCC Highways works programmed for the week commencing **6 February 2023** (subject to change due to weather) are as follows:

**6 February 2023**

* **Bishops Lydeard Bypass** 5 days Removal of dangerous trees
* **Mendip Road, Stoke St Michael** 2 days Replacement of street lighting unit (PL4)
* **Lodes Lane, Kingston St Mary** 1 day Jetting and CCTV
* **Milverton Road, Bathealton** 1 day Jetting works
* **Rectory Road, Staplegrove** 1 day Jetting works
* **Wellisford Manor Road, Langford Budville** 1 day Jetting works
* **Bodmin Road, Taunton** 5 days Road crossing and excavation in the footpath to allow for new HV cable to be laid and water connection to existing main.

**7 February 2023**

* **Monument Road, Wellington Without** 1 day Jetting works to clear flooding
* **Stoford Lane, West Buckland** 1 day Jetting works for flooding to property
* **Wellington Relief Road, Wellington Without** 1 day Traffic Management Permit for LG210YBPR8783

**8** **February 2023**

* **Henley Road, Taunton** 3 days Replace gully cover.
* **Castle Lane, Wiveliscombe** 1 day Further jetting works

**9 February 2023**

* **Cheddon Road, Taunton** 1 day Jetting works
* **Kingston St Mary Road, Bishops Lydeard** 1 day Jetting works

**10 February 2023**

* **Bircham Road, Minehead** 11 days Works to improve walking and cycling facilities from West Somerset Community College to Marsh Street including: carriageway narrowing, bus stop reconfiguration, the introduction of tactile crossings and drainage, construction of a new traffic island, relocation of street lighting columns, installation of new signage/lining along the entire length.
* **Ford Street, Wellington Without** 1 day Jetting works

**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.

**Temporary Road Closure**

**Henley Road Taunton ttr0262342TD**

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; **Henley Road - from the junction with Wellington Road, southwards for a total distance of 35 metres**.

This Order will enable Milestone Infrastructure to carry out drainage works.

The works are expected to commence on 8 February 2023 and last until 10 February 2023 between the hours of midnight and 11:59pm for a total of 3 days.

Please visit <https://one.network/?tm=131989634> for further information on the alternative route.

The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site is not permitted on this occasion.

**Somerset Libraries**

**Activity Tracker Watch Loaning Scheme**

An Activity Tracker Watch loaning scheme is now available in specific libraries. This means members of Somerset Libraries (16 and over) can borrow a device for up to six weeks free of charge.

Activity Tracker Watches are for everyone. If you’re new to exercise or want to move more, gauge your progress, and live near Taunton or Bridgwater why not borrow one of our smart Activity Tracker Watches?

It’s a great way to find out whether an activity monitor watch inspires you to move more. You can borrow one for up to six weeks, giving you a chance to see whether having an Activity Tracker Watch is something you’d like to consider investing in.

Please [click here](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries-leisure-and-communities/libraries/activity-tracker-watch-loaning-scheme/) to read the full press release.

**Community Employment Hubs**

**West Somerset, Taunton and Wellington Jobs Fair**

The next Jobs Fair is happening on **Thursday 23 February at Somerset County Cricket Club**, **Taunton.**

There will be lots of local companies and organisations offering part-time and full-time jobs, apprenticeships plus training, and volunteering opportunities.

Need help getting your CV ready for those all-important interviews? Come along and speak to the experts to help you get a foot on the career ladder.

**Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)**

**Exmoor Nature Friendly Farming Project Funding Extended**

ENPA is delighted to announce that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs DEFRA is extending its funding for the ‘Farming in Protected Landscapes programme’ (FiPL).

The FiPL scheme forms part of the government’s ‘Environmental Improvement Plan, with additional funding for Exmoor related projects granted until March 2025.

Exmoor has a proud and unique farming heritage where many farmers are passionate about wildlife and sustainability. £1.2 million has so far been allocated to Exmoor National Park, funding one-off projects connected to nature recovery, tackling the impacts of climate change, cultural heritage and more.

It supports farmers and land managers in their valuable contribution to our protected landscapes and to ensure environmental improvements go hand in hand with agriculture.

Please [click here](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/press-room/press-room/news-2023/exmoor-nature-friendly-farming-project-funding-extended) to read the full press release.

