

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 142 Weeks ending 26/02/2023**

**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 design guide shortlisted for national awards**

A Supplementary Planning Document published by SWT has been shortlisted in the Urban Design Group’s National Urban Design Awards for 2022/23.

The SPD document, titled ‘[Design Guide for a zero carbon, healthy, resilient and distinctive environment](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/3285/districtwide-design-guide-adopted-dec2021.pdf)’, was nominated in the awards’ ‘Design Codes’ category in recognition for its achievement in generating high-quality, healthy, resilient and sustainable design outcomes in development and placemaking.

It clearly communicates the Council’s design requirements for all types of planning applications and sets out the Council’s agenda for achieving higher quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places and to address the harmful effects of climate change.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-design-guide-shortlisted-for-national-awards/) 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.

* **Taunton Shadow Town Council – Tuesday 28 February 2023,** at 6.00pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=470&MId=3169). Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Friday 24 February.
* **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 1 March 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=454&MId=3074). Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Monday 27 February.
* **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 2 March 2023,** at 1.00pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=330&MId=3122). Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Tuesday 28 February.
* **Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee – Thursday 2 March 2023,** at 2.00pm 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=420&MId=1679)
* **Become a Councillor Event – Tuesday 7 March 2023,** at 6.00pm in the JMR and Live Webcast. For more information, please see Item 3 below.

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. **#MakeAChange - Become a Councillor**

Local people are being encouraged to find out more about becoming a councillor for the new [Taunton Town Council](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/taunton-parish-council/) at an information event on **7 March**.

The new council – the first grassroots council for Taunton in almost 50 years - will be formed on 1 April, giving residents in the county town more say in what happens locally.

Elections for 20 councillors representing 14 wards on the new council will be held on 4 May 2023.

SWT is hosting the event from 6.00pm-7.30pm at [Deane House](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/contact-us/council-offices/deane-house/), Taunton, for anyone interested in becoming a councillor, regardless of experience.

It will focus on the practicalities of being a councillor and give an opportunity for the public to discover exactly what that entails.

Newly appointed Town Clerk Donna Ford will be at the event which will also be attended by key council officers. There will be the chance to ask questions about what the role of a councillor involves and how to stand for election.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/makeachange-become-a-councillor/) to read the full press release.

1. **Independent Chair appointed to Taunton Garden Town Delivery Board**

Following the award of ‘Garden Town’ status to Taunton by the Government in January 2017, SWT is pleased to announce Jim Claydon as the Independent Chair for the new Taunton Garden Town Delivery Board.

Proposals to establish a Delivery Board were agreed by SWT’s Executive in November last year to ensure robust governance arrangements for its Taunton Garden Town project.

The Delivery Board will provide strategic leadership and oversight of the overall project and will shortly be joined by new Community /Stakeholder and Developer / Landowner Forums.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/independent-chair-appointed-to-taunton-garden-town-delivery-board/) to read the full press release.

1. **Somerset marks one year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine**

Ukrainian families and their hosts in Somerset joined people across the UK to observe the anniversary of the conflict in Ukraine at 11am on Friday, 24 February.

The National moment of reflection paid tribute to the bravery of Ukrainians and highlighted the UK’s solidarity with the country.

On Friday 24 February, the Ukraine flag was raised at public buildings across Somerset to mark one year since Russia invaded Ukraine.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/22/somerset-marks-one-year-since-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - 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. **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.

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

**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 is taking 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**

**Latest news**

**New Constitution: Strategic with a local focus**

The new Constitution for Somerset Council, the legal cornerstone of the new unitary council, has been approved by Somerset County Council.  The ten-part document over 500 pages sets out the Council’s commitment to public participation in its meetings, makes sure that the council meets all its legal duties and supports decision-making and governance.

The new Constitution sets out how Somerset Council will operate; how it will make decisions and the steps needed to make sure the new authority’s decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The new constitution details the roles and responsibilities of the 110 elected members, sets out the Code of Conduct and explains the roles and duties of the Chair, Leader and Executive.

