

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Final Issue week ending 02/04/2023**

**Key Messages this week**

1. **New Somerset Council**

The new unitary Somerset Council will launch on 1 April 2023. The new unitary council will bring together the services provided by the four district councils in Somerset (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton (SWT), and South Somerset) alongside the services provided by Somerset County Council.

The new Council will continue to work alongside the existing town and parish councils and their role is enhanced through new Local Community Networks.

Working together

On 1 April there will be one website for all your council services. The new website will replace the 6 websites that are currently being used by residents in Somerset.

The new Somerset Council website will use this web address: [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/).

Please [click here](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/how-the-council-works/about-your-new-somerset-council/) to read the full press release.

1. **Formal Notice of election published**

SWT has published notice for the election to Taunton Parish Council being held on Thursday 4 May.

This is the first election to the new Parish Council that comes into being on 1 April 2023. There are 20 seats available in 14 wards across Taunton.

Further information and nomination packs are available from the Taunton Parish Council office at the Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton. Completed nomination papers can be accepted from 28 March and must be received no later than 4pm on Tuesday, 4 April.

They should be hand delivered between 10am and 4pm to: The Deputy Returning Officer at Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, TA1 1HE.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/formal-notice-of-election-published/) to read the full press release.

1. **Purdah – Pre-Election Period**

During local government elections, there is a period described as a ‘period of heightened sensitivity’ (formerly referred to as purdah). For the forthcoming elections, this will be from Monday, 28 March 2023 until Thursday, 4 May 2023. During this time, the focus is on the publicity that certain actions or decisions may create. It certainly does not mean that all council activity halts, that committee decisions cannot be made, nor non-contentious consultations launched.

The ‘election period of heightened sensitivity’ period is really directed at the Councils - the organisations and their staff. The main point is that the organisation or its officers should not be seen to be promoting an individual candidate for the election, especially if they are a current member of any authority, or a dual member of any authority, with real or perceived links to that authority.

Elected Members, who are currently members and seeking election to Taunton Town/Parish Council can continue to express their own views to the press and are at liberty to organise any proactive publicity themselves, **but not** utilising any resources of the council; the auspices of the press offices, photographs that the authorities have paid for or taken.

It is wise for officers to be particularly mindful of any potential publicity before an election. While it is not true that each council cannot issue any publicity just before an election, we need to be cautious because the law makes it clear that **the timing of publicity** is an important factor.

The important detail is that no publicity from any Council at this particularly sensitive time should appear to support a particular candidate or even to support a single specific viewpoint as advocated by a particular candidate.

Should there be individual publicity material produced for any of the candidates, then this would not be distributed by the press offices of the councils, as it could be seen as an endorsement of that candidate.

Any publicity should not be perceived as seeking to influence public opinion or promote the public image of a particular candidate or group of candidates.

Publicity is defined as ‘any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public.’

Examples are:

1. newspapers articles
2. photographs in local press
3. newsletters
4. social media platforms, such as Facebook/Twitter etc
5. web site
6. posters
7. leaflets
8. booklets
9. advertising
10. campaigns
11. exhibitions
12. conferences
13. committee reports
14. and any other kind of public communication can be defined as publicity.

**What can members do?**

Members are, of course, free to comment on any issue that they get asked about directly (i.e., if the press contact members directly) but they should make it clear that it is their own personal or political view, and not the view of any authority.

Members should be reminded that any photographs taken by any authority should not be used in election materials.

The restrictions on political publicity are contained in section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986, as amended by section 27 of the Local Government Act 1988.

**The main point to bear in mind is that a local authority shall not publish any material that, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect support for a candidate or political party.**

If in doubt, please contact:

David Clark, Monitoring Officer (Somerset Council)

David.clark@somerset.gov.uk

Scott Wooldridge, Democratic services (Somerset Council)

Scott.wooldridge@somerset.gov.uk

With effect from the 1April 2023, the email address for contacting the Governance Team will be democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk.

1. **Reminder - Taunton Town Council election: Apply now to vote by post**

Residents in the Taunton area who will not be able to vote in person in the election for the new Taunton Town Council on 4 May should apply now for a postal vote.

