

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue20. Week ending 9/08/20

#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 Opens More Levels at Paul Street Car Park, Taunton

SWT has reopened levels 2 and 2A of the Paul Street Car Park in Taunton. This has provided an additional 37 car parking spaces for Blue Badge holders and 67 general use spaces, and has enabled the Shopmobility Taunton service to resume.

The Council has been working with the Orchard Shopping Centre and Compass Wellbeing to ensure further levels of the town centre car park could be opened again as COVID-19 restrictions ease. Customers are now also able to use the Shopmobility service run by Compass Disability Services from 11.30am - 3.30pm on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. More information can be found [here](#).

Additional safety signage has been placed on the pillars of levels 2 and 2A and at the pedestrian entrance and exits to Paul Street and High Street will remain closed due to the limited width of stairwells and lift capacity. These will, however, be retained as emergency evacuation and access points. SWT owned car parks will stay free until at least the end of August to support the re-opening of High Streets and to help rejuvenate the local economy.

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

2. 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.

August Committee meetings

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

- Wednesday 19 August - **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 14 August)
- Thursday 20 August - **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 17 August)
- Thursday 20 August - **Taunton Charter Trustees**, 6pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 10am on Tuesday 18 August)
- Tuesday 25 August - **Special Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 20 August)

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.

3. Taunton's Economy Set For A Boost

Two projects that will boost the economy of Taunton are in line to get almost £6m of Government funding. The projects are among 12 selected to go to the next stage in gaining funding from the Government's Getting Building Fund after the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership was awarded £35.4m from the national £900m pot.

Business cases will now be made to support the £5.5m bid for the proposed Digital Innovation Centre on the Firepool site and £400,000 for Firepool and Taunton Station access.

SWT is working closely with Somerset County Council on the bids for the projects that support employment, regeneration, skills, innovation and clean energy.

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

4. Last chance to apply for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant

The Government is expecting all Retail, Hospitality and Leisure claim payments to have been made by 28 August, so SWT will, therefore, cease accepting new applications from eligible businesses from **5pm on 14 August** in order to allow time for processing by the cut off.

Please [click here](#) for further details or to make a claim.

If you have any questions about the application form or this grant, please email SWT Revenues team at brgrants@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can telephone **0300 304 8000** Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

5. Additional Councillor Support Available

SWT will be bringing in some temporary additional support for the Councillor case management and corporate feedback function.

Officers will predominantly be handling Councillor Cases and helping with complaint resolutions.

NB to members: Please continue to follow the usual process when contacting SWT. You can reach the team on membercm@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk or feel free to contact your designated Engagement Lead.

6. A Reminder to Check Your Voter Registration Details

SWT is legally required to undertake an annual canvass of all residential properties in the area to ensure its Electoral Register is up to date so that eligible residents can take part in any elections.

As previously stated in last week's newsletter, the Electoral Services team will be contacting all households across the district by post this year due to the challenging public health situation. The correspondence will be addressed to the occupier and includes full details of the steps to take.

SWT wishes to remind local residents to check their electoral registration details are correct, or update them. This can be done simply and safely [online](#) using the unique security code provided in the letter. If there are no changes this can also be confirmed online or by Freephone or text.

For more detailed information visit our [webpage](#).

Partner Engagement - Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

Highway Maintenance Update

SCC Highways 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.

SCC Highways is in the process of contacting parish and town councils about the grit bins that they own in their respective areas. A map of the grit bins has been supplied and SCC Highways has asked the parish and town councils to confirm the following:

- If the information supplied is correct
- If any amendments need to be made
- To confirm whether or not the grit bin needs refilling.

Once again, as in previous years, SCC Highways will fill the bins with road salt and the information provided by the town and parish councils will allow SCC to organise this task cost effectively and in time for the onset of winter.

Rural verge cutting on the "A" and "B" road networks is now underway. More information on this can be found on the [Travel Somerset website](#).

Following on from SCC's item in Edition No.16, if you should spot any ragwort out on the highway verges then please [click here](#) to report it.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk or follow @TravelSomerset on Twitter.

Somerset Equalities Officer Group

Somerset Equality Innovation Grant

Are you a not-for-profit organisation, voluntary organisation or third sector organisation, including community group, faith and equalities group, charity, social enterprise, community Interest Company, and/or co-operative that works to promote equality and diversity in your community? If so, there is a funding opportunity that might be of benefit to you.

This is a one-time grant and there will be two evaluation panels for this process. The first will be on **1 September 2020** and the second will be on **30 September 2020**.

Please find attached the supporting documentation and application form.

