

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 140 Weeks ending 12/02/2023**

**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. **SWT homes to benefit from Neighbourhood Energy Efficiency Project**

Hundreds of homes could benefit from a new Neighbourhood Energy Efficiency Project to help make them warmer and cheaper to heat.

The new project, which is designed to improve neighbourhoods with a large proportion of Council-owned homes, launched on Thursday, 9 February, and is being delivered by Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Council over the next four years in partnership with [E.ON](https://www.eonenergy.com/) and its installer, [JJ Crump](https://www.jjcrump.com/).

SWT has secured £20 million of [Energy Company Obligation (ECO)](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-and-social-schemes/energy-company-obligation-eco) funding to upgrade the least energy efficient homes across the district.  The range of efficiency measures could include external wall, cavity wall and loft insulation; Solar Photovoltaics (PV); Air Source Heat Pumps; first-time central heating; and smart heating controls.

Eligible households within the first project area will receive letters from 9 February, explaining how to get involved.

Although the neighbourhood scheme will focus primarily on Council housing, a countywide scheme administered by [The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)](https://www.cse.org.uk/), will be available for private homes that meet the qualifying criteria for owners to self-refer.  For details about the CSE scheme, visit SWT’s [Saving energy](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/housing/private-sector-housing/saving-energy/) webpage.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-homes-to-benefit-from-neighbourhood-energy-efficiency-project/) 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.

* **SCC Constitution and Governance Committee – Tuesday 14 February 2023,** at 10:00am in the Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton.

The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=449&MId=1763).

* **SWT Executive – Wednesday 15 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?CId=326&MId=3051) Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 13 February.
* **SCC Annual Budget Meeting – Wednesday 22 February 2023,** proposed venue to be advised. The agenda and report packs will be available to view on the [website](http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1629), one week before the meeting.
* **SWT Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 22 February 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 20 February.
* **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 23 February 2023,** at 1.00pm in the JMR. Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Tuesday 21 February.
* **SWT Standards Committee – Thursday 23 February 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Tuesday 21 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. **Register to vote in Taunton Town Council elections**

Voters in the Taunton area are being reminded to make sure they are registered to vote so they can take part in electing the new Taunton Town Council on 4 May.

It’s quick and easy to register to vote, but after the deadline of 17 April, it will be too late for the 4 May election.

The call for voters to sign up aims to encourage as many people as possible to register before the elections taking place this year for the first parish-level council in Taunton for almost 50 years.

Research shows that young people, students and recent home movers are particularly less likely to be registered to vote. So, if you fall into one of these categories it is doubly important to make sure you’re registered correctly.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/register-to-vote-in-taunton-town-council-elections/) to read the full press release.

1. **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.

