

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 144 Weeks ending 12/03/2023**

**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. **Round Two of energy saving grants now open to businesses**

SWT is launching a second round of Energy Efficiency grants to help small and micro businesses become greener as part of its commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2030.

Carbon cutting grants worth up to £2,500 will be made available to businesses with up to nine employees to help fund energy reduction and net-zero transition projects.

There are many ways in which businesses can reduce their carbon footprint, from reducing waste by re-using and recycling to limiting energy use at night and replacing fuel-powered vehicles with electric cars and bikes.

Businesses will need to undertake eligible projects to claim back what they have spent, capped at £2,500.

As the scheme is being made available through Hinkley Point C’s developer contributions for business support funding, applications from businesses within the West Somerset locality of Somerset West and Taunton will be prioritised.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/round-two-of-energy-saving-grants-now-open-to-businesses/) to read the full press release.

1. **Democracy and Governance**

**Committee Meetings**

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all SWT [Committee meetings](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/council-meetings/). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

* **SWT Audit and Governance Committee – Monday 13 March 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=455&MId=3032) Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 9 March.
* **SWT Executive Committee – Wednesday 15 March 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on eh [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=326&MId=3052). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 13 March.
* **Taunton Charter Trustees – Thursday 16 March 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=405&MId=3177). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 14 March 2023.
* **The Exmoor Area Panel – Thursday 16 March 2023,** at 7.00pm at The Moorland Hall, Wheddon Cross, TA24 7DU. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=265&MId=3134).
* **SWT Licensing Committee – Monday 20 March 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 16 March.

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. **First round of works completed for new playing field**

SWT has completed the first stage of work for a new community playing field at Stembridge Way, Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton.

Work on the new playing field began in November 2022 with the first phase allocated to the construction of a tennis court, multi-use games area and car park, which completed at the end of last month (February 2023).

SWT has allocated approximately £500,000 towards the cost of the project, funded using Section 106 contributions from a nearby housing development at St. Modwen.

The next phase will see the creation of a football pitch and an attenuation pond between the spring and summer, as well as finishing touches to the car park, tennis court and multi-use games area.

All facilities are expected to come into use by the autumn of next year, whereby responsibility for the future maintenance of the site will transfer to [Norton Fitzwarren Parish Council](https://www.nortonfitzwarrenparishcouncil.com/), who helped choose which facilities would be most beneficial for the local community.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/first-round-of-works-completed-for-new-playing-field/) to read the full press release.

1. **Gaia Earth artwork comes 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.

At six metres in diameter and created from 120dpi detailed NASA imagery of the Earth’s surface, the touring artwork “Gaia” provides the opportunity to see Earth floating in three dimensions.

In Greek Mythology, “Gaia” is the personification of the Earth, and the artwork has been made to communicate a sense of the fragility of the planet. It has been created in partnership with the [Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)](https://www.ukri.org/councils/nerc/), [Bluedot Festival](https://www.discoverthebluedot.com/profile/gaia-by-luke-jerram/), and the UK [Association for Science and Discovery Centres (ASDC)](https://www.sciencecentres.org.uk/).

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. **SWT Climate News – Issue 11 now available**

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. Each new edition is circulated to all subscribers at the beginning of every month, and the March issue is available to read now.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/climate-change-newsletter/) to find out more information.

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

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

Anyone buying one or more tickets between now and Saturday, 25 March, could win a trip to Centre Parcs for a sporty break, a relaxing weekend in the forest, or some time away with the family – 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 new bolt-on prize draw.

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

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

The knock-on effects of snow disruption continue, and crews will be working on Saturday to ensure there are no outstanding refuse collections by the end of the week.

**Refuse collections missed in parts of the Exmoor Area on Wednesday 8 March, will be returned for this Saturday 11 March.**

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 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 few weeks have now passed for the gangs catching up on Safety Defects and they have caught up with the huge demand. This week the Arctic Blast brought snow to a large part of the region; allowing the SCC Highways team the opportunity to use the new snowblowers up on Exmoor which worked very well.

The preparatory works for the re-surfacing are now complete on the A39 Selworthy Parish at Venniford near Minehead. SCC Highways thank the public for their forbearance whilst these essential works were undertaken. The resurfacing will be carried out in the evenings week commencing 13 March 2023.