If you would like to discuss your proposal then please contact the Somerset Equalities Officer Group on Equalities@somerset.gov.uk or **01823 359221**.

Somerset Rivers Authority

Dozens of places across Somerset have benefitted from extra flood protection and resilience works funded by the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA). In 2019-20, nearly £2.8million was spent on actions designed to protect people, properties, businesses and roads, while also enhancing local environments.

Everybody in Somerset is affected directly or indirectly by issues with flooding, so the SRA invests in a wide range of actions countywide to reduce flood risks and increase local resilience when floods do occur. All works are additional to those carried out by other Flood Risk Management Authorities in Somerset.

Please find attached two copies of the SRA Annual Report. The longer version gives lots of detail about SRA activities and is helpful for exploring what has been done at a very local level, right down to single fields and ponds and ditches. It includes around 130 photographs plus other illustrations. The shorter version is much more selective, but still very informative.

You can also read the entire text, split up into accessible sections, on the SRA's website. Please [click here](#) for this version of the information.

If you have any comments or questions, or would like to know more, please contact Somerset Rivers Authority on sra@somerset.gov.uk or call **01823-355111**.

Last Chance to Respond to Business Survey

Somerset's five local authorities are undertaking a joint business survey to assess the impacts of COVID-19 (coronavirus) on the economy. It went live on Friday 24 July and can be found [here](#). It will close on the **14 August**. To read more please [click here](#).

Heart of the South West(HotSW)

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Annual Report 2019/20

The HotSW LEP Annual Report for 2019/20 has been published. Please find the report attached for your ease of reference. HotSW is on track to deliver their impacts by 2025 and has made significant progress in this financial year.

The LEP's foundations for creating the conditions for growth have mitigated some of the economic impacts of the lockdown. These took place towards the end of this reporting period and enabled the LEP to quickly identify measures to help businesses in the short term.

Please [click here](#) to view the route map to recovery.

HM Coastguard Watchet

This week the HM Coastguard Watchet team were tasked to St Audries Bay next to the St Audries Bay Waterfall following a large rock fall from the cliff face. Reported on 999 the team were tasked to the scene to check the stability of the cliff face as well as checking no one had been injured and to give immediate safety advice to those persons on the beach.

Arriving at the access point of Home Farm Holiday Centre the team were directed by one of the witnesses onto the beach where between the access steps and the waterfall a large section had fallen away, approximately 5 tonnes of rocks. Witnesses who heard the cliff fall described it as a large bang similar to a loud thunder burst as the rocks fell onto the beach. Luckily a group of children who had been playing at the base of the cliff only minutes before had moved around the corner by the waterfall and avoided serious injury.

After liaising with the families on the beach and giving advice HM Coastguard Watchet checked that the warning signs were all still in place at the beach access points and spoke to the owners of the holiday camp regarding advising new visitors of the dangers of the loose cliffs.

HM Coastguard Watchet continue to repeat their warnings that visitors to the coast should keep away from cliff edges and the base of cliffs due to continued erosion. Their guidance would be to stay out away from the base of the cliff the same distance as the cliff height and certainly not allow any children to play below these sorts of cliffs underneath any overhangs. In this case it was lucky there had not been any fatalities or serious injuries.

In a coastal emergency remember to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

To follow HM Coastguard Watchet, please [click here](#).

Community Support - What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Fortnightly Newsletter - Next Edition Due Out 14 August 2020

SWT continues to produce a fortnightly e-newsletter to support the work of the voluntary and community sector across the district. SWT is now seeking feedback

on the VCS newsletter and would be grateful if you could please [complete a short survey](#). It should only take 3-4 minutes. Thank you.

Eat Out to Help Out goes live

More than 5,000 eateries in the South West have signed up to the Government's Eat Out to Help Out that went live yesterday and will continue throughout August. The figure only relates to businesses with fewer than 26 outlets and excludes the large chains.

The deal offers diners the chance to benefit from a 50% discount, up to a maximum of £10 per person, on food and non-alcoholic drinks, any Monday to Wednesday. No voucher is required. Diners can take advantage of the offer as many times as they like during the month.

Stickers and posters are in the windows of restaurants, cafes, bars and other eateries, and customers who want to take advantage of the scheme are advised to look out for the logo.

You can search online for premises within a five-mile radius of your base that have signed up to the scheme [here](#).

Health and Welfare

#HandsFaceSpace

Boris Johnson has unveiled a new COVID-19 slogan [#HandsFaceSpace](#).

