

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 29. Week ending 11/10/20

#Hands

#Face

#Space

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](#).

[Click here](#) to read up to date information on how SWT continues to respond to coronavirus.

Key Messages this week

1. World Mental Health Day – 10 October 2020

Looking after your state of mind is just as important as taking care of your body, yet most of us manage our physical health far better than our mental health. As soon as we feel a physical ache or pain we generally try to do something about it, but when we find ourselves feeling very low or stressed we tend to think it is just part and parcel of life and don't do anything to improve the situation.

One in four of us experience a mental health problem in any one year.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises [World Mental Health Day](#) on **10 October** every year. This year's theme set by the [World Federation for Mental Health](#) is "**Mental health for all – Greater Investment – Greater Access**". Through this campaign, the World Federation for Mental Health endeavours to make mental health care a reality for all, with key emphasis on awareness, advocacy, accessibility,

and action. It aims to bridge the gaps between action and understanding through creative initiatives and worldwide participation.

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a surge in the number of mental health issues around the globe, thereby necessitating conversations and collective action to warrant support for all.

More information and advice including a list of useful links to various organisations can be found if you [click here](#)

2. **SWT to consider Climate Emergency Plan**

A Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan has been published for consideration by the Council's Scrutiny Committee. The CNCR Action Plan identifies a proposed one-year action plan together with route maps for longer term action, and the role that SWT will need to play in delivery.

This builds on recent initiatives by the Council including its Zero Carbon Affordable Homes Pilot, the Wildflower Meadow project, the electric vehicle charging point scheme and free tree 'giveaway' for town and parish councils.

The CNCR Action Plan which would be subject to annual review, would sit alongside and build upon the **Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy** produced jointly by the five Councils in Somerset. The joint county-wide strategy has also been published this week and will be going through the democratic process at each of the district and county councils.

Further details on the [Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy](#) and the CNCR Action Plan can be found on the [SWT website](#).

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

3. **Democracy and 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.

A number of Committee meetings are scheduled to take place over the next few weeks, which are as follows:

- Wednesday 14 October – **Special Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 9 October). Items on the agenda include the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy and SWT Carbon Neutrality & Climate Resilience Action Plan and Coastal protection works associated with the B3191

- Tuesday 20 October – **Special Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 15 October)
- Wednesday 21 October – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 16 October)
- Monday 26 October – **Special Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Wednesday 21 October)
- Wednesday 28 October – **Special Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 23 October)
- Thursday 29 October – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 26 October)

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. Planning measures to protect Levels and Moors

SWT is taking measures to protect the Somerset Levels and Moors when determining planning applications following advice from Natural England.

Parts of the district fall within the Somerset Levels and Moors which are designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the Habitat Regulations 2017 and listed as a Ramsar Site under the Ramsar Convention.

The Council has received a letter from Natural England concerning high levels of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors and stressing the need to protect them from further phosphate pollution.

Following a court judgement known as Dutch N, Natural England have advised that in light of the unfavourable condition of the Somerset Levels and Moors, authorities should undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) before determining planning applications that may give rise to additional phosphates within the

catchment. This means the Council is currently unable to determine some applications until the impact the development would have on phosphate levels has been addressed and where necessary, compensation secured.

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

Further information is available on the [SWT website](#).

5. SWT supports Local Electricity Bill

SWT is supporting a new Bill that would empower communities to sell locally generated electricity directly to local customers helping the economy whilst increasing clean energy production.

Currently customers can only purchase electricity from nationally licensed utilities. The proposed new law would establish a 'Right to Local Supply' which would promote local renewable electricity supply companies and co-operatives by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply operation.

Revenues received by new local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities.

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

6. SWT launches Community Chest

SWT has launched a new fund to help communities recover from the effects of COVID-19. The Community Chest of £250,000 is now open to support one-off initiatives run by the voluntary and community sector, and wider community groups who have been unable to secure mainstream funding from the Council or other sources.

Grants of up to £7,500 can be awarded to supplement activities and projects, covering up to 75% of the total cost with applicants needing to find at least 25% from their own or other sources.

The Community Chest Scheme will give consideration to initiatives that will help community groups become sustainable in the longer term; that will help the community to recover from the effects of COVID-19; and are aligned to SWT's corporate priorities of housing and communities, the environment and the economy.

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

To apply and find out more information on eligibility, please click [here](#).

7. SWT encourages residents to go green

SWT is encouraging homeowners and private landlords to apply for a Green Homes Grant in line with its corporate priorities for climate change and housing.

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

To find out more information on eligibility, please [click here](#).

8. Stronger Somerset

The Stronger Somerset campaign microsite contains the business case, an executive summary and the prospectus as well as FAQ's which are regularly updated.