You can download an application form via the Electoral Commission's [Apply to vote by post](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/apply-vote-post) webpage **– the deadline for applications is 5pm on 18 April.**

Voters must be registered – it’s quick and easy to register – but after the deadline of 17 April, it will be too late for the May election. The process takes around five minutes – just make sure you have your National Insurance number to hand. It is easy to register [online](https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/register-vote-and-update-your-details), or you can [download a paper form](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/register-to-vote-paper-forms).

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/taunton-town-council-election-apply-now-to-vote-by-post/) to read the full press release.

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.

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. **SWT homes to benefit from additional Energy Efficiency funds**

Last month, SWT announced a £20m [Neighbourhood Energy Efficiency Project](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-homes-to-benefit-from-neighbourhood-energy-efficiency-project/) to help make the districts homes warmer and cheaper to heat. In partnership with the [South West Net Zero Hub](https://www.swenergyhub.org.uk/), SWT has now been awarded over £2.5m of grant funding to deliver over £5m worth of energy efficiency measures to council homes.

Following a successful funding bid by the Southwest Net Zero Hub, people living in over 3,000 social homes in the southwest of England will benefit from improvements to boost energy efficiency. The Hub has received circa £30m to support the delivery of over £82m worth of home upgrades for low-income households across an area from Cornwall to the Solent, with support from a consortium of partners including local authorities and social landlords, of which SWT was a member.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-homes-to-benefit-from-additional-energy-efficiency-funds/) to read the full press release.

1. **Fields in Trust Protection awarded to SWT parks**

Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Council is obtaining special protection from independent charity and green space champions, [Fields in Trust](https://www.fieldsintrust.org/), to preserve Taunton’s [Galmington](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/neighbourhood-parks/galmington-park/), [Comeytrowe](https://www.facebook.com/groups/523531421952945/) and [French Weir](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/large-parks-in-taunton/french-weir-park/) parks as recreational spaces for future generations.

The protection, known as a 'Deed of Dedication', is a legal agreement between Fields in Trust and SWT, which ensures the parks are protected in perpetuity and retained for use as green spaces. Deeds are registered with the [Land Registry](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry) and any checks made on the land will highlight the protection, preventing disposal through sale or lease without the consent of Fields in Trust.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/fields-in-trust-protection-awarded-to-swt-parks/) to read the full press release.

1. **SWT Housing Newsletter – Spring 2023**

SWT Housing has produced the latest tenants’ newsletter which is due to hit doormats soon. Approximately 6000 publications have been printed and will be distributed to all SWT tenants and leaseholders. There has been a particular emphasis on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, paying rent to the new council and how tenants can access help and support.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/media/3849/swt-housing-newsletter-spring-2023.pdf) to access Housing News.

1. **April bolt-on prize announced for Somerset West Lottery players**

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

Anyone buying one or more tickets between now and Saturday, 29 April, could win an Apple tech bundle, comprising a top-of-the-line iPhone 14 Pro, and an Apple Watch series 8 to keep connected on the move, courtesy of external lottery management company, [Gatherwell](https://gatherwell.co.uk/).

Players need not do anything differently – their normal weekly ticket(s) will automatically enter the April bolt-on prize draw.

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

1. **SWT depot set to receive renewable energy source**

Electricity for SWT’s operations depot in Westpark, Wellington, is set to be supplied mostly from renewable energy.

In 2021, construction engineering company, [Hydrock](https://www.hydrock.com/), was commissioned to produce a decarbonisation strategy for selected council assets, prompting SWT to begin transitioning to the use of renewable technologies for its corporate buildings.

A recommendation in the strategy for Westpark Depot advised utilising a roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array coupled with battery storage as a highly viable option, providing a short return on investment and high reduction in energy and carbon usage.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-depot-set-to-receive-renewable-energy-source/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - Gaia Earth artwork is coming to Taunton Minster**

Following the successful Museum of the Moon exhibition in March 2022, SWT is delighted to announce that Luke Jerram’s sister sculpture, “Gaia”, will be coming to Taunton Minster in April 2023.