**Quantock Hills (AONB)**

**Spring is just around the corner…**

As we start to see more snowdrops popping up, we are reminded that spring is just around the corner and so is the lambing and ground nesting bird season.

Please [click here](https://www.quantockhills.com/post/spring-lambs-on-the-quantocks?fbclid=IwAR3HU_eC1o0mR4cgcAiAS1qTO4s5ESHVaDPw_kH2XvTlsd9HnSYmvpbnjV4) to read the Quantock Rangers blog.

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

**Potential industrial action**

The Fire Brigades Union has balloted its members and they have voted for industrial action. This is part of a national dispute between the pay negotiation body and the union over the annual pay award.

Whilst a strike has not yet been called, DSFRS have been making plans to ensure they can continue to provide frontline services during this period.

Please [click here](https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/industrial-action) to read the full press release.

**Maritime and Coastguard Agency**

**HM Coastguard Watchet**

Recruitment to the local coastguard team will be opening very soon. If you or anyone you know is looking to do something amazing with your spare time – why not join the UK’s oldest 999 emergency service.

Please [click here](https://www.facebook.com/HMCoastguardMinehead) for further information.

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

**Voluntary and Community Sector Suppor****t**

**Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)**

**How to save energy in your community building**

If you run, lease or own a community building like a scout hut, village hall, community association building, or even a local church, you’re probably thinking about the rising cost of energy bills and how this is going to impact how your building is used.

At the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), we’re already hearing of communities forced to make [difficult decisions to close buildings or limit activities](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/sep/07/community-groups-will-close-without-energy-bill-help-liz-truss-warned) because they can’t afford energy bills. These community hubs are important places where local people come together to socialise, learn, access key services, stay warm and access affordable food.

We’re facing a tough winter across the UK with the rising cost of living and spiralling cost of energy. And [even with new financial support from central government](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bill-relief-scheme-help-for-businesses-and-other-non-domestic-customers), this isn’t enough to keep some community buildings warm.

Please [click here](https://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2717) to read the full press release.

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

**Happy Healthy Holidays Winter 2022**

Kids and teens eligible for free school meals were able to access a range of holiday clubs and camps across Somerset over the winter holidays, thanks to the Happy Healthy Holidays programme.

The programme is delivered by SASP with funding from SCC and offers school-aged children and teenagers eligible for free school meals the opportunity to attend free activities during the school holidays, which include healthy food and education about healthy eating.

In the cost-of-living crisis, Happy Healthy Holidays is providing vital support to low-income families by offering a warm space for children and teenagers to make friends, be physically active and eat a nutritious hot meal for free.

The next Happy Healthy Holidays provision will run over the Easter holidays. More information will be added closer to the time on the [Happy Healthy Holidays website](https://www.sasp.co.uk/happy-healthy-holidays).

**Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

**Talking Cafes Live – every Wednesday at 1pm**

COMING UP on February's [Talking Cafe](https://www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWpTKl2tDqCBN6L3RR_Mug3Si9VozuVeCMzysveu4n5Co074R7EZQ24sdviMUgFUY9Jiv1-X6JNdfGyvLDhfAyYR-GLg6b-VKD-99-VN75xih-TVLawVWoqPke-pRsoNnEaaJ4Tt3VdZXnzKJlBoUvBjXcw5yx4MNmMH3vPGq961GKsOW6EHSDz6l4k85ilzEc&__tn__=kK-R) Live Streaming Sessions, available on:

[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5goIPHD91Ie4VDI5NMJdrQ/videos), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/RuralSomerset?fbclid=IwAR0uBg3jt6fs3q_tWCv-L-hMomh8awMZVa_-4g_OQjFmi-bmgOCnGBO-Mo4).

