

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 17. Week ending 19/07/20

#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. SWT £500,000 Cash Boost to Support Town Centres

SWT has announced a £500,000 cash boost to support town centres as part of its commitment to recovery, investment, jobs and opportunity.

Backing the town centres is the key focus of the new special fund launched by SWT to support, rebuild and transform the high streets and surrounding areas.

The half-a-million-pound investment will help the centres of Taunton, Minehead and Wellington through the most challenging time in their history with a programme of emergency measures designed to aid these vital social and economic hubs.

In the short-term, the money will be put towards freshening up town centres, keeping them clean, tidy and attractive. It will help secure jobs and livelihoods

following on from the millions already invested in cash, advice and business support during the COVID-19 crisis.

The conversation SWT is starting now with businesses and communities is how and where investment is required in the longer-term.

SWT is working with Taunton Chamber of Commerce, Minehead BID, Minehead Town Council and Wellington Town Council to understand what it can do to help town centre businesses fully recover and grow back stronger from the impact of COVID-19.

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

2. Free High Street Webinars

A series of webinars are being held next week to give local businesses, members of the community, shoppers and visitors a chance to share their ideas and views on what the high streets should look like, what type of 'offer' they should have for businesses, shoppers, visitors and residents post COVID-19; and what businesses need in order to adapt, recover and flourish post COVID-19.

The webinars will focus on two discussions -

- What do businesses and the Town Centres need to help them to stay open urgently in the next 12 months?
- Reimagining our high streets - How should the high streets be shaped, what they should look like, what the offer should be in the future?

Places can be booked using the Eventbrite links below - joining instructions will be sent nearer the time:

[Wellington](#) (7pm, 21 July)
[Minehead](#) (7pm, 22 July)
[Taunton](#) (6.30pm, 23 July)

As well as feedback from the three main town centres, SWT is also keen to hear from neighbourhood retail centres in Wiveliscombe, Watchet, Williton, Dulverton, Dunster and Porlock.

If you are unable to make these events and have any views that you would like to share with SWT please email them

to Openinghighstreets@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

3. DEMOCRATIC/GOVERNANCE

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:

- Thursday 23 July – **Planning Committee**, 6.15pm (Please [click here](#) to view the Agenda and Report Packs. The 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. Housing awards recognise inspirational colleague

A member of SWT's housing team has been shortlisted for a national award in recognition of "the people that make housing great".

Dee Bradley is a finalist in the Inspirational Colleague of the Year category of the Housing Heroes Awards run by Inside Housing and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Dee who works in the team offering advice on debts and benefits, said: "I was blown away to be nominated and to get this far is huge – things like this don't usually happen to me. I just love my job and work with some amazing colleagues. I'm very proud to be able to do the very best I can to work for and support our communities here in the district."

The Housing Heroes Awards 2020 will take place at a virtual awards ceremony this year, as part of the [Housing 2020: The Virtual Festival](#) on Thursday 10 September.

More information on the Housing Heroes Awards can be found [here](#).

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

5. Love Parks Week

Since the easing of lockdown, families are looking for ways to have fun in the open air, whilst socially distancing. For this year's Love Parks Week SWT is encouraging everyone to get out and enjoy their favourite park. By using and celebrating your local park, you are helping to protect them for future generations.

Spending time outdoors, especially in green spaces, is one of the fastest ways to improve your health and happiness. It's been shown to lower stress, blood pressure and heart rate, while encouraging physical activity, buoying mood and mental health.

SWT's Open Spaces teams have worked tirelessly to make these areas safe, clean and attractive for the community, especially during COVID-19. The proof is quite clearly in the pudding when you walk around Blenheim Gardens, Vivary Park and many other stunning locations. Take a look at SWT's [short video](#) on Instagram.

6. 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.

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

SCC is currently focusing on the routine tasks of gully emptying, safety defect repairs and patching. You may well also see the carriageway surface dressing team out and about, carrying out aftercare tasks on the dressings that were laid in June.

Although it is July and the weather is warm, "winter's comin'", as Sean Bean famously said in "Game of Thrones". Back at the SCC highway depots, the workshops are a hive of activity as the fitters inspect, service and repair the fleet of 23 gritters and five demountable gritting units. Readers will be familiar with the gritters as they are out and about on the roads a lot during the colder months. This may not be the case with the "demounts": these are used as back-ups in the event of breakdowns etc. in the main fleet and are carried by a standard lorry. They spend most of their time stored on a frame supported on high legs and are installed by the truck reversing back under the frame and the unit is then lowered down and connected up. All very Thunderbirds!

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

Following on from the noxious weeds (including ragwort) article in last week's newsletter, should you spot any ragwort out on the highway verges then please [click here](#) to report it to SCC.

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.