The exhibition will be free to see at [Taunton Minster](https://www.tauntonminster.org/) between 14 April and 1 May, which encompasses [Earth Day](https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2023/) on 22 April. A specially made surround sound composition by BAFTA award winning Composer, [Dan Jones](https://uk.linkedin.com/in/dan-jones-43a2ba22?original_referer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.co.uk%2F), will be played alongside the sculpture, as well as a series of Earth and environmental inspired events hosted by the Minster.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/gaia-earth-artwork-comes-to-taunton-minster/) to read the full press release.

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

**Changing but not changing….**

From 1 April 2023 a new Somerset Council will replace the county council and four district councils and take on responsibility for all your waste services.

At SWP, all the authorities have worked together on waste services since 2007, so it will be largely business as usual.

Importantly, the collections contractor stays the same (SUEZ) as does the contractor running out recycling sites (Biffa). The SWP team behind the scenes will simply become part of the new council. In short, you shouldn’t notice the switch at all.

There will be a few tweaks though. The SWP web content will shift over to Somerset Council’s new website [www.somerset.gov.uk/waste](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste) when it goes live at the start of April. So, the www.somersetwaste.gov.uk will be no more. Don’t worry you’ll still be able to do all the same things online that you can do through the current site – order containers, report missed collections, subscribe to the garden waste service, check your collections days etc.

A single phone number, 0300 123 2224, replaces district contact numbers and will be taking calls about waste services from the start of April. The new email address is wasteservices@somerset.gov.uk.

SWP will bid a fond farewell to the SWP name and branding. You’ll see some things change immediately (like the website and social media branding) and some gradually over time (like vehicle branding and signage).

This is an exciting new era and SWP look forward to their continuing work with you to waste less and recycle more.

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 SWP 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**

**Council Plan sets out priorities for new Somerset Council**

The new Council Plan was approved unanimously at a meeting of the outgoing Somerset County Council, whose councillors will form the new Somerset Council.

The Somerset Council Plan highlights four key priorities. A further Business Plan, outlining how the Council will deliver services in support of these priorities, will be developed in the coming months.

The key priorities for the new Council are:

* A Greener, More Sustainable Somerset
* A Healthy and Caring Somerset
* A Fairer, Ambitious Somerset, and
* A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/01/one-month-out-council-plan-sets-priorities-for-new-somerset-council/) to read the full press release.

**Can you help? Venues for Local Community Network (LCN) meetings being sought**

Do you manage a community building or village hall that could host a LCN meeting? Ideally it would need to have adequate parking, wi-fi capability and a kitchenette (although this is not essential). Meeting capacity would be for approximately 50 people. Meetings will take place 6-8 times a year during the evening.

If you can help, please email Rachael.robertson@somerset.gov.uk before Tuesday 11 April 2023.

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

**Somerset County Council (SCC)**

**Vital Halse Road drainage scheme gets go ahead**

Somerset Council’s highways team is carrying out essential drainage works on a flood-prone road connecting villages on the outskirts of Taunton from next week (3 April).

Halse Road at Ash Priors, close to Bishops Lydeard, regularly suffers from surface water flooding which runs off from a nearby common. The water freezes in cold weather and this caused a significant problem for road users and residents this winter with excessive wet weather followed by freezing temperatures.

The works will help ensure the road is safe all year round, but it will be necessary to fully close this 250m section for a about a month – **from 3 April to 5 May**. The team will do its utmost to minimise the impact on local residents and access to properties in the immediate area will be maintained throughout.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/30/vital-halse-road-drainage-scheme-gets-go-ahead/) to read the full press release.

**Taunton’s Galmington Road set for essential repairs**

Major surface repairs are to be carried out on Galmington Road in Taunton by Somerset Council’s highways team during the Easter holidays.

Inspections by the team identified the road was in a poor condition and in need of full-width carriageway patching with some deeper excavation needed where the road is significantly damaged.

There will need to be a full daytime closure between 8am and 5pm while the work is carried out from **3-14 April**. This does not include the long Easter weekend or Bank Holiday. Access will be maintained throughout for residents.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/27/tauntons-galmington-road-set-for-essential-repairs/) to read the full press release.