It sets out committee structures and procedures, including the planning and licensing and regulatory committees, how the 18 Local Community Networks (LCNs) will operate and the make-up of their membership, how delegated decision-making will work, as well as policies and protocols.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/23/new-constitution-strategic-with-a-local-focus/) to read the full press release.

**Budget approved for new Somerset Council**

The budget for the new Somerset Council was approved this week (22 Feb 2023).

The budget confirms an overall rise of 4.99% in the council’s share of council tax, made up of a basic rise of 2.99 per cent in council tax and the 2 per cent adult social care levy.  The increase is in line with Government policy and councils across the UK that have responsibility for Adult Social Care and Children’s Services\*.

The first budget for Somerset Council includes substantial increases in funding for Adult Social Care and Children’s Services by £28million and £19 million respectively, to reflect that growth in demand and cost. The new budget provides start-up support for the Local Community Networks (LCN) and has protected funding for the voluntary and community sector.

The Council dropped a proposal to remove funding for many parish grit bins after the option was criticised during public consultation and through Scrutiny and will now concentrate on pilot projects to work with local communities to improve gritting of the secondary network of roads in Somerset.

The rise in Somerset Council’s share of Council Tax is made up of basic rise of 2.99 per cent in Council Tax and the 2 per cent adult social care levy. As a result of these proposals the council tax proposed for a Band D property will increase by £78.24 each year, or £1.50 per week.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/22/budget-approved-for-new-somerset-council/) to read the full press release.

**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 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 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)**

**Council focuses on the bright side of the road with eco-friendly lighting**

Energy efficient lighting is playing an important role as SCC works towards its 2030 carbon neutral target.

Work is underway to replace conventional street lighting with LED equipment across key towns. So far nearly 3,000 conventional lights have been replaced in Minehead, Taunton and Street during 2022.

The new lights cut energy consumption by up to 56 per cent, making this a quick and low-cost intervention with immediate effects.

Phase two in 2023 will see more communities come online with the Signify energy efficient LED street lighting, which is not only eco-friendly, but actually performs better than traditional lighting.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/22/council-focuses-on-the-bright-side-of-the-road-with-eco-friendly-lighting/) to read the full press release.

**SCC Highways maintenance update**

A very busy couple of weeks for the gangs catching up on Safety Defects and thankfully the weather was calmer this week allowing for high numbers of works completed.

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 330 safety defects this week with 147 in Taunton Area and 183 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 **27 February 2023** (subject to change due to weather) are as follows:

**27 February 2023**

* **Minehead A39, Dunster** 61 days Implementation of new footway/cycleway.
* **Honiton Road, Otterford** 3 days Replace damaged guard rail.
* **South Molton Road, Chipstable**  2 days Removal of dangerous Ash tree with Western Power Distribution shut down.
* **Bircham Road, Minehead** 1 day Surfacing and lining works.
* **Bradford Road, Oake** 1 day Putting new sign on existing post.
* **The Pavement, North Curry** 1 day Putting up new sign for parish office on existing post.
* **Wiveliscombe Road** 1 day Putting up one village hall sign.
* **Riphay Criss to Allers Down Lane, Brushford** 5 days Drilling trial holes for essential drainage scheme driven by SCC.

**28 February 2023**

* **Holway Avenue, Taunton** 3 days Replace damaged kerbs and make good road.
* **South Molton Road, Wiveliscombe** 1 day Jetting works.
* **Rockwell Green, Wellington** 1 day Traffic signals to be retrofitted as part of the Somerset Retrofit programme across site 449S Rockwell Green/Popes Lane, Wellington

**2 March 2023**

* **Silk Mills Road, Bishops Hull** 1 day Realignment of street lighting unit (PL39).
* **Slade Way, Williton** 2 days Replacement of street lighting units (PL1 & 2).