* **8 February** - [NHS Somerset](https://www.facebook.com/NHSSomerset1?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWgiR5eZSwGHfnkZdYlpoZAu5YSJcWPAYP2P0WmPCTiJC33_to-0MHxA3UZF2KicCX_cg7BZ5es8kliCJYtSLp_QfFJJh5SJ3JsIPH_p3S9HJHUeW-h6tNSXKpTnjrylLp602zObnSmIMEQBfKFPwcMjlZmYacqFD8Q553GTE0HK69qF1sLpmDEFFZGsIb5dOs&__tn__=-%5dK-R) Stroke Services
* **15 February** - Celebrating National Ukulele day with Carhampton ukulele group
* **22 February** - [Walkers and Talkers](https://www.facebook.com/walkersandtalkersQandA?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWgiR5eZSwGHfnkZdYlpoZAu5YSJcWPAYP2P0WmPCTiJC33_to-0MHxA3UZF2KicCX_cg7BZ5es8kliCJYtSLp_QfFJJh5SJ3JsIPH_p3S9HJHUeW-h6tNSXKpTnjrylLp602zObnSmIMEQBfKFPwcMjlZmYacqFD8Q553GTE0HK69qF1sLpmDEFFZGsIb5dOs&__tn__=-%5dK-R) at Somerset County Cricket ground with [Somerset Cricket Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/SomCricketFDN?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWgiR5eZSwGHfnkZdYlpoZAu5YSJcWPAYP2P0WmPCTiJC33_to-0MHxA3UZF2KicCX_cg7BZ5es8kliCJYtSLp_QfFJJh5SJ3JsIPH_p3S9HJHUeW-h6tNSXKpTnjrylLp602zObnSmIMEQBfKFPwcMjlZmYacqFD8Q553GTE0HK69qF1sLpmDEFFZGsIb5dOs&__tn__=-%5dK-R)

Watch LIVE every Wednesday at 1pm and ask questions in the comments for instant answers.

Want to take part and SHOUT about the organisation or community project you are passionate about? Contact debis@somersetrcc.org.uk or message the Talking Cafe page.

**Rural Services Network (RSN)**

**Rural cost of living survey**

The Rural Services Network (RSN) in partnership with the Citizens Advice Rural Issues Group has launched a Rural Cost of Living Household Survey.

Independent[research](https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/publications/rural-cost-of-living.pdf) commissioned by the RSN in summer last year shows rural areas are suffering more acutely from the cost of living crisis compared to urban areas.

To lend more weight to the argument for more funding for rural areas the RSN is calling on as many rural residents as possible to complete a Rural Cost of Living Household Survey.

The purpose of the survey is to understand more about rural household budgets at, what is, a very difficult time for many.

Research has shown that those living in rural areas face extra costs and the RSN now want to explore the impacts for households.

Please [click here](https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/suffering-from-the-rural-cost-of-living-make-your-thoughts-known-in-household-survey) to read the full press release, and participate in the survey.

**Spark**

**The Warm Welcome Somerset Map is now live!**

As many of you will know, Spark Somerset has been working with community partners to develop a network and online map of Warm Welcome spaces for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Spark are delighted to announce that the Warm Welcome map is now live and you can view it at [http://warmwelcomesomerset.org.uk?mc\_cid=1293684b4e&mc\_eid=UNIQID](http://warmwelcomesomerset.org.uk/?mc_cid=1293684b4e&mc_eid=UNIQID).

You can use the map to locate a Warm Welcome space, find out when it's open and what facilities are on offer. Please share it far and wide so that even more people can find the warmth, company and support they need this winter, and beyond.

If you would like to add your group or venue to the map, please visit <https://sparksomerset.org.uk/warm-welcome?mc_cid=1293684b4e&mc_eid=UNIQID> where you will find the registration form and a whole host of information to help you set up, run or fund your Warm Welcome space. Spark are continuously updating this page so please return regularly to see what's new!

Finally, Spark would like to say like to say a big thank you to everyone who has signed up to offer a Warm Welcome so far - over 70 spaces and counting!

**Community Buildings - Become a warm space this winter!**

If your facility or group would like to host a warm space for anyone who will struggle to keep their heating on this Winter. Please [click here](https://ccslovesomerset.org/app/uploads/2022/10/Warm-Spaces-Funding-Directory-1.pdf) to view the new Warm Spaces funding list.

**Health and Welfare**

**Could you help get people to crucial medical appointments? Volunteer drivers needed urgently across Somerset**

People across Somerset with no transport of their own need help to get to important medical appointments.

From routine checks to cardiology and cancer-related care, these Somerset residents benefit enormously from reliable volunteer drivers to get them there.

The team also support adults and children with journeys relating to social care.

SCC’s current volunteer drivers need new recruits, to support the NHS and the Council in ensuring patients get the care and treatment that they need.