**SCC Highways maintenance update**

A very busy few weeks have now passed for the gangs working on safety defects, but they have managed to catch up with the huge demand.

The drainage improvement works at Combe Florey and Maidenbrook Lane Taunton have been completed this week. SCC Highways thank the public for their continued forbearance whilst these essential works were undertaken.

SCC safety defect numbers have continued to be high this week due to the amount of rain washing out areas that were damaged by the earlier freezing conditions, but they are now at a manageable level as we go into the new financial year and new Council!

Our contractors’ gangs have successfully repaired 232 safety defects this week with 107 in the Taunton Area and 125 in West Somerset. Thi is an incredible figure.

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.

**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**

**ttro743652TD - Galmington Road, Comeytrowe**

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;

**Galmington Road** - from the junction of Trull Road, to the junction of Shepherds Way for a total distance of 950 metres This Order will enable Milestone Infrastructure to carry out patching work. **The works are expected to commence on 3 April 2023 and last for 12 days.**

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

Please [click here](https://one.network/?tm=132320069) to see the map and details on alternative routes.

**Young people urged to have their say on Somerset’s transport future**

SCC has launched a survey to capture the views of young people across the county on the future of transport.

The survey was complied with the help of the Somerset Youth Parliament and their deputies who belong to the UK-wide group representing the voices of young people.

The survey is on [Somerset’s Commonplace website](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsomersetsustainabletransport.commonplace.is%2F&data=05%7C01%7Candrew.doyle%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cfca9c74857164746a66f08db2b939cf4%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C638151685251363496%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=YzNNa1pQmotq0Ygxf%2BFIF7vpjAmfwV9UqQ3OyFVygrw%3D&reserved=0) which informs and collects the views of people in the county on sustainable travel provision and planning.

The survey gives young people in the county the chance to have a say on how they want transport to work in the future. Their views will help inform policy, shape sustainable transport solutions and in turn help to combat climate change and improve health.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/23/young-people-urged-to-have-their-say-on-somersets-transport-future/) to read the full press release.

**Think Travel**

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

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

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

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

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

You can check out “Think Travel” here: [https://somerset.thinktravel.info.](https://somerset.thinktravel.info/)

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

**UK Government – New Emergency Alerts system**

A new Emergency Alerts system to safeguard and protect lives across the UK has been launched this week.

It will transform the UK’s warning and informing capability, providing a means to get urgent messages quickly to nearly 90% of mobile phones users in a defined area when there is risk to life, providing clear instructions on how best to respond.

On Sunday 23 April 2023, there will be a national test of the UK Emergency Alerts service. The government does not need to know your phone number of location to send you an alert.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/alerts?fbclid=IwAR3amJlrilNDwOJoHTbzNXh7g3uM_rIZMv3LX-_jq8lZc57M_puvnm8w6nw) to read the full press release.

**HM Coastguard Watchet**

**Recruitment for new volunteers is now open.**

As a team HM Coastguard is trained in Cliff, Mud and Water Rescue, along with Lost and Missing Persons Search and Casualty Care.

For more information on what the role involves please head to:

[https://www.gov.uk/volunteer-as-a-coastguard](https://www.gov.uk/volunteer-as-a-coastguard?fbclid=IwAR3GndTQ2hk-WNX85oKsHbS-3-87FgjFCf4BKeGYEVZb88xEuto0a8x66AE).

For anyone interested in applying, the team will be holding a briefing session outside the Coastguard Station, Watchet Esplanade on Monday 27 March between 7:00-8:30pm.

**The closing date for applications is noon on the 2 April 2023**.

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

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

**Talking Café Live (CCS)**

**Wednesday at 1pm**

The Talking Cafe is an information and support cafe providing free advice and support to the public, run by the CCS Village and Community Agents.

Online sessions broadcast live each Wednesday at 1pm where you can find out about the wonderful support available to people in Somerset, listen to people's fascinating stories and learn about what's happening in communities - all from the comfort of your own home! Watch any time on catch up.

Please [click here](https://www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset) to visit the Facebook page and see who will be joining the April Talking Café Live sessions.