Do take the time to read through and feedback any comments via the microsite which can be accessed [here](#).

9. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Recycling sites are now on winter hours until Wednesday 31 March, operating weekdays 9am-5pm and weekends 9am-4pm.

Recycling site visitors must take responsibility to keep themselves and others safe. Restrictions remain, including:

- Social distance, gloves, mask discretionary;
- max two people - same household - in vehicle, no one with COVID-19 symptoms or those asked to shield;
- Site staff cannot offer manual assistance;
- Van and trailer permits continue.

All site details can be accessed by [clicking here](#)

To keep up to date with recycling sites, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter at www.somersetwaste.gov.uk and follow @Somersetwaste on Facebook or Twitter

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

Highway Maintenance Update

SCC Highways are currently focusing on the routine tasks of gully emptying, safety defect repairs and patching.

We have now experienced our first storm of the autumn with "Storm Alex" over the weekend of 2 to 4 October. Fortunately for us, with the main centre of the storm passing over France, we did not experience anything like the devastating flooding that was experienced in south-eastern France and north-western Italy (a year's worth of rain in 24 hours!)

A number of trees were blown down on the Friday and over the weekend. There were 52 incidents across the county requiring emergency response by Highways. These included: 25 reports of flooding; 16 fallen trees/branches; 5 debris in the carriageway; 3 potholes; 1

damaged road sign; and 2 others. With the storm being centred over France, the winds blew from the north-east and this meant that Somerset West and Taunton, as well as Mendip, were in the firing line and accounted for most of the calls.

One thing to be thankful for, though: with the wind direction, wind speed and amount of precipitation, if this had happened in January, rather than October, taken in combination it would have produced a lot of snow!

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

Temporary Road Closure – Viney Street, Taunton

To enable Wessex Water to carry out supply separation works, Viney Street, Taunton will be closed for a distance of approximately 50 metres. The [Order](#) becomes effective on **15 October 2020** and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on the 19 October and last until 23 October 2020 between the hours of (00:00 – 23:59) for a total of five days.

To view a map of the road closure including alternative routes please [click here](#).

Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund

City, town and parish councils and community organisations in un-parished areas across Somerset are invited to bid for between £5,000 and £75,000 for innovative projects that can make a real difference in reducing carbon emissions and can contribute to making Somerset resilient to the effects of Climate Change.

For information about the **Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund 2020-21** which was launched on the **1 October** please [click here](#).

Climate Change Virtual Events

Thursday 22 October 2020 11am to 2pm,

Virtual Climate Emergency Event for City, Town and Parish Councils
Zoom contact [Somerset Association of Local Councils \(SALC\)](#)

Saturday 24 October 2020 11am to 2pm,

Virtual Climate Emergency Event for City, Town and Parish Council,
Zoom, contact [Somerset Association of Local Councils \(SALC\)](#)

Exmoor National Park

Last chance to book tickets as the final countdown begins to Exmoor's popular **Dark Skies Festival**, which runs from **16 to 31 October** with events for all ages.

As Europe's first [International Dark Sky Reserve](#), and with some of the darkest skies in the UK, Exmoor National Park (ENP) is an ideal destination for stargazing.

In light of the coronavirus update, ENP has reviewed the most recent government guidance and are happy that some events can still go ahead, although all events must be pre-booked with the relevant event organiser.

The Rangers and staff of ENP are running a range of events for all ages at locations all over Exmoor. There are Ranger-Guided Night Walks at Lynton and outdoor family fun and stargazing with astronomer Jo Richardson at Wimbleball and Simonsbath. For those not able to join in person, there are also a number of virtual events, including an on-line ranger-led workshop on bio-luminescence

This year's Festival Competition is based on capturing Exmoor at night on camera. Four categories are open to photographers in both under 16s and adult classes, including deep-sky images or photos of Exmoor's iconic wildlife or landmarks at night.

Please [click here](#) for more details, including regular updates and changes to the schedule.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

With rain and wind affecting many areas last weekend due to Storm Alex, the Coastguard issued warnings about being weather aware and staying safe.

The key message was "If in doubt, don't go out! Don't let your judgement be clouded when it comes to safety in and around our coastline".

If you really do have to go out:

- Check the local weather and tide times so you can be prepared;
- Avoid windy coastlines and cliff-sidewalks where the tide can easily cut you off. Do not attempt to climb cliffs as a shortcut to the top, they are often crumbly and slippery, especially when the weather is bad;
- Big waves can knock adults, children and pets into the water and out to sea. Keep well back from the water's edge;
- Huge waves crashing over quays, piers, cliffs and rocks are not the place for selfies and certainly not worth putting your life (or those of others and our emergency services) at risk;
- Take a fully charged mobile and tell someone where you're going and when you expect to be back

Don't take risks, but if you do get into trouble or see someone else in difficulty call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. [#999Coastguard](#).