In addition to the official unveiling, SWT have a full line-up of fun dragon-themed activities, including meet and greets with [Somerset County Cricket Club](https://www.facebook.com/SomersetCricketClub/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVnYWeFyoRgksjssjTy4_4pHGUbgtGi3r63XJ882Gsa8o1TzG1aAUmof5fMDtU9plgzj-WYshgOYtjGdN8RwWf-yn1oh1iPJ_q6OVBXTQQ9gbnP_I7HgRWKn1ZXTdIdt_I3T0cecLDWogQIrNLU1ypMv6vK9EClBU0aDAshYF02h144jfnK3xmmOXVwoZjQC7E&__tn__=kK-R)’s Stumpy the Dragon, [GoCreate Taunton](https://www.facebook.com/GoCreateCIC/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVnYWeFyoRgksjssjTy4_4pHGUbgtGi3r63XJ882Gsa8o1TzG1aAUmof5fMDtU9plgzj-WYshgOYtjGdN8RwWf-yn1oh1iPJ_q6OVBXTQQ9gbnP_I7HgRWKn1ZXTdIdt_I3T0cecLDWogQIrNLU1ypMv6vK9EClBU0aDAshYF02h144jfnK3xmmOXVwoZjQC7E&__tn__=kK-R) arts and crafts, a [LEGO](https://www.facebook.com/LEGO/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVnYWeFyoRgksjssjTy4_4pHGUbgtGi3r63XJ882Gsa8o1TzG1aAUmof5fMDtU9plgzj-WYshgOYtjGdN8RwWf-yn1oh1iPJ_q6OVBXTQQ9gbnP_I7HgRWKn1ZXTdIdt_I3T0cecLDWogQIrNLU1ypMv6vK9EClBU0aDAshYF02h144jfnK3xmmOXVwoZjQC7E&__tn__=kK-R) Games/Toys station, [Angelart Face Painting & Glitter Tattoos](https://www.facebook.com/AngelartSW?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVnYWeFyoRgksjssjTy4_4pHGUbgtGi3r63XJ882Gsa8o1TzG1aAUmof5fMDtU9plgzj-WYshgOYtjGdN8RwWf-yn1oh1iPJ_q6OVBXTQQ9gbnP_I7HgRWKn1ZXTdIdt_I3T0cecLDWogQIrNLU1ypMv6vK9EClBU0aDAshYF02h144jfnK3xmmOXVwoZjQC7E&__tn__=-%5dK-R), live music and [Apple FM Taunton](https://www.facebook.com/AppleFmTaunton?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVnYWeFyoRgksjssjTy4_4pHGUbgtGi3r63XJ882Gsa8o1TzG1aAUmof5fMDtU9plgzj-WYshgOYtjGdN8RwWf-yn1oh1iPJ_q6OVBXTQQ9gbnP_I7HgRWKn1ZXTdIdt_I3T0cecLDWogQIrNLU1ypMv6vK9EClBU0aDAshYF02h144jfnK3xmmOXVwoZjQC7E&__tn__=-%5dK-R), fire performance by [FUSE Somerset Outdoor Arts](https://www.facebook.com/fuseoutdoorarts?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVnYWeFyoRgksjssjTy4_4pHGUbgtGi3r63XJ882Gsa8o1TzG1aAUmof5fMDtU9plgzj-WYshgOYtjGdN8RwWf-yn1oh1iPJ_q6OVBXTQQ9gbnP_I7HgRWKn1ZXTdIdt_I3T0cecLDWogQIrNLU1ypMv6vK9EClBU0aDAshYF02h144jfnK3xmmOXVwoZjQC7E&__tn__=-%5dK-R) and dragon doughnuts from [Dough Bros.](https://www.facebook.com/doughbrosbakery?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVnYWeFyoRgksjssjTy4_4pHGUbgtGi3r63XJ882Gsa8o1TzG1aAUmof5fMDtU9plgzj-WYshgOYtjGdN8RwWf-yn1oh1iPJ_q6OVBXTQQ9gbnP_I7HgRWKn1ZXTdIdt_I3T0cecLDWogQIrNLU1ypMv6vK9EClBU0aDAshYF02h144jfnK3xmmOXVwoZjQC7E&__tn__=-%5dK-R)

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

1. **Planning a street party for the King’s Coronation?**

Neighbours and community groups looking to hold street parties in May to celebrate the King’s Coronation should check whether they may need a temporary road closure.

The Council requires six weeks to process road closure applications for street parties on no-through roads, and twelve weeks for closures for special events.

This means that time is running out for planned celebrations in early May.

There is no charge to apply, and full details can be found at  [Holding a street party (somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/licensing/street-licensing/holding-a-street-party/).

For information on the Coronation please visit [www.royal.uk](https://www.royal.uk/).

1. **Climate Change Newsletter Issue 10**

The Climate Change Team has published its latest 'Climate News' which gets sent to SWT residents and businesses who sign up to receive a copy.

The newsletter aims to showcase all the great work that is happening across Somerset West and Taunton to achieve carbon-neutrality by 2030.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/climate-change-newsletter/) to subscribe to Climate News.

1. **Reminder - 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. **Reminder - 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.

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. **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 a final drop-in session at the Pop-Up Shop in Wellington (31 Fore St, Wellington, TA21 8AG) on **Thursday, 16 February, 3pm to 7pm.**

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

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

**Love Valentine’s: Hate Waste**

Somerset is being urged to put its heart into avoiding waste and boosting recycling this Valentine’s Day.

Like many key dates in the calendar, February 14 can generate more waste than usual as people hit the shops for gifts and treats for loved ones.

But there are lots of ways to celebrate and show your Valentine you care while loving the planet too.

If you are looking for gift, think about things that do not come in big boxes – or any boxes at all.

Vouchers for experiences, local attractions, meals out, the theatre or cinema make great presents to be shared together without contributing to Somerset’s cardboard mountain.

Buying local is usually a good move environmentally, as well as supporting the local economy. For ideas, visit [www.shopsomerset.co.uk](http://www.shopsomerset.co.uk)

If you want something delivered, small independents tend to avoid the excess packaging you see with some of the bigger online retailers. Or, hit the shops in person and avoid unnecessary packaging completely.

After the Valentine’s Day has been and gone, recycle wherever possible.

The cardboard boxes from chocolates can go in your recycling box and the plastic trays in your Bright Blue Bag. Unless you are keeping them forever, make sure you put Valentine cards out for recycling with all your other cardboard. And, once they have started to wilt, compost flowers if you can or put them in your refuse bin – they should not go into food waste.