South Street, Taunton, Temporary Road Closure

In pursuance of Section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, as amended by the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Act 1991, the County Council of Somerset propose to make an [Order](#) PROHIBITING ALL TRAFFIC from proceeding along **South Street, Taunton** for a distance of approximately 95 metres.

This order will enable SCC to carry out construction of build out, illumination and drainage improvement works.

Please [click here](#) to view the road closure.

The Order becomes effective on the 30 July 2020 and will remain in force for 18 months. The works are expected to commence on the **3 August 2020** and last for 19 days.

Childcare Provision through the Summer

The summer holidays are approaching and for many of us that means that we will continue to experience issues balancing childcare and work. SCC has produced some information on childcare options over the summer holidays that they would like to pass on to you all. Their website, [Somerset Choices](#) provides information on a wide range of childcare placements.

If you are struggling to find childcare, you can phone **0300 123 2224** or email childrens@somerset.gov.uk and they will endeavour to find you a solution. SCC is also working with Fare Share to bring food into Somerset over the summer period for those families who require this support and you can discuss this, using the telephone number and email address above.

West Somerset Opportunity Area Children's Summer Activities

COVID-19 restrictions mean that there are fewer summer activities than in previous years, additionally, guidance has been changing rapidly so delivery partners have opted for an online version only.

As restrictions ease additional activities are likely to be added to the e-Calendar so it will be worthwhile checking the site regularly for any updates.

The latest government guidance concerning childcare activities only came out on the 10 July, therefore giving very little time to confirm with the providers and produce the information.

Please [click here](#) to view the West Somerset Holiday Activities Calendar which provides information about Holiday Childcare and Children's Activities available in West Somerset during the School Summer Holidays.

Please feel free to publicise this link to working parents. This link has been endorsed by the WSOA (West Somerset Opportunity Area) Programme as a resource which may assist those seeking childcare over the period.

LiveWest Housing Association

Dulverton Housing Development set for Autumn Completion

An affordable housing development in Dulverton is on course for completion in October. Barnes Close Mead is a new scheme which will provide 18 affordable homes – six for shared ownership, six for social rent and six for affordable rent.

The South West's largest housing association, LiveWest, teamed up with Woofenden Construction to deliver the homes. Construction work is now back underway following lockdown and the development will be completed in the autumn.

To read the full press release please [click here](#).

LiveWest Partnership paves the way for 42 new homes in Wellington

LiveWest, has teamed up with property development specialists, Freemantle Developments, to deliver 42 new homes in Wellington. The development on a brownfield site in the Cornhill area of the town will include 26 homes for affordable rent and 16 for shared ownership. There will be a mixture of one, two and three-bedroom homes. The development will be built by Classic Builders.

The 42-home development includes a listed building that was severely damaged by a fire in 2008 which is being repaired and converted to provide four new homes.

For more information on this and other planned developments please [click here](#).

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue

Camping, glamping and caravanning safety

Whether you are camping or caravanning this summer, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue want you to enjoy a safe trip away by following their simple tips.

Please read on and/or click the links for general safety advice:

- [fire safety in caravans and mobile homes](#).
- [how to use a BBQ safely](#)
- [carbon monoxide advice](#).

What to do if there is a fire:

- Keep calm and get everyone away as quickly as you can.
- Call 999 and ask for the fire and rescue service. Give the exact location; give a map reference if possible or give a landmark such as a pub or a farm. You can use the What3Words app too.

You can download Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue's camping and caravanning safety leaflet [here](#).

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Newsletter moves to fortnightly. Next Issue out w/e 26 July

SWT continues to produce an e-newsletter to support the work of the voluntary and community sector across the district.

As mentioned last week, SWT is dropping back to producing VCS newsletter on a fortnightly basis with the next issue out w/e 26 July.

SWT would welcome your feedback on the frequency, or even need, for such a newsletter as we move into August. It would be great to hear your thoughts - please email:

VCSNewsletter@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk Thank you.

Spark Somerset tribute to Volunteers with a Video Montage

To show their appreciation of all the amazing volunteers and COVID-19 groups, Spark Somerset has made [a short video](#) which gives a snapshot of some of the incredible work that has taken place in Somerset over the past few months.

So far more than 1,300 Somerset residents have registered on [Corona Helpers](#), a website that matches people with voluntary activity in their area, with many more volunteering informally by helping friends, family and neighbours.

To get involved in your community visit www.sparksomerset.org.uk/volunteer.

The Somerset Coronavirus Appeal

The Somerset Coronavirus Appeal, launched by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF), is offering funding of up to £10,000 to local charities and community organisations delivering frontline work that will help communities recover from the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

The first phase of the appeal has already seen grants of almost £500,000 being awarded to more than 170 local good causes across the county, including food deliveries for older people, online counselling, activity packs for disadvantaged children and support for struggling families.

The funding has been made available thanks to generous contributions made to the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal by local individuals, charitable trusts and businesses, as well as funding from the national appeal, run by The National Emergencies Trust (NET).

