

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 145 Weeks ending 19/03/2023**

**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. **Taunton town centre CCTV gets digital upgrade**

SWT has upgraded eleven of Taunton town centre’s CCTV cameras from analogue to digital.

The new cameras, which run through the centre of town from Staplegrove Road to East Street, will provide better picture quality to help with crime prevention.

They will also be used in a safeguarding capacity to ensure the welfare of vulnerable people and for general operational activities in partnership with Avon and Somerset Police and Sedgemoor District Council to monitor shoplifters, known offenders, anti-social behaviour and public nuisances.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/taunton-town-centre-cctv-gets-digital-upgrade/) 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 Licensing Committee – Monday 20 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=329&MId=3036). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 16 March.
* **SWT Planning Committee – Monday 27 March 2023,** at 10:00am 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=3182). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 23 March.
* **SWT Tenants Strategic Group – Monday 27 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=435&MId=3162)
* **SWT Full Council – Tuesday 28 March 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 24 March.
* **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 30 March 2023,** at 10:30am in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 28 March.
* **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 30 March 2023,** at 1.00pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 28 March.
* **Taunton Shadow Town Council – Thursday 30 March 2023,** at 6.00pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 28 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. **Reminder - Round Two of energy saving grants now open**

SWT has launched 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.

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. **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. **Reminder - 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. **Reminder - 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)**

**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**

**Latest news**

**Councils celebrate shared history at Wells Cathedral**

A special service of Thanksgiving took place at Wells Cathedral on Sunday 12 March to mark an historic milestone in Somerset’s history.

The service celebrated the contribution and coming together of Somerset’s five councils before Somerset Council comes into effect on Saturday 1 April.

Councillors and staff from the councils – Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset District Councils, and Somerset County Council, took part in the Choral Evensong at the Cathedral.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/15/councils-celebrate-shared-history-at-wells-cathedral/) to read the full press release.

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

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

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

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

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

**Somerset County Council (SCC)**

**SCC Highways maintenance update**

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

The re-surfacing works are now complete on the A39 Selworthy Parish at Venniford near Minehead. Unfortunately, at the post resurfacing inspection it was discovered that a gully was broken, possibly as a result of heavy plant passing over it during the night work. SCC Highways have therefore arranged to repair it on the **21 and 22 March** during the daytime, but under temporary traffic lights. This will mean that local communities will be able to move along the A39, but there may be some disruption. SCC Highways thank the public for their continuing forbearance whilst these essential works are undertaken.

SCC safety defect 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 89 safety defects this week with 52 in the Taunton Area and 37 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.

**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.

**Council urges young drivers to “Think!” before taking risks on country roads**

SCC is backing a major new campaign aimed at younger drivers to raise awareness of the dangers of excessive speed on rural roads.

The Department for Transport launched its Think! campaign earlier this month on video and radio and the Council is set to roll out its own radio version of the campaign this week.

The ads focus on a young driver eager to meet up with friends and will underline key messages around taking care, reducing speed and respecting the road layout, particularly on rural roads.

A quarter of incidents involving fatalities or serious injuries on Somerset’s rural roads involve younger drivers.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/15/council-urges-young-drivers-to-think-before-taking-risks-on-country-roads/) to read the full press release.

**“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.

**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 an educational nature-based event in March.

**Saturday 25 March - BioBlitz** 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)**

**Plantlife: saving wild plants**

Did you know that we have [rainforests](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/rainforests?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZU_mLWIDRfbygKop2phanF7BRmzb5G7P9UrUVp3l1r5FFjDDphmaXykIcJYZujiGM5JEvvP8ZtsSLJn1F_hSWsQA5oN3lCQqLmZoM8NJJ276rWoGual_xU_aVRrIn3yzb3NPR12wLhwedQ2YBUbg2GKRNkUOdT0M1seE7ika07AOBUzbscM4kTlGvrCGdwb_csmjPEcVL970ObcsmmFAw52&__tn__=*NK-y-R) in Britain too?

Temperate rainforests: Lush and humid woodlands where plants grow on other plants can be found in fragments in Britain in western Scotland, the Lake District, West Wales and the South West of England

The historic decline of rainforests puts some species at risk of extinction as this habitat is their only known home. Some species are only able to survive in rainforest conditions and internationally important populations of lichens, mosses, and liverworts adorn Britain’s rainforests.

[Plantlife](https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/about-us) have been working in partnership with a number of organisations, backed by National Lottery, to manage and protect temperate rainforest in South West England as part of the ‘Building Resilience in South West Woodlands’ Project.

Please [click here](https://www.plantlife.org.uk/uk/about-us/news/building-resilience-rare-rainforests?fbclid=IwAR0rW-ER8GS4NRfv1d8YRvhTi5p8OGXvovwRLR1Pa8boysEF5AXf9Os5uzA) to read the full press release.