UK Weather Warnings are available [here](#).

Community Support – What help is out there?

**Voluntary and Community Sector Support
Mapping and Supporting Food Banks across our District**

Many more people than normal turned to food banks over the recent months, and there has been wonderful support for them across the community. SWT has kept in regular contact with food banks, to understand the work they are doing and, where appropriate, provide information and support.

To help us plan how we can help food banks deal with any future increase in demand we have asked for updates on their current and projected resilience. We are mindful that new food banks have been set up in response to Covid-19 and there may be some which we are not aware of. That is where your help would be appreciated. If you know of a food bank not listed below, please could you or they make contact with H.phillips@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

For the purposes of this request a Food Bank is defined as: -

"A non-profit, charitable organisation that distributes food (and other essential items such as toiletries) to those who have difficulty purchasing enough to avoid hunger."

Listed so far are;

- Trussell Trust in Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe,
- The Taunton East Development Trust (TEDT) in Halcon,
- The Besom in Taunton,
- Minehead's Hope Centre and Food Cupboard,
- Quantock Foodbank in Watchet ;
- Dulverton Good Neighbours scheme.

Your earliest updates would be much appreciated.

Could you run a Community Pantry? Are you interested in joining SWT's pilot scheme?

The idea of a Community Pantry is to share good, but excess food from going to landfill, by making it available to the community at low cost. A pilot scheme is [launching in Sedgemoor](#), and we are seeking a group or groups to pilot the scheme across the SWT area.

There will be support with planning and training, and set up costs are likely to be covered from a central fund, however we need groups and a venue that can act as a small distribution hub, as well as 2-4 other host venues.

The scheme does not operate like a food bank, and it is hoped and likely the pantries will work well as a next step for those who have used a food bank, as well as others keen to avoid food waste and live economically. Pantry members pay £3.50 a week but get £20-£25 worth of food.

Each pantry needs about 10 volunteers, including a lead and a deputy.

If you would like the opportunity to learn more about how this could help your community please get in touch as we plan to host an information event later this month.

Please email: H.phillips@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

More support for Carers in Somerset

Somerset Carers (provided by the Community Council for Somerset - CCS) is a free service with a dedicated team of Carers Agents, designed to support those people caring for their partners, children, parents, family or friends. The Carers Agents remit is to support the unpaid Carer with anything from emotional care, to finding the right support group or financial benefits and much more.

As well as Carers Agents, CCS has a team of Village Agents. CCS Village Agents have been working in communities across Somerset since 2012. They help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely individuals and statutory and/or voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs, helping often where others won't, don't or can't.

CCS is delighted to announce that from September, all Carers Agents will become Village Agents and all existing Village and Community Agents are ready to support unpaid Carers in Somerset.

To find out more about the service and or access support please [click here](#).

Young Somerset

Young Somerset has had a busy and rewarding summer despite the trials of coronavirus and the closure of Youth Clubs across the county. They have been supporting young people on a 1-1 basis, doing activities such as dry stone-walling, horse management, motor mechanics and kayaking. All this working in partnership with amongst others, Somerset County Council, Avon and Somerset Police and the District Councils.

They also have been providing on-line support via the virtual hubs and have a dedicated line to speak or contact a member of the Wellbeing Team.

They are hoping to resume youth clubs in a COVID-secure way and are currently looking at how they can do this following the strict guidance issued by the National Youth Agency and UK Youth.

Young Somerset's delivery of detached youth work across the county, during the last six months has supported and listened to young people, especially those who are feeling lonely and sad. Young people have been isolated like many of us, and welcome being able to spend time with their friends and a trusted adult such as a youth worker.

To find out more about Young Somerset and the work they are currently doing to help young people tackle loneliness and isolation please [click here](#).

Somerset Community Foundation

Grants worth **£20,911** have been awarded to 19 smaller, grassroots charities and community groups in the latest round of [The Somerset Fund](#), managed by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF).

Local organisations that have recently benefitted include the North Taunton Partnership, Work-Wise in Taunton and Stogumber Parish Council.

To read the full press release and find out more about applying for a grant please [click here](#).

VCS Newsletter –Publication out 16 October 2020

The next edition of the Voluntary Community Sector newsletter will be released on **Friday 16 October 2020**, however, any urgent news bulletins will be circulated to subscribers when applicable.