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.

Contractors’ gangs have successfully repaired 129 safety defects this week with 88 in the Taunton Area and 41 in West Somerset which is another good week.

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 March 2023** (subject to change due to weather) are as follows:

**13 March**

* **Bagley Green, Wellington** 5 days Temporary No Right Turn onto A38 Exeter Road for a duration of the vegetation clearance works at A38.
* **Wellshead Lane, Exford** 5 days Replace 9m of 150mm pipe between 2 gullies and form 1 new gully.
* **Whiteball Road, Sampford Arundel** 5 days Road closure to aid Traffic Management on A38 for vegetation clearance works.
* **A39 Selworthy, Minehead Road**  3 days Resurfacing under night road closure (3 Nights) 8:00pm-7:00am.
* **Severidges Road, Ashbrittle** 1 day Jetting Works
* **Cornishway West, Bishops Hull** 3 days Replacement of streetlighting unit PL5
* **Cornishway North, Bishops Hull** 3 daysReplacement of streetlighting units - Pl's 2,3,4,6,7 & 9.
* **Yarford Road, Kingston St Mary** 1 day Jetting Works
* **Runnington Lane, Runnington** 1 day Jetting Works
* **Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton** 3 days Replacement of streetlighting unit (PL11 & PL12).
* **High Street, Bishops Lydeard** 1 day Installing new SID post
* **Whitefield Rocks, Wiveliscombe** 1 day Jetting Works
* **Wellington Road, Taunton** 3 days GMIS Patching
* **Exeter Road, Sampford Arundel** 5 days Vegetation Clearance
* **Holywell Lake Road, Sampford Arundel** 5 days No Right Turn during vegetation clearance at A38.

**14 March**

* **Bridgwater Road, Bathpool** 2 daysDefect works - reinstatement around a number of manhole covers.
* **Upper Holway Road, Taunton** 3 days Replacement of streetlighting units (PL17 & 18)
* **Holway Road, Taunton** 3 days Replacement of streetlighting units (PL12,13,14,18,21-26)
* **Hankridge Dual Carriage Way, Taunton** 2 days Defect works - reinstatement around a number of manhole covers.
* **Magdalene Street, Taunton** 1 day Jetting Works

**15 March**

* **Ilminster Road, Thornfalcon** 2 days Realignment of sign unit 'F'
* **Kingston Road, Taunton** 2 days Replacement of streetlighting unit (PL23)

**17 March**

* **Toulton Road, Cothelstone** 1 day Jetting Works

**Reporting a problem on the road**

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

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

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

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

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

**Temporary Road Closures**

**ttro095757TD - Canon Street, Taunton**

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; **Canon Street - from the junction with St. James Street, south-eastwards for a total distance of 100 metres.**

**This Order will enable Wessex Water to carry out works to replace a chamber.**

The works are expected to commence on **15 March 2023 and last until 17 March 2023 between the hours of 6:30pm - 6:00am for a total of 3 nights.**

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=132152581) for further information on the alternative route.

**ttro957461TD - Honiton Rd, Otterford**

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; **Honiton Road - from the junction with Adcombe Lane, south westwards for a total distance of 755 metres.**

**This Order will enable Milestone Infrastructure to carry out resurfacing works.**

The works are expected to take place on **16 March 2023 between the hours of 07:30am - 6:30pm for a total of 11 hours.**

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=131458064) for further information on the alternative route.

**“Bus It” bonus as £2 single bus fare in Somerset is extended to the summer**

Bus users in Somerset can now travel on most routes in the county and beyond for just £2 until July.

The major fare cut is part of a national initiative funded by the Government aimed at boosting bus use while helping passengers to save money. It was introduced in January and was originally due to end on 31 March.

Now thanks to further funding it will continue for an extra three months, until 30 June. It’s welcome news for people in Somerset as the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite, fuelled in part by high petrol and diesel prices.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/02/bus-it-bonus-as-2-single-bus-fare-in-somerset-is-extended-to-the-summer/) to read the full press release.

