

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 146 Weeks ending 26/03/2023**

**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 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.

If you know that you will not be able to get to the polling station on polling day, you can vote by post. You can apply for a postal vote because you’re away on holiday or because your work schedule means you can't get to polling station. You can also choose to vote by post simply because it would be more convenient for you.

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. **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 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. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=325&MId=3041). 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. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=330&MId=3180). 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. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=330&MId=3123). 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/).

With effect from the 1April 2023, the email address for contacting the Governance Team will be [democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservicesteam@somerset.gov.uk).

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. **Next generation fleet arrives for Somerset West and Taunton**

A new fleet of vans, featuring the latest electric and next generation diesel vehicles, has arrived at SWT this month as part of the council’s plans to decarbonise its fleet and transition to sustainable vehicle technology.

The vehicles, which will replace some of the council’s current fleet due for replacement this year, have been provided by [Specialist Fleet Services Ltd (SFS)](http://www.sfs.co.uk/) as part of a 7-year contract awarded in 2021.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/next-generation-fleet-arrives-for-somerset-west-and-taunton/) to read the full press release.

1. **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.

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 - 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. **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. **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](mailto: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**

**Accessing council services**

**In person**

On 1 April Somerset Council will be delivering two face-to-face models across Somerset. These are called Customer Service Points and Customer Access Points.

Please [click here](https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/accessing-council-services-in-person/) to find out more information on the website.

**Online**

All the existing council websites, along with the Waste Partnership and Travel Somerset websites will be removed when Somerset Council is launched. They will be replaced by a single new website based on the new Somerset Council brand. The new website will have the same address as the old county council site [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk).

Please [click here](https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Guide-to-website-and-digital-services-changes.pdf) to find out more information about the digital switch over.

**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)**

**Drainage works underway on A358 at Combe Florey**

SCC is carrying out essential highway drainage improvements along the A358 Williton Road, at Yarde Farm in Combe Florey.

The scheme will see upgrades of drainage grips along the eastern verge of the A358 to allow surface water to better drain off the road surface and help reduce future highway flooding.

The scope of the work is the result of a successful liaison between the local landowner in the area and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and SCC.

No road closure is required as the work is being carried out under temporary lights and a lane closure will be place until **Friday 31 March.** Two-way traffic is being maintained throughout. Lights will be in place between 9 am and 3pm Monday to Friday. All restrictions will be removed outside these hours and at the weekend.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/03/17/drainage-works-to-start-on-a358-in-combe-florey/) 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 re-surfacing works are now complete on the A39 Selworthy Parish at Venniford near Minehead including the new gully covers. SCC Highways thank the public for their continued forbearance whilst these essential works were 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 223 safety defects this week with 133 in the Taunton Area and 90 in West Somerset which 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.

**Parish Council Vacancies**

**Taunton Town/Parish Council**

The following Taunton Town Council vacancies are now being advertised: -

* Deputy Clerk and Office Manager
* Project and Administration Officer
* Deputy Clerk and Office Manager
* Democratic and Governance Lead Officer
* Finance/Grants Officer

**Closing date for applications is 9am on Wednesday 29 March 2023.** Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/jobs/) to find out more information.

**Dulverton Town Council – Finance Officer (part-time)**

Salary –start £24,948 – £27,344 (pro rata) Local Government pay scale band and is dependent on qualifications and experience.

Dulverton, a small but busy Town, seeks an organised, independent and adaptable individual to work on behalf of the Town Council in the role of part time Finance Officer.

The post requires: A formal qualification such as Qualified Association of Accounting technicians or experience of working of within a Finance Department. Experience in accounting/bookkeeping up to final account stage and including VAT returns and payroll.

**Closing date for applications is 31 March 2023**. For an informal discussion about the position, please contact Mandy Rose, Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer, on 01398 324561 or email [clerk@dulvertontowncouncil.co.uk](mailto:clerk@dulvertontowncouncil.co.uk).

Please [click here](https://dulvertontowncouncil.co.uk/files/Financer-Officer-Advert.pdf) to find out more information.

**Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)**

**Exmoor National Park mapping project reveals vital info on the future of our trees**

By planting just one tree on available land, you can help offer a healthier future for our woodland.

Thanks to an intensive study using detailed National Tree Data, ENPA have intricately mapped the tree canopy within our local landscape and the number of non-woodland trees in the area. The project found around 1.5 million trees in hedges and around 500,000 in fields across Exmoor.

After careful analysis, the study also revealed vital information about the type, age and diversity of our trees and the fact that there are areas outside of woodland that are prime spots for tree planting. The study showed that while there has been great work done so far in tree planting, more is needed outside the woodland to replace those suffering from disease or climatic stress, nearing the end of their lives.