There are some very simple ways to protect yourself and others, when you leave home you must:

- wash hands - keep washing your hands regularly
- cover face - wear a face covering over your nose and mouth in enclosed spaces
- make space - stay at least a metre away from people not in your household

If you are feeling unwell, get a test which will allow contact tracing and do not leave home for at least **10 days**.

The self-isolation period has been extended to 10 days

The Government has issued further guidance on the **changes made to isolation periods** for anyone displaying symptoms of COVID-19 and are awaiting a test/test result, people who are asymptomatic but have tested positive, and people who have received a positive test.

In summary, the self-isolation period has been extended from 7 days to 10 days:-

- If you have symptoms (however mild) you must self-isolate for 10 days from when the symptoms started and arrange a test
- If you are asymptomatic but have tested positive, you must self-isolate for 10 days from when the test was taken and if you then subsequently develop

symptoms, you must then restart your 10 day self-isolation from when the symptoms started.

For more specific guidance on variable situations, please refer to this [publication](#).

Shielding Period Paused

From 1 August, the Government's shielding programme for the clinically extremely vulnerable is paused as average incidence rates across the country remain sufficiently low. This will continue to be kept under close review. In areas where incidence and transmission rates are increasing, the Government will take a more targeted approach to shielding advice at local authority level.

This means the support from the National Shielding Service, including free food parcels and medicine deliveries will stop. However, supermarket priority delivery slots will remain and in Somerset the **Coronavirus Support Helpline number, 0300 790 6275**, will also continue to provide help and support 7 days a week between 8am and 6pm.

Since March, communities have rallied round, with volunteers helping those who have most needed help. Many of those charities, local groups and volunteers, are still there and still able to help. [Spark Somerset](#) has been bringing volunteers together and has advice. [Corona helpers](#) are another valuable source of help. People can also contact their [village agent](#) for support.

For further updates and instructions, please [click here](#).

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](#)

FAQS

Q. Can I now visit my family member / friend who lives at a care home?

- A.** The decision on whether or not to allow visitors, and in what circumstances, is for each individual care home provider or manager of each home to make, based on assessment and advice from local directors of public health. Care homes can develop a policy for limited visits, following the advice set out in the guidance published on 22 July.

If the care home provider permits visits, they should encourage all visitors to wear a face covering and to wash their hands thoroughly before and after putting it on and taking it off. Visitors should wear appropriate further PPE depending on the need of their visit, including gloves and aprons. Providers should also consider whether visits, if they are permitted, could take place in a communal garden or outdoor area, which can be accessed without anyone going through a shared building.

To limit risk where visits do go ahead, this should be limited to a single constant visitor, per resident, wherever possible. This is to limit the overall number of visitors to the care home and the consequent risk of infection. A constant visitor is a nominated person, a son, or wife for example, who can visit the resident. Please [click here](#) for further guidance and information.

Q. I've been shielding for health reasons since March. Now I'm free to leave my home but I feel incredibly nervous. How can I help myself to relax?

- A.** Many individuals who have been shielding and haven't really left their homes since March, may be feeling a little uneasy about the lifting of the shielding period. Venturing back out and being around other people, for example at the shops, with face coverings and one-way systems, might be a daunting prospect and the transition could be as difficult as the sudden lockdown was in March. And just as it took a while to adjust back then, it will take a while to adjust now.

Take it at your own pace, share any concerns or anxieties with those closest to you and remember that the friends and neighbours that have helped you over the last few months are still your friends and neighbours even after the shielding ends and they are still there for you.

For those who have been shielding and are worried about venturing outside of the home environment, please know that you are not alone, and support is available.

NHS Volunteer Responders will carry on delivering the groceries you buy and prescriptions if you need it. You can call them on **0808 196 3646** (8am to

8pm). There is also support available to help people who are feeling anxious about leaving the house. You can access this online on the [NHS website](#).

Anyone feeling emotionally distressed or suicidal can phone Samaritans for help on **116 123** or email jo@samaritans.org in the UK.

Crime / Safeguarding

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Report parking issues

Avon and Somerset Constabulary work in partnership with local authorities to deal with parking enforcement. Enforcement of parking restrictions is not a criminal matter in any local authority area.

How do I report...?

- a vehicle parked in a dangerous position
- a skip causing an obstruction or in a dangerous position
- obstruction of the pavement causing pedestrians to enter the highway

You can report any of the above, by calling 101.

For any other parking concerns or guidance on parking regulations in your area, contact [Somerset County Council](#).

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:

Somerset Equalities Officer Group Innovation Grant application/info
Somerset Rivers Authority Full Length Annual Report 2019-20
Somerset Rivers Authority Summary of Annual Report 2019-20
HotSW LEP Annual Report for 2019/20