

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 15. Week ending 5/07/20

#StayAlert #Controlthevirus #SaveLives

Up to date information on the Council's response can be found on the SWT website:

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-and-information/>

SWT Council priorities

Somerset West and Taunton Council's updated priorities during the coronavirus outbreak are as follows:

- Preserve critical services;
- Safeguard the public;
- Ensure our most vulnerable residents are supported; and
- Planning economic resilience and recovery

The situation is being reviewed on a daily basis to ensure that the Council follows the [latest advice from Public Health England](#).

Key Messages this week

1. Reopening SWT Play Areas

This week SWT staff have been busy undertaking preparations to ensure our play areas and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) are Covid-secure ready for opening as per the government guidance on Saturday, 4 July 2020.

The guidance issued asked for all those that are responsible for play areas to produce a risk assessment to help control the spread of Covid-19. SWT has produced a document that sets out our approach to managing our play areas.

This week the play areas are being jet washed, and the Open Spaces teams are cutting grass and sprucing up where required. Safety inspections have continued throughout the lockdown, so there is no issue around compliance or unsafe equipment. SWT is

arranging signage as per the Government guidelines and this will be in place by the 4 July. Please see attached suggested signage for your reference.

SWT has also attached the risk assessment for your information, as well as a copy of the text that they will use on signs. If you manage a community space or play area and you are unsure about how to interpret the guidance or produce your own risk assessment, please feel free to adopt or edit the SWT version to help with this.

Please be aware that all responsibility still remains with the Parish Council as owners of the play area, even though you might be adopting the SWT risk assessment.

Please [click here](#) to read the new government guidelines relating to reopening play areas safely issued on Friday, 26 June.

2. Pavement Café Licences – Supporting Hospitality Businesses

SWT is working to support pubs, restaurants, cafes and takeaways across the district with their preparations to reopen from 4 July as Covid-19 restrictions are eased.

Our officers are currently implementing temporary changes to licensing laws to allow more premises to sell and serve alcohol and food for consumption off the premises, making social distancing easier. SWT will aim to process applications for Pavement Café Licences within 10 working days and will continue to ensure that communities are consulted on applications for Pavement Cafes, that waste is disposed of responsibly, and that pavements and pedestrianised areas are still accessible and able to support social distancing.

The application process for new Pavement Café Licences will be up and running on the SWT website shortly including full information and guidance. Any business wishing to apply for a new Pavement Café licence should submit an expression of interest to openinghighstreets@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

Businesses that have expressed an interest will be sent full details and links to the application form and guidance. An officer from SWT may also contact you to discuss your plans. Full reopening guidance for pubs, bars, cafes, restaurants and takeaways can be found [here](#).

The Government measures, which have been introduced to simplify the process for outdoor seating, include reducing the consultation period for applications for pavement licences from 28 calendar days to five working days, and setting a lower application fee for a pavement cafe licence. Please [click here](#) for full details of the new legislation can be found on the Government website.

3. DEMOCRATIC/GOVERNANCE

Update on Committee appointments

The final Committee appointments have now been made, as follows:

- Chair of the Licensing Committee – Cllr Mark Lithgow
- Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee – Cllr Janet Lloyd

Committee Meetings

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](#). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

July Committee meetings

A number of meetings have been scheduled for July 2020, which are as follows:

- Tuesday 7 July – **Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements ended at 4pm on Thursday 2 July; however, please [click here](#) to view the full agenda and report packs.)
- Thursday 9 July – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 6 July)
- Wednesday 15 July – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 10 July)
- Thursday 23 July – **Planning Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 20 July)
- Monday 27 July – **Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Wednesday 22 July)

The meetings will all 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](#).

If you are not able to watch the meeting live, you can also watch it after the meeting.

Members of the public are still able to participate in the meeting by submitting their questions or statement to the Governance Team via governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk and these will be read out by an officer at the meeting. Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.

SWT Councillors are reminded that if they do not wish to receive paper copies of agendas to please let the Governance Team know.

4. Watchet Sea Defence Walls Update

It is an opportune time to provide an update on the replacement of the sea defence wall at Splash Point, Watchet. You will recall that SWT undertook emergency works during the winter following the destruction of the wall in the storms. These works are still in place and have performed well and in the meantime plans have been made for the permanent replacement of the wall.

SWT has the necessary financial approvals and a design has been approved, with contractors ready to undertake the work. Permission is awaited from the Marine Management Organisation, as without this SWT are unable to go ahead. It is anticipated that permission will be received at the end of July. Assuming their response is positive, SWT will begin work immediately on site with an aim to complete in autumn 2020.