Health and Welfare

Deafinate Training Session

Approximately 1 in 6 people in the UK have a degree of hearing loss. Deafinate Training promote excellence in communication with deaf people and their aims are to ensure positive, quality training for organisations to break down the barriers deaf people encounter. They are offering free deaf awareness training sessions

Saturday 17 October 10.30am – 3pm (Via Zoom)
Wednesday 18 November 12pm – 4.30pm (Bridgwater)

To be eligible for a free course you must be 19+ and reside in Somerset.

To find out more information and how to register please email deafinate@hotmail.com

To visit the Deafinate Matters website please [click here](#)

Download the new NHS Test and Trace app now

The NHS [COVID-19 app](#) has launched in England and Wales, including QR check-in at venues. You can now download the app and help control the spread of coronavirus and protect yourself and your loved ones as case numbers rise.

The app will advise you to self-isolate if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case. It will also enable you to check symptoms, book a free test if needed and get your test results.

NHS Nightingale Bristol- Save the date!

NHS Nightingale Bristol is delighted to be taking part in the autumn Bristol distinguished lecture series with their landlord and host, UWE Bristol.

The free event will take place online on **Wednesday 14 October** to support social distancing and starts at 6.30pm. Panel members will discuss 'responding to a national crisis - building the NHS Nightingale Hospital Bristol.'

Please [click here](#) for further information and to register.

Please remember Hands, Face, Space

It is so important to remember the coronavirus basics as we enter autumn and winter:

- **Hands** – Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds
- **Face** – Cover your face in enclosed spaces
- **Space** – Keep 2m apart where possible

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you must:

- Stay at home
- Call 119 or book a test online at [gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test)
- Self-isolate until you get the results from that test

Travel Restrictions

The guidance for travelling abroad is constantly being updated by Government. Please [click here](#) to read the latest information relating to the travel corridors.

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 am not sure if I should get a test for COVID-19 (coronavirus)?

- A.** Only people who display symptoms need to get a test. These include at least one of a high temperature; a new continuous cough, and a loss of, or change to your sense of smell or taste.

People without symptoms are not advised to get a test, even if they are a “close contact” of someone who tests positive.

Q. Can I look after my grandchildren?

- A.** Yes. People in groups of up to 6 can meet indoors or outdoors, which enables you to spend time with your grandchildren (although whole families may not be able to meet up at once).

It is recognised that grandparents and other relatives often provide informal childcare for young children, and this can be very important.

Although you should try to maintain social distance from people you do not live with wherever possible, it may not always be practicable to do so when providing care to a young child or infant. If this is the case - and where young children may struggle to keep social distance – you should still limit close contact as much as possible, and take other precautions such as washing hands and clothes regularly.

If you have formed a support bubble with your grandchildren’s household, which is allowed if either you or they live in a ‘single adult household’, then there can be close contact and social distancing is not necessary.

Crime / Safeguarding

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Traffic Disruption on the Roads

Motorists are being warned they may face disruption at the weekend when an abnormal load travels through Somerset.

A 225-tonne transformer is being transported along the **A38** and **M5** on **Saturday 10 October** and **Sunday 11 October**.

On Saturday the load will be escorted by police from Dunball, travel south on the **M5 between junctions 23 and 26**, before heading along the **A38 to West Buckland, near Wellington**. Drivers are warned traffic may need to be held at points for safety reasons.

On Sunday, the vehicle will head back along the **A38 to Bishops Hull** and again traffic may be held.

Motorists are advised to consider an alternative routes between 8.30am and 10am each day with delays expected.

Critical Incident – BBC1 7 October

A PCSO who showed tremendous bravery during an incident in Taunton in which he was stabbed while detaining a suspect was featured on an episode of Critical Incident on BBC1 11am on 7 October. In the piece, [PCSO Sam Bushen](#) explains the vital role and duties of a PCSO.

In the same programme [Chief Constable Andy Marsh](#) talks about the importance of Body Worn Video, explaining how it has transformed the criminal justice system and helps show the public the reality of life on the police frontline.

Series 2: Episode 8 of Critical Incident is available to view on BBC iPlayer.

Facebook Live

Monday 12 October at 5pm, Superintendent Andy Bennett and Alex Raikes MBE, of Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI) will be hosting a Facebook Live session aimed at allowing members of the public to ask their questions about hate crime, talk about how the police and other organisations are tackling this, and highlight the support services available to victims.

The session will go live on A&SP's main [Facebook](#) page at 5pm on Monday, and is open to all. The police would like to share this session as widely as possible, so please promote to all your channels and networks.

A&SP are encouraging members of the public to send in their questions ahead of Monday's Live to Lucy.Keenan@avonandsomerset.police.uk.

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.

#Hands #Face #Space