**Think Travel**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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)**

**Free online directory supports Exmoor Businesses**

A brand-new online directory of businesses operating in and around Exmoor National Park has been launched as part of the Rural Enterprise Exmoor initiative which seeks to retain greater community wealth in the area. The site can be found at [https://directory.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](https://directory.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/) and already has over 200 listings, with other businesses from all sectors urged to sign-up for free.

A priority for the Rural Enterprise Exmoor vision, developed by the National Park Authority alongside partners, has been connecting businesses across the area and encouraging individuals and businesses to use local tradesmen, services, suppliers, and producers to retain greater economic benefits to the area while minimising impacts on the special environment of Exmoor.

Please [click here](https://myemail.constantcontact.com/News-from-Exmoor--Free-online-directory-supports-Exmoor-businesses.html?soid=1102765974837&aid=FUkD-LnB0uU) to read the full press release.

Please [click here](https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/safety/home/stay-warm-safely-winter?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Orlo&utm_content=%23SaveSafely) to read the latest safety advice.

**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.

**Talking Café Live (CCS)**

**Wednesdays at 1.00pm**

Coming up on March's live streamed Talking Cafes with the CCS Village Agents; bringing useful local information and services to you in the comfort of your own home

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* **15 March** - [Medequip Community Equipment Service](https://www.facebook.com/MedequipUK?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZXGy8XXN5XG1bQFnfc-W0DE__hIz9eD7E8Yj5QVgbQLyWOwij8J2jFqdfc9NU6Q8fiJ6jeodLWv-6oYeDayAJDnyK5A3RTzX3YgAsHTQdtm_bsfaH4NQmkAsKDBAHppg_LKXbXj9g4LM51tWTacAtjsof_jePbGyrI0SE5wKSaxqXI_dilFeKOLCEDNG_WtNG4&__tn__=-%5dK-R) NHS suppliers of accessible equipment for independent living in Somerset
* **22 March** - [In Charley's Memory](https://www.facebook.com/ICMCharity?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZXGy8XXN5XG1bQFnfc-W0DE__hIz9eD7E8Yj5QVgbQLyWOwij8J2jFqdfc9NU6Q8fiJ6jeodLWv-6oYeDayAJDnyK5A3RTzX3YgAsHTQdtm_bsfaH4NQmkAsKDBAHppg_LKXbXj9g4LM51tWTacAtjsof_jePbGyrI0SE5wKSaxqXI_dilFeKOLCEDNG_WtNG4&__tn__=-%5dK-R) Counselling services for young people
* **29 March** - Volunteering - A Full Circle Story

How a man was helped by volunteers in his childhood, the impact it had, and how he now helps others.

Watch live on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube LIVE! Take part and ask questions in the comments.

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

**Funding received to support Somerset Schools to open their sports facilities to help communities be more active**

SASP has been awarded a share of up to £57m worth of Opening School Facilities investment from the Department for Education, to support schools to open their sporting facilities for local community and school users outside of the normal school day.

Schools play a vital role in encouraging children and young people to be more active. This funding will enable 20 local schools to open up their facilities for children, young people and the wider community to access more opportunities to be physically active, before school, after school, during weekends, evenings and school holidays.

SASP has been working with local stakeholders to identify those communities and people that would most benefit from increased access to facilities to help them be more physically active.

Schools can use this funding to purchase equipment to deliver new or additional clubs, to train employees to obtain qualifications to deliver new or additional activities and to pay for activity deliverers to run the clubs. They can also use funding to open their school swimming pools for pupils, focusing on providing valuable swimming and water safety lessons during and outside of the school day.

Please [click here](https://www.sasp.co.uk/news/2023/03/funding-received-to-support-somerset-schools-to-open-their-sports-facilities-to-help-communities-to-be-more-active) to read the full press release.

**Spark**

**Community Food Forum**

**Tuesday 14 March, online from 7.00pm-8.30pm**

A free forum for anyone in Somerset involved with initiatives that use food, growing and gardening to support positive change.

The cost-of-living crisis has highlighted the importance of food provision and growing projects in local communities and it’s vital that we keep talking to each other.