On Monday 6 July, SWT will be taking core samples from the low sea defence wall alongside the main sdefence wall to see what maintenance work will be required. It is expected that some voids behind this wall will have to be filled to ensure it is as strong as it can be and we anticipate doing this work in the coming weeks.

5. COVID-19 Response for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities in Somerset

The challenges of COVID-19 have a greater impact on people from Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities, particularly around the ability to follow government guidance around travel, access to clean water, social distancing and self-isolation. In response to this a multi-agency group was formed within Somerset to tackle these concerns.

The group has considered national guidance and recommendations set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to ensure that all parts of our society are kept safe during this time.

SWT will endeavour to ensure that anyone already in Somerset or those arriving in Somerset will be provided with a safe place to stay. This could mean accommodating people where they have stopped by providing basic sanitation and support around adhering to national guidance, or relocation to one of the temporary sites in direct response to the pandemic that are being set up around Somerset.

Within Somerset West and Taunton, SWT shall be establishing a temporary stopping facility at Enfield Car Park, Tangier (Taunton). This facility will be available from Monday July 6 and is likely to remain in place until October. The current use of the site as a public car park will be suspended temporarily. The site will provide access to clean water and sanitation. Household waste will be collected daily.

Please [click here](#) to read the full SWT press release.

6. Minehead BID Invoices to be delayed

In these unprecedented times during the Covid-19 crisis, Minehead BID and SWT have agreed to delay the issue of year three invoices in respect of Minehead BID.

Business Improvement Districts are governed by parliamentary regulations which require invoices to be issued annually, however, Minehead BID and SWT have agreed on a pragmatic decision to delay this year's invoice issue from July until September 2020.

The BID Levy is also normally due in a lump sum, but for this year only it has been agreed businesses can pay in three instalments by contacting the Council and setting up a payment arrangement.

Please [click here](#) to read the SWT article.

7. Coal Orchard Update

SWT Coal Orchard development project has, like many other construction projects, been affected by the current restrictions from COVID-19. The project was on hold from 27 March to the 4 May but time was used wisely to push on with the Block E substructure. Whilst this process took some three weeks longer than programmed because of COVID-19 restrictions on working, it allowed work on other elements that would otherwise have not been achievable.

Since the update in the guidance from the Government allowing suppliers to start back up, reasonable progress has been made. Please see below for a block update:

- Block A - a tower crane has been erected and MIDAS has completed the 1st floor slab allowing Kingbuild to start on site.
- Block D - steelwork is complete. MIDAS will be installing the first floor slab over the next few weeks.
- Block E - steel erection follows on.

The work at the Coal Orchard site marks a significant step in SWT plans to regenerate Taunton.

8. Discretionary Business Grant

The current application phase has now ended. SWT are currently processing applications received. It is likely that there will be funds available to open a further application window during the week commencing 6 July 2020, which will be open to a wider range of businesses. Please revisit the [Business Grants- Covid 19 response page on SWT website](#) for further details and look out for updates on social media.

9. SWP Sites and Services

All 'business as usual' items are now being accepted across Somerset Waste Partnership's recycling centres. All 16 sites can now take cardboard, as well as commercial waste and other waste you pay to dispose of – including tyres, gas bottles, soil and hardcore, vehicle parts, plasterboard and asbestos (card payment only).

'Shop-style' social distancing is in place and sites are at times busy. SWP is encouraging people to only come if they really need to and make sure they use their weekly recycling collections – which include cardboard - wherever possible.

Trailers and vans can now access the sites at any time during opening hours, as long as they have the appropriate permit. Sites have experienced long queues at times, especially in the morning.

All SWP sites are now open for their usual summer hours. Queue cams at Bridgwater, Chard, Taunton and Yeovil can be viewed [here](#).

Please [click here](#) for up to date notifications from SWP Somerset.

Urge others to follow [@Somersetwaste](#) on Facebook and Twitter.

Sign up [here](#) to subscribe to e-news.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

Highway Maintenance Update

A much quieter week on the roads of Somerset West and Taunton following the great amount of activity during June. Last week's major scheme for Highways was the resurfacing of A39 Bridgwater Road, Holford, near the Castle of Comfort. This was carried out under a series of evening road closures up until Thursday 2 June. Frustratingly there were some delays with the work, especially the application of road markings onto the new surface, due to the light rain and damp conditions which characterised the week. As an aside, this was somewhat different to when the adjacent section of the A39 was resurfaced in 2019 when SCC were held up by heavy snow!

This week SCC will be carrying on with the routine tasks of gully emptying, safety defect repairs and patching. You may well see the carriageway surface dressing team out and about, carrying out aftercare tasks on the dressings that were laid in June.