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

**Online Community Conversation**

**Wednesday 29 March, 12:00-1:00pm on Microsoft Teams**

DSFRS friendly experts will share helpful fire safety tips to keep you safer in your home and community. They would also like to hear about anything else fire service related that’s on your mind, and ask your opinion about current issues.

This event will take place on Microsoft Teams and will last an hour. Each session will start with a 10-minute presentation on seasonal fire safety advice, followed by a general discussion and question and answer session.

Please [click here](https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/safety/home/community-conversations?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Orlo) 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**

**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

* **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)**

**New funding to help keep leisure centres with pools afloat**

Publicly owned leisure centres with swimming pools have been handed a financial boost following the announcement of a major new fund in this week's Spring Budget.

On Wednesday, the Chancellor of the Exchequer outlined that £63 million of new money will be made available in a one-year-fund.

The fund, which will be managed by Sport England, will allow local authorities to apply for funding for leisure centres with pools that face immediate cost pressures including operational and maintenance costs, and energy bills.

There are more than 2,000 public leisure centres in England, over 800 of which have pools, and these play a vital role in helping communities engage with sport and physical activity. They provide vital services which are not available through other providers.

Please [click here](https://www.sasp.co.uk/news/2023/03/new-funding-to-help-keep-leisure-centres-with-pools-afloat) to read the full press release.

**Health and Welfare**

**Council extends online support for carers with new digital service**

Many Somerset residents who provide unpaid care do not access the support available to them. This could be because they do not see themselves as carers because they are simply supporting a relative, friend or neighbour who needs them to due to disability or illness.

SCC has recently launched a three-month pilot project with [Mobilise](https://www.mobiliseonline.co.uk/our-story), an online business created by carers to help unpaid carers get the support they are entitled to. The new pilot will use social media and digital marketing to help find and identify ‘unpaid carers’ in Somerset and link them with the support that is available to them.

Mobilise will work directly with the existing commissioned Carers Service, including the Community Council for Somerset Agents, to ensure that targeted information will be given to carers and their families.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/15/council-extends-online-support-for-carers-with-new-digital-service/) to read the full press release.

**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:-

* **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.

**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 at the right time.

[The vaccination page](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-vaccinations/) now provides more overall strategic vision of how the vaccination programme has been implemented and provides an indication of the effective level of immunity provided to our community by boosters and third doses.

The current version of the dashboard can be accessed at any time[here](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/covid-19-dashboard/).

**Influenza**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19**

The [Government has published important advice](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI2NjM2IiwidHRzeGVycTFtamtrY29nMGtvOGcwZ2trODRvZ2t3YzAiLCIxNDE5IiwiMTA5MGQ5NzhlMTg5IixmYWxzZV0) for people with symptoms of respiratory infections, such as COVID-19; people with a positive COVID-19 test result and their contacts; and advice on safer behaviours for everyone.

There are simple things you can do in your daily life that will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, such as flu and protect those at highest risk.

Things you can choose to do are:

* Get vaccinated.
* Wear a face covering or a face mask.
* Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors.
* Stay at home if you have [symptoms](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI1MjEiLCIxbWRhbWxvZnRhbjRnb2d3ODRrZ2s0azhzOHdzd3c0YyIsIjE0MTciLCI3MDMyNWYxYzNmODEiLGZhbHNlXQ)
* Cover your coughs and sneezes
* Practise good hygiene:

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, you are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19-and-have-not-taken-a-covid-19-test) to read the guidance on what to do if you have symptoms but have not taken a test.

**Need to seek help?**

If you, or someone you know are feeling like things are too much, please know that you / they don’t have to be alone. Here are some numbers of organisations that can help:

* Samaritans - 116 123
* CALM - 0800 58 58 58
* ChildLine - 0800 1111
* Anxiety UK - 03444 775 774
* Mindline Somerset – 01823 276892
* Somerset Domestic Abuse helpline - 0800 69 49 999

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Mounted officers out on patrol in Taunton**

ASP mounted officers were helping the Taunton Neighbourhood Policing Team crack down on people using their mobile phones while driving. [This driver](https://www.facebook.com/avonandsomersetpolice/videos/658111052745779) was sighted and stopped on East Reach in Taunton. Drivers face six points and a £200 fine if caught using a phone.

ASP are currently conducting a co-ordinated enforcement operation, targeting drivers who use their mobile phones while driving.

ASP are encouraging people to support by sharing the video footage. Please do not put yourself or others in danger by driving distracted.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/were-joining-nationwide-crackdown-on-people-who-use-mobile-phones-while-driving/) 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.