There are many national organisations and schemes supporting local tree planting.

If every house, farm, business, local club or organisation or village green planted just one tree, we could see a significant impact of the future health of our tree canopy. Every single tree counts.

Please [click here](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/about-us/press-room/press-room/news-2023/exmoor-national-park-mapping-project-reveals-vital-info-on-the-future-of-our-trees) 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.

**Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)**

**Funding boost for performance and career training in West Somerset**

Stacked Wonky, a not-for-profit contemporary dance company based in Porlock, is delighted to have received a second grant from the Hinkley Point C (HPC) Community Fund, which is managed by SCF The team has now received a total of £15,000 from the fund since May 2022.

Stacked Wonky puts on professional dance performances ‘anywhere but the stage’ across Somerset – in unexpected locations such as the SWT offices at Deane House in Taunton. It also runs highly popular academies for children and teenagers in the area – and has become an important provider of dance training in Somerset. The company aims to benefit the community by enhancing community cohesion as well as building the confidence of young people.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/funding-boost-for-performance-and-career-training-in-west-somerset?fbclid=IwAR2RQ78no7zl6wzeYQPcwjAH3RRSa1eWt_bXlHdIpkl6KMVhp5otPYqERsg) to read the full press release.

**Talking Café Live (CCS)**

**Wednesdays at 1.00pm**

Coming up on the last March live streamed Talking Cafe with the CCS Village Agent; bringing useful local information and services to you in the comfort of your own home

* **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)**

**Get That Spring Back in your step with Get Outside in Somerset**

On the 20 March, the UK officially welcomed Spring! As we welcome the spring you may find yourself wanting to find new ways to Get Outside in Somerset. The days are getting longer, warmer and plants begin to bloom with local wildlife making more of an appearance too.

For many of us, the change in weather and season can bring us may positive feelings, but you may also be looking for a good place to start.

Please [click here](https://getoutsideinsomerset.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DIGITAL-Get-That-Spring-Back-in-Your-Step-5x-Top-Tips.pdf) to check out how to get the Spring Back in Your Step.

**Health and Welfare**

**Vaccinations**

**Influenza**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Things you can choose to do are:

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

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

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

**Need to seek help?**

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

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

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**Action Fraud**

**HMRC Scam**

The HMRC scam can present via the telephone, text message or email and is a type of phishing. This means someone is contacting potential victims on a large scale, and the attempt is not personal towards you.

As we are approaching the end of the financial year, we expect to see an increase of HMRC impersonation reports:

* **What does the scam look like?**

You will be contacted by phone, email or text and you will be told you are talking to the HMRC. The fraudster will tell you that a large amount of tax is owed, immediate payment is required and if you do not pay, a warrant will be issued for your arrest by the police. Or maybe that you are owed a tax rebate and to follow a link.

This fraud is successful because the contact is scary, and or the language they use may be aggressive and authoritative.

* **How can you stay safe?**

HMRC can sometimes call however they will always include your reference number and never demand immediate payment. Be aware that fraudsters can ‘spoof’ their phone numbers and pretend to be calling from anywhere in the world. If the number displayed on your phone matches their legitimate number online, it does not mean it is genuine and this is not a verification check.

Log in to your HMRC online account to verify contact or call the HMRC on a number that you have sourced to be correct. (Not a number provided to you by the caller as this number will belong to the fraudster). Hover your mouse over any links and in the bottom of your screen it will display where that link is actually going to take you.

Remember, no genuine organisation will ever scare or worry you. If you have been the victim of fraud, report it [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or call Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040,

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Undercover operation reveals ‘disappointing’ lack of awareness of child exploitation amongst hotel and taxi firms**

An operation led by ASP to raise awareness of child exploitation amongst hotels and taxi companies found that too often people do not recognise key signs that a child may be at risk.

On Saturday 18 March, plain clothed officers and volunteer cadets aged between 14 and 16 carried out a number of test bookings with local firms as part of Operation Makesafe.

Officers visited 22 hotels and B&Bs across the force area and attempted to book a room with cash, accompanied by an underage child without identification. Only three establishments refused to book the room due to concerns that something wasn’t right.

Operation Makesafe is run across police forces nationally and aims to empower businesses and organisations to tackle child exploitation through increased awareness and training. ASP have previously provided training and guidance to local businesses around how to spot the signs of child exploitation, both criminal and sexual, and the actions they should take.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/03/undercover-operation-by-avon-and-somerset-police-reveals-disappointing-lack-of-awareness-of-child-exploitation-amongst-hotel-and-taxi-firms/) 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](mailto: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)

For quick up to date information regarding SWT services please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/ or Twitter @swtcouncil.