Rural verge cutting continues along the "C" and "D" road networks and more information on this can be found on the [Travel Somerset website](#).

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit our website www.travelsomerset.co.uk or follow [@TravelSomerset](#) on Twitter.

Somerset Libraries Launch New Personal Shopper Service

SCC will launch the service in Taunton Library on 6 July. Subject to a review, it will then be introduced in Bridgwater, Frome, Minehead and Yeovil on 13 July. It is hoped all remaining libraries will be able to open again during August.

The personal shopper service enables customers to request library books either by email, website or telephone, using a new borrower request form. By providing staff with a few key details about what you are looking for, a hand-picked selection of books, audiobooks, and

DVDs will be available for collection at a convenient time for you. No hire charges or fines will be applied in the interim.

When libraries open, internet access will be available in some, but it will be primarily for users who don't have home internet access and require essential services.

Somerset Local Outbreak Management Plan Available Online

SCC and partners released further detail on how they will prevent and react to localised coronavirus outbreaks after Somerset's Local Outbreak Management Plan was published online. Somerset cases continue to remain low compared to other parts of the country, but coronavirus is proving to be a disease around clusters and outbreaks. For further details please [click here](#).

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

SWT is publishing an e-newsletter to support the phenomenal positive response and work of the voluntary and community sector across our district.

Please share this with all you contacts and encourage people to [subscribe](#).

If you know of a group in your ward who may benefit or have something to contribute then please send them our dedicated email; VCSNewsletter@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Safe Use of Community Facilities – Parish and Village Halls

Guidance is now available for those managing community centres, village halls and other community facilities on safely re-opening multi-purpose buildings. The government will allow community centres and other multi-use community facilities to open on 4 July. To read the guidance, please [click here](#).

West Somerset Wisermoney- Money, Debt and Benefits Advice

Wisermoney is a partnership between Navigate Charity and Encompass Southwest. The partnership was formed in 2012 and currently delivers a number of projects across Devon and West Somerset aiming to improve the quality of life, wellbeing and financial resilience of people living in rural settlements.

The partnership specialises in working with people who are living on low-incomes in communities in Devon and West Somerset experiencing (or at risk of experiencing), poverty, financial hardship, and social and financial exclusion.

Wisermoney continue to adhere to Government advice about COVID-19, therefore, the Wisermoney team are unable to meet with you face to face but they can provide money, debt and benefits advice by telephone or email.

To talk to one of their specialist advisers, please call **01823 299050** or you can email your query to enquiries@wisermoney.org.uk

Please find attached a document outlining more information about Wisermoney.

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Citizens Advice Services

Citizens Advice provides information and advice on any issue and delivers a number of specialist services in issues such as debt, benefits and employment – you may be facing a crisis, or just considering your options.

Citizens Advice cannot provide a face to face service at present because of coronavirus; however, they can still provide you with the advice you need if you make contact by telephone or by completing their [online advice form](#). You will need to select a location or type of advice you need for more details.

Telephone – Call **03444 889623**.

This is a local-rate call and the line is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Please [click here](#) to visit the Citizens Advice Services webpage.

Health and Welfare

Phased Return of Sport and Recreation

The guidance for the public, providers of outdoor sport facilities, elite athletes, personal trainers and coaches on the phased return of sport and recreation has been updated to include new guidance. From 4 July outdoor gyms and playgrounds can open, as can food or drink facilities inside a clubhouse. Indoor facilities, such as changing rooms, should be kept closed, apart from toilets and throughways. Outdoor and indoor swimming pools will also remain closed to the public. For more information [read here](#).

Fire Safety Concerns over Hand Sanitiser

There have been a number of reports in the news and on social media, relating to fires in vehicles, suspected to have been caused by hand sanitiser. Many sources have now identified that when heated to high temperatures, the alcohol content of the product can potentially create a vapour that can ignite if it comes into contact with a spark or naked flame.

Most of the reported cases were linked to smoking inside vehicles or the vapour coming into contact with a spark from a cigarette lighter. However, there have been no formal instructions to stop using these products as the risk is still deemed very low.

Therefore, always ensure that you take care when storing hand sanitiser in your vehicle. Make sure:

- the container is always securely closed and stored in an upright position to avoid leakage
- that it is not left in a position where it is in direct sunlight but stored preferably in the boot space/storage area in vans
- that you use products endorsed and sourced reputable

In England, company vehicles are required to be smoke free at all times if they are:

- Used to transport members of the public, or

- Used in the course of paid or voluntary work by more than one person – regardless of whether they are in the vehicle at the same time.