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

**Somerset Moves Activity Finder**

SASP is powering the brand-new Somerset Moves Activity Finder which launches on the 3 April 2023 and will be a one-stop-shop for all physical activity and sport opportunities in Somerset.

The new activity finder will make it easier for Somerset residents to find and book activities online, as a study by Sport England showed that **1 in 5 adults** have been put off physical activity because it was too difficult to find or book online. It is hoped that this resource can assist in breaking down some of the barriers people face when it comes to participating in physical activity.

SASP have chosen to move to open data with the launch of the new activity finder as this will help to keep session information up to date. By harnessing open data, the activity providers themselves, will have the ability to make changes to their session information, when using an Open Active enabled system, their session data can be linked to their own website and the activity finder, meaning they will only have to make changes in one place and their session information will automatically be changed and pulled through to the activity finder as well as their own website.

Please [click here](https://www.sasp.co.uk/news/2023/03/somerset-moves-activity-finder) to read the full press release.

**Community Employment Hubs**

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

Our friendly team can help you with:

* Guidance on opportunities for learning, training and work
* Confidence building to return to work
* Help with job applications, covering letters, CVs and interview skills
* Referral for further support including IT, Citizens Advice, apprenticeship advice, Citizens Advice and positive mental health
* Links to volunteer work
* Identify any other barriers that stop you from progressing
* Regular one to one support for as long as you need it
* We are meeting face to face, come and visit us to make an appointment or use the email below to arrange a time:

Where we are and when we are open:

* **Wellington Baptist Church**, South Street TA21 8NS 10am to 12pm (every 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month)
* **Minehead** The hub, Alcombe Minehead (next to fire station) TA24 6DJ 10am to 12pm (every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month)
* **Williton**, Council Office, The Chamber, Killick Way, Williton, West Somerset, TA4 4QA 10am to 12pm (every 1st Thursday of the month)
* **Taunton** Charis Centre, 16 – 17 Hammet Street, TA1 1RZ 10am – 12pm (every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month)
* **Stogursey** Youth Club, TA5 1PR, (next to the Victory Hall) 10am – 12pm on a Tuesday once a month, please use employment support email below to book an appointment

**Volunteers needed**

Could you help and support people in your local community towards work? If the answer’s yes, you will need the desire to help others, have general life experiences, as well as the enthusiasm to motivate people and raise their confidence and self-esteem. If you can spare some time, you could be just the volunteer, we value at any of our hub locations as listed above.

Volunteering roles on offer:

* one to one support
* admin
* meet and greet
* making tea/coffee

The Employment Hubs focus on offering one to one practical support such as CV writing, searching and applying for work, how to deal with online application forms, help with interviews and signposting to other agencies for further help and support.

For more information email: employmentsupport@somerset.gov.uk.

**Health and Welfare**

**Healthy Start Vouchers**

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

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

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

You can also use your card to collect:

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

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

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

**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 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”.

**Action Fraud**

**Warning issued to WhatApp users over account takeover scam**

Action Fraud has received over 60 reports relating to a scam that steals access to a WhatsApp user's account.

The scam begins when a criminal gets access to another WhatsApp account which has you listed as a contact.

The criminal, posing as your friend or someone that’s a member of a WhatsApp group you’re in, will then send you seemingly normal messages to try and start a conversation with you.

However, around the same time you will receive a text message from WhatsApp with a six-digit code. This is because the criminal has been trying to login to WhatsApp using your mobile number.

The criminal will claim that they sent you their code by accident and ask you to help them by sending it to them. Once the criminal has this code, they can login to your WhatsApp account and lock you out.

The criminal will then use the same tactic with your WhatsApp contacts in an effort to steal more accounts and use them to perpetrate fraud.

Please [click here](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/alert/warning-issued-to-whatsapp-users-over-account-takeover-scam) to read the full press release.

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Poaching – The importance of reporting**

With recent reports of poaching activity, ASP continue to urge members of the public to report any incidents of Poaching and Coursing, by calling 999 (if in progress) or reporting via 101 or on-line after the event.