**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.

**SCC Education**

**Have your say in the School Term dates and holidays consultation**

Somerset’s residents have been invited to have their say on proposed school holiday, term and staff training dates for Voluntary Controlled and Community Schools for the next two years.

SCC has published two separate consultations: one for the [**2024/25** academic year](https://somerset.inconsult.uk/Termdates2425/consultationHome) and one for the [**2025/26** academic year](https://somerset.inconsult.uk/Termdates2526/consultationHome). Both consultations are open to the general public, but are particularly relevant to all school staff, parents and caregivers with responsibility for school age children. Academies and other school types set their own dates but may choose to align their dates with neighbouring schools.

**The consultation runs until the 17 March with results being published in April.**

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/21/have-your-say-in-the-school-term-dates-and-holidays-consultation/) to read the full press release.

**Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)**

**Partnership Project to deliver iNaturalist training**

Minehead and Coast Development Trust, Somerset Wildlife Trust, The National Trust and Exmoor National Park are working together to deliver two fun, educational nature-based events in March.

* **Saturday 4 March,** the team will be running a training session at the Beach Hotel in Minehead to show people how to use the iNaturalist app to record wildlife and submit records to national and local databases. This will lead into a larger event on:
* **Saturday 25 March** called a BioBlitz which will look to survey the beach during the day to record all wildlife found at different tide levels. As part of the event, the partnership will be running free arts and crafts workshops for kids, a free beach sketching workshop for adults, seashore safaris run by rangers from Exmoor National Park as well as free guided nature-based walks. The aim of the event is to get the local community engaged with their natural environment and to inspire them to protect and learn more about the environment in Minehead and West Somerset.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwildlife.org/events/2023-03-04-inaturalist-training) to book your place at the training event.

**Quantock Hills (AONB)**

**Car Park Closure**

From Monday 6 March for 5 days, Withyman’s Pool car park on Quantock Common will be closed to allow essential repair work to be undertaken.

The car park surface is slumping due to the recent wet and cold weather making it difficult for vehicles to use.

**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.

**North Taunton Partnership**

**Priorswood Community Centre – Treasurer and Trustees Required**

The North Taunton Partnership are seeking individuals to join its board of trustees. They would like to hear from anyone with a willingness to give a little of their time, experience and commitment.

The North Taunton Partnership is a registered charity which has overall responsibility for the legal structure and safe running of the Priorswood Community Centre. It employs 4 part-time members of staff with support from 38 volunteers who undertake various toles within the Community Centre.

If you would like to find out more information please contact Lesley Councill, Manager on 01823 353643 or email lesleycouncill@priorswoodcommunitycentre.co.uk.

**Somerset Community Foundation**

**Intergenerational workshops create understanding and compassion thanks to funding from HPC Community Fund**

Hundreds of young people in education and older people in residential care across Somerset West and Taunton and Sedgemoor have taken part in inclusion and equity workshops delivered by the charity State of Trust. The workshops were funded by a grant for almost £50,000 from the Hinkley Point C (HPC) Community Fund, which is managed by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF).

State of Trust is a small local charity based in Taunton. It builds social cohesion using the arts as a tool to bring communities together and develop relationships through the common language of music and dance.

Following the delivery of the workshops, State of Trust left continuity plans for further sessions for the schools to carry on, cementing the legacy of this work and helping students to see events and people from different perspectives without fear or prejudice.

The HPC Community Fund’s Open Grants Programme is for larger applications for community funding, typically over £10,000. It is an ongoing programme with decisions on Expressions of Interest made quarterly. **The next deadline is Wednesday 29 March**. Visit [www.hpcfunds.co.uk](http://www.hpcfunds.co.uk/) for more details. If you would like to discuss your project or idea please contact Amelia Thompson, Senior Programmes Manager: amelia.thompson@somersetcf.org.uk or call: 01749 344949

Please [click here](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/3029-2) to read the full press release.

**Somerset Independent Living Centres (SILCs)**

**Try out amazing equipment and technology to make daily living easier**

Talking microwaves to help the visually impaired and specially designed lightweight kettles for the elderly are among the fascinating and practical items on display at Somerset’s Independent Living Centres (SILCs).