The Somerset Coronavirus Appeal, which was first launched on Thursday 19 March, now stands at **£850,000** [amount correct as at 09/07/2020]. The charity aims to raise a total of £1.5m through the appeal.

SCF is passionate about doing as much as possible to support communities, and is encouraging local people, businesses, charitable trusts and organisations who feel able to donate to the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal by clicking [here](#).

Any groups wishing to apply should visit the SCF website where they can find guidance on how [to make an application](#).

Health and Welfare

South West Communications and Engagement Network Survey

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people who work in health and care services and the voluntary and community sector across the South West have offered new choices to patients and the public; for example, by making more use of online and telephone appointments.

The NHS needs to reintroduce and revitalise non-COVID-19 services that have been affected by the pandemic. As part of this planning, the health and care staff in both NHS England and NHS Improvement in common with the seven South West systems are looking to gather the views of patients, staff and stakeholders on their experience of health and care services during this unprecedented time.

A survey is being hosted on a platform by NHS Gloucestershire and the anonymous results will be shared with NHS England and NHS Improvement who will analyse the results and share them with all seven health and care systems, in a collaborative approach. The results and analysis will be compiled into a report at both a local system and regional level and shared with health and care organisations and respondents who provide their email addresses in August.

The information you provide will be used by health and care organisations across the South West to help the NHS and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) understand what suits different people best and tailor health and care services to best meet the needs of our local communities.

Please share your views by completing this [survey](#). It can be completed by multiple members of the same household using the same online device, but each person needs to complete the questionnaire separately. Please encourage everyone over 16 in your household to complete it.

The deadline for completing the survey is **midnight 31 July 2020**.

Mandatory Face Coverings from Friday 24 July

Face coverings must be worn in shops and supermarkets in England from Friday 24 July. While shop employees should encourage compliance, the Government has said retailers and businesses will not be expected to enforce this policy; enforcement will be carried out by the police. Anyone failing to wear a face covering while shopping will be subject to a fine of up to £100, or £50 if paid within 14 days.

The rules to tackle coronavirus will be the same as those currently applicable on public transport in England, which means children under 11 and people with certain disabilities will be exempt.

The Government guidance will be updated to make the wearing of face coverings in shops and supermarkets compulsory, however, guidance for other settings will be kept under review.

Please [click here](#) to read the current government guidance.

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 Covid-19 guidance can be found here

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

[Public Health England](#)

[NHS – Help and Advice](#)

FAQS

Q. I'm going back to work and I'm concerned about childcare over the summer holidays. What help is available?

A. The Government is offering to help with childcare costs, whether it is for toddlers or teens. Please [click here](#) to see a list of the available schemes and to check what help you could get with childcare costs. Please also refer to the document attached to see which schemes can be used with free hours of childcare.

Q. What should a business do when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported?

A. The Somerset COVID-19 Local Engagement Board has designed posters and flyers for use by businesses. These contain a checklist of actions and provide guidance to help you, employees and customers know what to do when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported.

Please [click here](#) to view / download the posters and flyers.

For any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and advice on the next steps to take if a case is confirmed, call the Public Health England Health Protection Team immediately on **0300 303 8162**.

Crime / Safeguarding Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Honour Based Abuse #ShineTheSpotlight

Police and Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens put your questions about honour-based abuse and forced marriage to expert Punita Bassi from [Avon and Somerset Police](#).

They discussed how the crime affects both men, women and children and what local people across the region can do if they know someone is a victim.

To view this video please [click here](#).

Appeal to Identify Owners of Recovered Bicycles and Tools

The police are reissuing their appeal in a final bid to identify the rightful owners of a number of suspected stolen bikes and tools seized in January. The gallery can be viewed [here](#).

You can make it harder for thieves to steal your bikes and easier for police officers to identify property as stolen:

- where possible, securely store your bicycles in your home. If this isn't possible, ensure they are kept in a secure outbuilding such as an alarmed and locked shed or garage
- always lock your bicycles to something immovable like a wall or floor anchor or a railing.
- double lock your bikes using two quality locks, at least one of which is a D-Lock.
- get your bikes and tools security marked and registered at www.BikeRegister.com
- record the details of your bicycles and tools including noting the frame or serial number and take photos including any distinctive marks.

Facebook Live – Tuesday 21 July 2020 #HaveYourSay.

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Sue Mountstevens is inviting local people to submit their questions concerning policing for next week's Facebook Live. The PCC is encouraging local people to share their questions and concerns with her ahead of the webchat with Chief Constable Andy Marsh on **Tuesday 21 July at 2pm**.

Please submit your questions by messaging the PCC at [Avon & Somerset Police & Crime Commissioner](#).

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](#)
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:

Childcare Overview PDF

Camping and Caravanning Safety PDF