It is an ideal opportunity for anybody over 18 with a full UK driving licence and four-door car to do something for their community; particularly those who enjoy driving and meeting new people. Patients appreciate the opportunity to chat to their drivers too, since some live in socially or geographically isolated situations.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/01/30/could-you-help-get-people-to-crucial-medical-appointments-volunteer-drivers-needed-urgently-across-somerset/) to read the full press release.

**Public Health Video**

**Lowering your alcohol intake**

In this week's [catch up film](https://www.facebook.com/somersetcountycouncil/videos/746610126800267), Clinton looks at the benefits of lowering your alcohol intake.

He speaks to Harriet Gliddon, a Public Health Registrar at Somerset County Council about how we can cut down on our drinking and hears from Nick about why he chose to cut alcohol out of his life completely.

Clinton looks at both the short and long-term benefits to cutting your alcohol intake including saving money, healthier skin, more energy, lower blood pressure and more.

Find out more by heading to [www.alcoholchange.co.uk](http://www.alcoholchange.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR3YZVxoHT12qjdUs6G_N1JSnknObGBoS6HHNU6OZt9FomCt5OJjpzn230g) or if you're worried about your drinking, visit the [Somerset Drug & Alcohol Service - SDAS](https://www.facebook.com/SDASdigital?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWmVLekpjWGBmBsF3-5nN5BdHnuJf2wmByC1VeAYRQmK4MZzjdg3eLm0fzeQvruCmjyydDc8ushdHUcBMfGlHMJnogJ996Kqe1t1uRinqsWhIjgfiyXiPCPFDP1t9zveauPIbVDpZbuDGKLrlf4OMjk01tWNDkv0JBpsAbMZe7Ba4snWsqZYxpXzF32GRjFDls&__tn__=-%5dK-R) on [www.turning-point.co.uk/services/sdas](http://www.turning-point.co.uk/services/sdas?fbclid=IwAR2ieoY8OGQSkmcdkooUgraRvH82mLKwxO4jFTUIKUj9V-UlvcsuBWHAG2E).

**Make sure you get your winter vaccinations**

With winter upon us, Somerset residents are being reminded to protect their health and the health of people around them by getting their flu and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Covid and flu vaccinations are safe and effective ways to prevent serious illness.

If you're 50 and over, a frontline health or social care worker, pregnant, have a long-term health condition, or are a paid or unpaid carer, you are eligible for the free flu vaccine, and you can likely get the COVID-19 seasonal booster. Children aged 2-15 years old are also eligible for free flu vaccination, which is delivered through either their GP for pre-school and school for school age children – parents need to sign a consent form.

**Vaccinations**

**COVID-19**

If you are eligible, you can book your seasonal COVID-19 vaccine using the [online booking service](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/) by calling 119 or finding a [local vaccination walk-in site](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site?fbclid=IwAR07orCoa6T-JY6pEaPwFZqxiz3LV3qAJ1by_63c3nzAynPwRAhc30-ijg8).

If you have not yet had your earlier doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, it’s not too late to come forward and you can get these at any time.

Getting both vaccines is important because more people are likely to get the flu this winter, and you're more likely to be seriously ill if you get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

A number of clinics across Somerset are also open for walk-ins. More details can be found at [COVID-19 and Flu vaccinations in Somerset - NHS Somerset](https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/covid-and-flu-vaccines/).

[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/).

**Influenza**

In Somerset, we are seeing an increase in hospitalisations from flu, and lots are younger than you might think. Many people do not realise that they’re at risk of catching flu and being affected by complications such as pneumonia, so it really is important to get your jab to protect yourself and those around you.

The pressure from flu on our NHS continues to grow with the latest figures showing that cases in hospital are now more than seven times higher than last month.

You can help the NHS this winter by getting your flu vaccine. It is effective in stopping you getting seriously ill from the flu and means the NHS can stay focussed on helping people with other illnesses. If you get the flu vaccine, it can stop you from getting ill from flu meaning that you can keep doing the things you enjoy like going out and seeing friends.

[If you're eligible for a free flu vaccine](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI1MjEiLCIxbWRhbWxvZnRhbjRnb2d3ODRrZ2s0azhzOHdzd3c0YyIsIjE2MDciLCJhZTM5MDUxYTRjYzUiLGZhbHNlXQ), you can book an appointment at your GP surgery or a pharmacy that offers it on the NHS. You may also get an invitation to get the vaccine, but you do not have to wait for this before booking an appointment.