The SILCs are filled with useful technology and equipment designed to make daily living at home easier for anyone who may need support living independently, such as older people, or people of any age with disabilities, sensory impairments or health conditions.

There are two such centres in Somerset, one in [Wellington](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9vmB4lkQv8) and the other in [Shepton Mallet](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-M6NkIH1CI). Members of the public can book a free appointment to visit the centre, and meet the Occupational Therapy led team at the centre. The team offer impartial information and advice and do live demonstrations of showcasing the range of equipment on offer – most of which can help people in the bathroom, kitchen, or generally moving around the house.

The centres are also a valuable resource for people who are supporting and caring for others, whether that is families and carers, professional care providers, GPs, health workers, or organisations within the voluntary community and social enterprise sector who support people in their own home.

The SILC service is free for people to attend. To book an appointment call 0300 123 2224 or email adults@somerset.gov.uk.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/23/try-out-amazing-equipment-and-technology-to-make-daily-living-easier-at-somerset-independent-living-centres/) to read the full press release.

**Lendology**

**Council-funded loans help homeowners towards net zero**

With the current climate emergency, homeowners may be wondering what they can do to support a reduction in carbon emissions. The rising costs of energy also means many are wondering how to cut their utility bills.

Many homes in the UK struggle to retain heat because of their age and poor energy efficiency, as well as how they are heated. Whether looking to invest in renewable technologies such as solar or heat pumps, or to install energy-saving measures, homeowners may be eligible for an energy efficiency loan to help fund the upfront cost.

Working in partnership with Social Enterprise lender, [Lendology](https://www.lendology.org.uk/), SWT provides accessible finance in the form of low interest loans to homeowners wishing to increase their energy efficiency.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/council-funded-loans-help-homeowners-towards-net-zero/) to read the full press release.

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

**Unbreakable Men**

SASP are excited to announce the return of Unbreakable Men!

The project aims to raise awareness around Men's Mental Health in Somerset and actively encourage you to take ownership over your mental wellness, whilst positively impacting your wellbeing through physical activity!

Please [click here](https://www.sasp.co.uk/unbreakable-men?fbclid=IwAR103tthzuP1PRJcwuXIDl2arTRphMoYscM7cA--ynyH46ANFpPXoiw0b08) to find out more information on the website.

**Spark**

**Roadshow events mark launch of new Somerset Dementia Service**

To mark its launch, the Somerset Dementia Wellbeing Service are holding a series of roadshow events to showcase what support is available to people living with dementia and the local organisations and services that can help.

Attendees can also try the Virtual Dementia Tour Simulator which can help them understand what it feels like to live with the condition and how to better support those affected.

The events are drop in and will take place at a variety of locations including:-

* **Thursday 9 March – Wellington Rugby Club**
* **Monday 20 March - Flook House, Belvedere Road, Taunton**
* **Friday 14 April – Minehead Methodist Hall, The Avenue, Minehead**
* **Thursday 20 April – Victoria Community Centre, Bridgwater**

Please [click here](https://sparksomerset.org.uk/somerset-dementia-service-launch-events?mc_cid=08bd27207f&mc_eid=4aa6243a6d) to visit the website and find out more.

**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.

**West Somerset Food Cupboard (WSFC)**

**Part time Job Opportunity – Operations Assistant**

The WSFC is currently looking for someone who can support the Food Cupboard Manager and Charity’s Trustees in providing emergency food and developing projects like the Local Pantry.

**The closing date for applications is Tuesday 7 March 2023.** Please [click here](https://www.wsfoodcupboard.org.uk/jobs/) to find out more information.

**Health and Welfare**

**NHS Somerset**

**What matters most to you? Help shape the health and care strategy and plans for Somerset**

In Somerset the way we deliver health and care is changing. Public services are coming together, to plan and buy health and care services.