This free forum will be jointly hosted by Spark Somerset and Somerset Community Food

Whether you’re involved with a local allotment, community fridge or foodbank, therapeutic garden, cooking class or any other initiative which uses food, growing and gardening to support positive change, please come and join for the chance to network and share peer support, learning and best practice.

Please [click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/community-food-forum-tickets-541052351147) to reserve your space.

**Health and Welfare**

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

**Orange Button Scheme – Suicide awareness**

In this week’s Public Health catch up video, Clinton raises awareness that it’s time to talk about [#suicide](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/suicide?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZXRgwLVJe1bXDuu1gCY1czkulMBETnrOojtndi1wyccMmfGLAjcnaiTmRKF-l63RMyADiygl-l0IwI1NuEL22asI4DpjHkLxZL0FEuO5vzxHvjJc6e_sBR11VzZfsSz4hVrR2TpXL6wJsWxKch9UwBKHdFRcQAQM-eOBxilH516Q0PNCy0xr_JWboRgzeU1dZHfV4qjz6bXFtYzzFLfjTXB&__tn__=*NK-R).

The Orange Button community awareness scheme funded by the Public Health team, aims to support people who are having thoughts of suicide, or are worried about a friend or family member.

Suicide can affect anybody and there isn’t a community in Somerset where people haven’t been touched by suicide.

If you’re interested in finding out more about the Orange Button scheme check out the website: <https://www.healthysomerset.co.uk/support.../orange-button/>

Please [click here](https://www.facebook.com/SomersetCouncilUK/videos/170766712415158) to watch the video and find out more.

**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**

**Which? Consumer Rights**

**How to spot a text message scam**

Messaging scams can be very convincing, so it’s important to know what to watch out for to stay ahead of the fraudsters. Scammers are increasingly taking advantage of smartphones and are getting very clever with how they try to take your hard-earned money.

They can even make it look like a legitimate organisation is contacting you via text or a messaging app by using identity masking technology to change the name displayed as the sender. This is known as ‘number spoofing’.

If you get sent a scam message, it’s important you report it so others don’t fall victim. Reporting a scam message is free and it will help stop the spread of these messages

Fraudsters can use many different types of messaging systems and apps, like SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber, Skype, Google Hangouts, Snapchat and many other platforms to try scam you out of your money.

Please [click here](https://www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/advice/how-to-report-a-scam-aG3sH5L8tjeP) to find out how to report scams and warn others.

**Spot a scam bank message**

If you get a message purporting to be from your bank, always treat this with caution. And know the eight things your bank will never ask you.

Your bank should **never:**

* Ask for your Pin or internet banking password
* Send someone to your home to collect cards or banking information
* Ask you to email or text personal or banking information
* Email a link where you have to then input your internet banking details
* Ask you to authorise a funds transfer which you haven’t requested
* Tell you to invest in diamonds, land or other commodities
* Ask you to carry out a test transaction
* Send you to a mobile app other than their own official app

**How to avoid message scams**

Here are a few tips to help you avoid message scams.

* **Don't follow any links**

This is the most effective way to avoid text scams. Links can take you to cloned websites designed to steal your money or personal data. Because links are often shortened to help them fit into the message, it’s not always easy to tell the real ones from the fakes. Clicking on links could also lead you to download malware - malicious software that can take over your phone and access your data.

* **Don't share personal information**

Treat all messages requesting sensitive information - or that link you to websites asking for personal details - with suspicion. Legitimate organisations will never text you to ask for your personal or banking details upfront.

* **Contact the organisation directly if you're unsure**

If you're not sure if a text is real, contact the company that claims to have sent it to check. Use the official contact details listed on the company’s website or documents you might have been sent, if it's your bank then you can usually find its official number on the back of your credit or debit card.

* **Don't reply**

Replying to a fake text, calling the number it’s been sent from or clicking through on suspicious links only lets the scammers know your number is being used. You might be bombarded with even more scam messages and calls. The number has likely been spoofed anyway, which means you’ll probably only be messaging an innocent member of the public who has had their number stolen.

* **Report it**

You report the fake text by forwarding it to 7726 - a free reporting service provided by phone operators. This information is then shared with the police and intelligence agencies working to stop text scams. If you've fallen victim to a text scam, you can report it to [Action Fraud](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/).

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**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.