Everyone who is eligible for the free flu vaccine will be able to get it. If you have an appointment for a Covid-19 booster vaccine at a GP surgery or pharmacy, you may also be offered a flu vaccine at the same time.

Do not delay booking your flu vaccine appointment so that you can get both vaccines together. Only some people will be offered both vaccines at the same time.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-who-should-have-it-this-winter-and-why) for more information about the Flu vaccination.

**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.

**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
* Mindline Somerset – 01823 276892
* Somerset Domestic Abuse helpline - 0800 69 49 999

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Safer Internet Day – Tuesday 7 February**

There are between 800-1000 reports of fraud and cyber-crime every month in Avon and Somerset alone – these are just the cases that are reported. The National Crime Agency predicts that only 20 per cent of fraud incidents are reported nationally so the real figures are likely to be much higher.

ASP were one of the first police forces to invest in dedicated fraud and cyber protect teams, committed to providing support to victims of fraud and educating people and businesses to help prevent them becoming victims of fraud or cyber-crime.

The teams provide a proactive response to fraud and cyber-crime by educating the public around any new or specific threats.

The fraud and cyber protect teams provide talks to many groups within the community including Womens Institutes, Rotary Clubs, care homes, schools and universities. Reaching out to 1,600 vulnerable residents they used the Meals on Wheels network to deliver Christmas cards, which contained information on how to keep safe from fraud.

Follow Avon and Somerset police on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/aspolice/) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/avonandsomersetpolice/) on **7 February** to catch Cyber Protect Officers’ Megan and Felix’s top tips for staying safe online on Safer Internet Day.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/working-to-stop-people-becoming-victims-of-fraud-and-cyber-crime/) to read the full press release.

**Arrests made after man injured in Taunton**

Two teenagers are in police custody after a man was stabbed while walking along Colin Road, Taunton, at about 11.40pm on Thursday 2 February.

A man in his 30s was taken to hospital with two wounds not believed to be life-threatening or life-changing. Two teenage boys were arrested overnight in connection with the incident.

A scene remains in place on Colin Road and you’ll see an increased police presence in the area as house-to-house and other enquiries continue.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/arrests-made-after-man-injured-in-taunton/) to read the full press release.

**Sheep Worrying**

Unfortunately, ASP have received numerous reports of livestock worrying in recent weeks.

[Rural Affairs Unit - Avon and Somerset Police](https://www.facebook.com/aspruralaffairsunit?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZV8W8z2PpfjBz2DVhOFo4RctkOVWzHhWZBIXRaqOiNyP4wLnEgUBhT-0CQrTTnpS8Mk9qfpxdPT1f4L3y4AHHpJU0J6CcCGLzmMj-TDbo2IVRFPvIOZvPsJ3a-wW6WgTZpBGMbqEYNgSja4HgvoxjlGGj-alNoPBIR37FRTS0S1lUMleTDaSJA6_SolHifpERs&__tn__=-%5dK-R) would like to remind dog owners to act responsibly when walking in the countryside. Livestock worrying is a criminal offence. This offence does not require livestock to be injured: Allowing your dog to be out of control around livestock will be committing an offence.

The impact of livestock worrying on our farming community can be devastating.

Please always keep dogs under control around livestock.

**Police Crime Commissioner (PCC)**

**Commissioners Crime Prevention Fund**

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner ([OPCC](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/uploads/images/OPPC%20Help%20Document.docx)) has set up the **Commissioner’s Crime Prevention Fund** to help create safer communities. It is run as a partnership between the OPCC, Somerset Community Foundation [(SCF)](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/grantfunding/grants-groups/opcc) and Quartet Community Foundation ([QCF](https://quartetcf.org.uk/)).

Groups can apply for a grant of between £1,000 to £5,000 to run a project:

* in a particular neighbourhood so that everyone benefits from reduced crime and antisocial behaviour, or
* for a specific group of people who are at higher risk of being the victims or perpetrators of crime and antisocial behaviour.

**The next deadline is Friday 24 February 2023.**Future dates will be added shortly.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/grantfunding/grants-groups/opcc) 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.