SCC and the NHS in your area, want you to have access to the best possible health and care now and into the future, but they need your help to make this happen. Your feedback will be used to help shape the new Integrated Care Strategy and Five Year Forward Plan.

Please [click here](https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/what-matters-most-to-you/?fbclid=IwAR3kzOgo70jeFYngZX79oGbHjNGHGtI0E9KvggUIAA82dgShnF9VGDNxSIQ) to find out more and take the survey. The survey closes on **Sunday 5 March 2023.**

**Public Health Catch Up Video with Clinton Rogers**

In this week's [Public Health catch up video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nAVx-ldRlQ), Clinton looks at what the new Integrated Care System means for Somerset and how you can help decide what the future of healthcare looks like in Somerset.

Somerset's Integrated Care System wants to hear from you. As one of the 580,000 people living in Somerset you really can help drive this forward. What do you think we need to do as a community, as a county, to make sure everyone can live well? How do we make sure we create thriving communities, break down inequalities and make sure everyone has access to high quality public services when they need them?

**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 vaccination.

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 ended on Sunday 12 February. A Spring Booster will be announced with more details in due course.

[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**

**Stop Scams UK Ltd / Global Cyber Alliance**

**The 159-telephone service**

Consumers wanting to avoid financial fraud now have a secure and easy-to-remember phone number to contact their banks on to avoid painful scams. It could prove to be the safest way for many to contact their provider if they have suspicions and concerns about their accounts, or even if they're struggling to find a customer services number.

Stop Scams UK and Global Cyber Alliance have launched, the UK-wide 159 call service, which is designed to guarantee consumers a safe route to contacting their banks.

The scheme is urging people to "stop, hang up and call 159" to check calls are for real. The idea is to help those who believe they have been contacted by scammers claiming to be their bank, or by fraudsters who encourage them to transfer money.

159 works in the same way as 101 for the police or 111 for the NHS. It’s the number you can trust to get you through to your bank, every time.

Please [click here](https://stopscamsuk.org.uk/159) to find out more about “159”.

**StreetSafe tool**

Local people are being encouraged to use the StreetSafe Tool to anonymously tell ASP and partners about public places where they feel or have felt unsafe.

[StreetSafe](https://www.police.uk/pu/notices/streetsafe/street-safe/) has been introduced as part of the Government’s response to tackling violence against women and girls but all local people are being encouraged to use the tool to help identify areas where there are fears caused by anti-social behaviour and environment issues including lack of street lighting, abandoned buildings and vandalism.

The online tool enables residents to anonymously pinpoint on a map the location where they felt unsafe.

The information provided will be considered alongside the extensive evidence base already gathered by police forces and used to inform the community safety activities of police and partner agencies such as local authorities.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/news/2022/07/tell-us-where-you-dont-feel-safe-with-the-streetsafe-tool/?fbclid=IwAR2wQBH8qXJEhGX5zYyuWeZOhLBMis7ogAQxouEU0KGyWIMCNKdaJMDRTTY) to read the full press release.

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Taunton property closed following anti-social behaviour and drug-related incidents**

A property in Taunton has been closed for three months after a series of drug and anti-social behaviour-related incidents.

Taunton Magistrates’ Court granted a closure order for a flat at Eastbourne Court on Thursday 16 February.

The property has been linked to a series of incidents, including violent crime, affray, anti-social behaviour and drug use.

On visits to the address, officers found weapons linked to other crimes, drugs and drug paraphernalia which supported their request for a closure order.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/taunton-property-closed-following-anti-social-behaviour-and-drug-related-incidents/) to read the full press release.

**Further arrest after man stabbed in Taunton**

A teenage boy remains in police custody and there has been a further arrest after a man was stabbed in Taunton.

Thankfully the man’s injuries are not life-threatening or life-changing, but he continues to receive treatment.

It happened in the park area between Baldwin Road and Monmouth Road, Halcon, just before 3.30pm on Saturday 18 February.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/further-arrest-after-man-stabbed-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.

**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.