#BeTickAware

An Important Message from Public Health England

Ticks are small, spider like creatures that feed on the blood of animals, including people. During this feeding process, they can transmit pathogens that can result in infections such as Lyme Disease.

Ticks are very sensitive to temperature and relative humidity, requiring areas with dense ground layer coverage of vegetation for survival, reproduction or establishment. Areas such as woodlands, grasslands and moorlands, provide this dense vegetation layer and a suitable range of hosts on which ticks can feed. Ticks can also be found in some urban parks and gardens.

If you're going out for a walk to any woodlands, grasslands or moorlands in the [#southwest](#), make sure you carry out a [#TickCheck](#) afterwards. [#BeTickAware](#) - look and feel for attached ticks on you, your family and your pets.

Please [click here](#) for further information, guidance and to access a toolkit provided by Public Health England.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

A single phone number is available for anyone in Somerset who needs coronavirus-related support from their councils. The **0300 790 6275** number is available seven days per week 8am – 6pm.

Anyone who can't find help within their own local networks and volunteers, can use this number to get help and advice around:

- Personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions
- Support for the homeless
- Emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious
- Transport to medical appointments
- Waste collection and disposal
- Financial support

This number won't cover medical advice, for which people will need to continue to use the 111 NHS phone number if they cannot get help online.

Please refer to the websites below for the latest advice, help and guidance:

Links to the most up to date Government guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Public Health England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

[Help to protect yourself and your community - Public Health England](#)

NHS – Help and Advice

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - NHS website](#)

[Advice about staying at home - NHS website](#)

FAQS

Q. What can I do to keep me, my family and friends as safe as possible from 4 July when lockdown restrictions are eased?

A. Moving forward, from 4 July, people will be trusted to continue acting responsibly, and to follow the guidance on what they should and should not do.

These new changes will reopen much of society and the economy, but it is essential that everyone in the country goes about their lives in a manner which reduces the risk of transmission, whether they are at work, leisure, or using public services.

When you leave your home, you should follow the guidelines on [staying safe outside your home](#).

You should continue to avoid close contact and remain socially distant from anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble - even inside other people's homes. You should wash your hands regularly. This will help to protect you and anyone you come into contact with and is critical to keeping everyone safe.

Please [click here](#) to view what you can and can't do after 4 July 2020.

Q. Can I visit a clinically vulnerable person?

A. People 70 and over, those with certain underlying conditions and pregnant women may be more clinically vulnerable, so the government has advised them to take particular care to avoid contact with others.

Although such individuals can meet people outdoors and, from 4 July, indoors, you and they should be especially careful and be diligent about social distancing and hand hygiene. Never take a chance on visiting a clinically vulnerable person if you think you have COVID-19 symptoms, however mild.

Never visit **anyone** if you have been advised to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because you have been in contact with a case.

If someone is defined as clinically extremely vulnerable and being asked to shield, you should follow the [guidance for a shielded person](#).

Crime / Safeguarding Avon & Somerset Police

Night Time Economy

On Tuesday 30 June [PCC Sue Mountstevens](#) put her questions to Chief Constable Andy Marsh regarding the re-opening of the pubs, restaurants and cafes on the 4 July. Although the interview is no longer live, it can be viewed [here](#).

Facebook Live Surgery – UPCOMING

[PCSO Katherine Williams](#) and [Linda Brooks](#) are holding a Facebook Live Beat Surgery on **Wednesday 8 July at 11am**. Please message your questions to either of the PCSOs on the Facebook links above, to aid an informative discussion.

PCC Announces £200,000 Extra Funding to Support Local Causes

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Sue Mountstevens is encouraging projects impacted by the demands of coronavirus to apply for extra funding from the Commissioner's Community Action Fund (CCAF).

The PCC has allocated an additional £200,000 to support local charities, voluntary organisations and community groups to help deal with the consequences of coronavirus. Such initiatives across Avon and Somerset are urged to apply for grants of up to £5,000.

The CCAF will continue to be run in partnership with the Police Community Trust (PCT) and will welcome applications until **30 November 2020**.

To find out more about the fund and how it can help your organisation during these challenging time, please [click here](#).

Finally

It is important to keep up to date with the latest [information and advice from the government](#).

For quick up to date information regarding SWT services please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/ or Twitter [@swtcouncil](https://twitter.com/swtcouncil)

Please see our dedicated [webpage](#) for updates.

If you have concerns about your own health and coronavirus please visit the [NHS](#) website.

#StayAlert #Controlthevirus #SaveLives

Attachments:

Play Area Risk Assessment

Play Area Signage Document

Wisermoney Leaflet.