You can pass on Important Intelligence via 101 alternatively if you wish to remain anonymous you can call Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

Please do not approach those taking part in this activity but please try to obtain as much information as possible:

* Location (consider WHAT3WORDS)
* Vehicle involved (type/colour)
* How many person/s involved descriptions.
* Dogs / weapons involved.
* Photos /video evidence can be helpful.

Please remember – don’t put yourself at any risk!

**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.

**Somerset Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)**

**Spring Events 2023 - Free training and webinars**

This April and May, you are invited to join the VDU’s free webinars and training held in Somerset to help promote violence reduction across the county.

Spaces are limited, so it is advised to book early to avoid disappointment.  Please click on the links below for information and booking:

**In Person Conferences**

Violence Reduction Conference (a training and networking day for operational managers and supervisors)
[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/557799692897](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F557799692897&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=gFErUyV972R3IuDQwgBY9biC3h4Z4Mbj%2BcVedEyOze4%3D&reserved=0) - **25 April 2023**

Violence Reduction Training - Promoting Healthy Relationships in Adolescence
[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/557836212127](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F557836212127&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WCnn%2FfAHDFr8HAKhLldmjID5c7xYnQCtU6xDoih8jLU%3D&reserved=0) - **26 April 2023**

Violence Reduction Training - Violence Against Women and Girls

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/557844617267](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F557844617267&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=UnQdN%2BlB7fqYZWZQwmD9hmog3uMoeE99MBDx%2FliZ1Q8%3D&reserved=0) - **15 May 2023**

Violence Reduction Training - Criminal Exploitation and Organised Crime

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/557884235767](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F557884235767&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=CnKCc%2BQQ9IfuSFK%2B%2FtlNNxrcbabRwATRqiINYjUNCbI%3D&reserved=0) - **22 May 2023**

**Online Webinars**

Violence Reduction (online) Training - County Lines and Young People. 4 available sessions.

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/557948257257](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F557948257257&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=LpySjy%2FvG3ILpME%2BJDOGtQfwzZ9gd2%2BoU4pcmadoTVY%3D&reserved=0) - **18 May 2023**

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/557982128567](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F557982128567&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=PVieJvaab4bYRD8Ji7uq24oGjwmYNvDSJCaL6ny%2FGIs%3D&reserved=0) - **23 May 2023**

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/558003723157](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F558003723157&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=qd0n9w05gL6y8MGT6HWufFyOSdl0szBY80FSXJQcFZA%3D&reserved=0) - **24 May 2023**

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/558021857397](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F558021857397&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=nFhSGNhZEkO%2FTanem8Z1q96jqhqADx0dxCxVlktdf1Q%3D&reserved=0) - **25 May 2023**

Violence Reduction (online) Training - Peer and Familial Harmful Sexual Behaviours (amongst adolescents). 2 available sessions.

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/574277588727](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F574277588727&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=fm7V32sg7GCmV4zpFMy6nzW44mg4ERBn8gV3cTyWGVY%3D&reserved=0) - **16 May 2023**

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/574272082257](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F574272082257&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=raQ4TNkqy6kFAMr50p8hasrTeFJRTIQsiT0RZU1a22A%3D&reserved=0) - **18 May 2023**

Violence Reduction (online) Training - Responding to sexual abuse disclosures (in adults over 18). 2 available sessions.

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/574264389247](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F574264389247%2520-9&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2BcKU2SIntM9HTTQ6Y9y2Xwdxf7%2FlREygEl0QCAgyhYE%3D&reserved=0) - **9 May 2023**

[https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/574270798417](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eventbrite.co.uk%2Fe%2F574270798417&data=05%7C01%7CCharmaine.dyne%40avonandsomerset.police.uk%7C7530a71adb1c473ce94508db26260b7a%7C2d72816c7e1f41c0a94847a8870ff33a%7C0%7C0%7C638145717105271222%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KFth6CIoj%2F9mtrvSslgalvY3HnU%2BX9MCdvKUa2Ek%2BBk%3D&reserved=0)  - **12 May 2023**

Please share this email with colleagues and contact the violence reduction unit, vrueventsbooking@somerset.gov.uk with any queries.

**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)