**New recycling regulations coming into force: pilot programme launched to help Somerset businesses comply**

New recycling regulations for businesses are coming soon and Somerset is one of five areas nationally to pilot a business support programme, designed to prepare its businesses for the change.

The new regulations will require all businesses, healthcare establishments and academic institutions to separate glass bottles and jars, metal food and drink cans, plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, paper, cardboard and food waste from their general waste.

Somerset County Council are working with WRAP, a global sustainability charity, to deliver the pilot, which will take place for 10 weeks between **13 February and 21 April 2023**. The pilot will promote the launch of a new [Business of Recycling website](https://businessofrecycling.wrap.org.uk/) which will provide a waste calculator tool to help businesses monitor how much waste they generate and how recycling can help them save money, step-by-step guidance to ensure they are compliant with the regulations and free downloadable communication resources to promote recycling in the workplace.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/09/new-recycling-regulations-coming-into-force-pilot-programme-launched-to-help-somerset-businesses-comply/) to read the full press release.

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.

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**

**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.

**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](mailto: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.

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 149 safety defects this week with 110 in Taunton Area and 39 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 **13 February 2023** (subject to change due to weather) are as follows:

**13 February 2023**

* **Bircham Road, Minehead** 10 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.
* **Nynehead Road, Wellington** 2 days Final drainage connection and surfacing operations to complete the LIDL access.
* **School Road, Monkton Heathfield** 2 days Resurfacing of the full CW under 2-day road closure.
* **Wyndham Road, Taunton** 1 day Jetting works.

**14 February 2023**

* **Spencer Avenue, Taunton** 3 days To repair failing works.
* **Slade Way, Williton** 2 days Replacement of street lighting units (PL1 & 2).
* **Nethercott Lane, Lydeard St Lawrence**  1 day Jetting works.
* **Pickney Lane, Kingston St Mary** 1 day Jetting works.

**15** **February 2023**

* **Haines Hill, Taunton** 1 day Jetting works.
* **Wiveliscombe Road, Wiveliscombe** 1 day Jetting works.

**16 February 2023**

* **Jews Lane, Wiveliscombe** 1 day Clear silt trap.

**17 February 2023**

* **Ilminster Road, Thornfalcon** 1 day Grass cutting using tractor and flail.

**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**

**Holway Road, Taunton - ttro312754TD**

Somerset County Council 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;

**Holway Road - from the junction with Holway Hill westwards, and Wordsworth Drive eastwards for a total distance of 199 metres closing both carriageways.**

**This Order will enable Utility Services to replace BT poles.**

The works are expected to commence on **13 February 2023 and last until 13 February 2023 between the hours of 8:00am -4:00pm for a total of 1 day.**

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

Please visit <https://one.network/?tm=131649524> for further information on the alternative route.

**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)**

**Missing finger from Exmoor Landmark Sign Sought**

The finger from one of Exmoor’s iconic historic signposts is missing and the National Park Authority are appealing for its return.

Many visitors admire Exmoor’s iconic cast-iron signposts, and they are now a source of local pride, but a few years ago many were dilapidated and broken until a project led by the National Park Authority and Somerset County Council with an army of volunteers from local parishes enabled the restoration of 140 signposts.

Following significant damage to two highly important signposts and ongoing maintenance costs, the authority is now hoping to raise at least £3,000 through its CareMoor donations scheme in the coming months. One of the damaged signposts is located at Webber’s Post and the finger that should direct people to Somerset’s highest point, Dunkery Beacon as well as Wheddon Cross, where the famous snowdrop valley is based, is now missing. The second signpost which was vandalised and needs significant repair is located at Withypool.

Please [click here](https://myemail.constantcontact.com/The-Search-for-Exmoor-Landmark-Signpost-Missing-Finger.html?soid=1102765974837&aid=XPkTmhGX0Gs) to read the full press release.

**Quantock Hills (AONB)**

**Swaling underway**

Over the next month and a half you may see some flames or smoke on the Quantock Hills as part of the AONB controlled burns (Swaling).

This is a management technique of keeping the heathland at different stages of growth to provide a variety of habitats available for different bird species and allowing some of the heath plants to grow. It also ensures there are fire breaks at various points in case of summer fires.

If you are concerned please do ring the Fire Service, and if it is the AONB carrying out swaling in an area they will know about it, and if it isn't they will respond accordingly.

Please [click here](https://www.quantockhills.com/swaling-more-info?fbclid=IwAR3_d5q6ff89FMk4F3_0dVCDtVfHQgMXdDTc3cOf5nM9T2xGf406WEk_45k) to read more information on the website.

**Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme**

Following last summer's archaeological dig in search of Crowcombe's elusive medieval manor, colleagues at Context One Heritage and Archaeology have completed their post excavation analysis and will be returning next month to share their findings.

Join the team on **Saturday 25 February at 2:00pm at Crowcombe Village Hall** for a FREE public talk to learn what has been discovered.

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

**National Fire Chiefs Council - NFCC**

Do you live in rented accommodation?

Has your landlord provided working smoke alarms on every floor of your home?

This is a requirement in all rented homes in England.

But remember it's up to you to test them regularly during your tenancy.

Please [click here](https://fireengland.uk/fire-safety/fire-safety-tenants?fbclid=IwAR1pTKHXfi4Z2z12ugviMMZEobok7Jdrsdp4fc6QJJsDyPL0KkUhqCToNL0) to find out more.

**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)**

**Get Outside in Somerset Half Term Challenge**

Enjoy this February half term with [Get Outside in Somerset's](https://getoutsideinsomerset.co.uk/challenges/step-challenge-23) new step challenge! Challenge yourself to achieve at least 8K steps per day, or if that seems like a bit too much, increase your current average by 3K, or go outside for at least 30 minutes every day. A fantastic opportunity to explore Somerset with family, friends, colleagues or on your own! Don't forget, Tuesday 14 is Valentine's Day, spread the love and check in with each other on your daily walk!

Please [click here](https://www.sasp.co.uk/news/2023/02/get-outside-in-somerset-half-term-challenge) to read the full press release.

**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).

* **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](mailto:debis@somersetrcc.org.uk) or message the Talking Cafe page.

**Spark**

**Somerset Volunteer Coordinator Forum**

**Monday 27 February 2023, 1:00pm – 4.00pm**

**The Canalside Conference Centre, Marsh Lane, Bridgwater**

Spark recognise that Volunteer Coordinators are often the sole person within their organisation with responsibility for volunteers and this is an opportunity to meet people with a similar role and share peer support.

This monthly face to face meeting will give volunteer coordinators a chance to network, share best practice and gain help and support.

Tickets to this event are freely available to anybody who manages or coordinates volunteers in Somerset, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Please [click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/somerset-volunteer-coordinator-forum-tickets-522412187917) to find out more and register for a place.

**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**

**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**

**The Autumn Booster and general Booster programme will end on Sunday 12 February.** All people who are eligible are urged to come forwards before this date. A Spring Booster will be announced with more details in due course.

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).

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**

**Action Fraud**

**Romance Fraud**

Met someone online who's asking you for money? Stop and think as it could protect you and your cash.

Criminals are experts at impersonating people. They spend hours researching you for their scams, especially when committing romance fraud.

Romance scams involve people being duped into sending money to criminals who go to great lengths to gain their trust and convince them that they are in a genuine relationship. They use language to manipulate, persuade and exploit so that requests for money do not raise alarm bells. These requests might be highly emotive, such as criminals claiming they need money for emergency medical care, or to pay for transport costs to visit the victim if they are overseas. Scammers will often build a relationship with their victims over time.

Please [click here](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/a-z-of-fraud/dating-fraud) to read the full press release.

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Murder investigation launched after death in Wellington**

Detectives have launched a murder investigation following the death of a man in Wellington on the morning of Tuesday 7 February.

Emergency services were called to a residential property in Jurston Lane at approximately 8.25am. A man was found critically injured and despite the efforts of paramedics he was sadly pronounced deceased at the scene a short while later.

A man and a woman have been arrested on suspicion of murder. Both are currently in custody.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/murder-investigation-launched-after-death-in-wellington/) to read the full press release.

**Appeal issued after car driven at teenagers during robbery in Taunton**

ASP are investigating an incident in which two teenagers had their bikes stolen during a robbery in Taunton.

Two thirteen-year-old boys were threatened and had their bikes stolen. They were unharmed but left shaken following the incident.

ASP want to speak to anyone who saw this incident, or anyone in the local area who may have dashcam or doorbell/CCTV footage, showing the incident, or the vehicle involved in this offence.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/appeal-issued-after-car-driven-at-teenagers-during-robbery-in-taunton/) to read the full press release.

**New campaign launched to recruit volunteer police officers**

ASP are launching a new recruitment campaign, asking people to join them and begin a second career as a volunteer police officer.

Volunteer police officers – or Special Constables, as they are known, provide an important link between their community and the police. ASP recognise the benefit that different life experiences and perspectives can bring to policing and are particularly interested in receiving applications from people from an ethnic minority background, and women.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/new-campaign-to-recruit-volunteer-police-officers/) to read the full press release.

**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.