

# Somerset West and Taunton

## Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

### Issue 36. Week ending 29/11/20

**#StayAtHome    #ProtectTheNHS    #SaveLives**

#### **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

#### **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. SWT under Tier 2 Restrictions from 2 December 2020**

The whole of the Somerset County Council area has been placed in Tier 2 of the Covid-19 restrictions announced by the Government this week. South Somerset, Somerset West and Taunton, Mendip and Sedgemoor are all in Tier 2. Please [click here](#) to read the full list of what you can and cannot do in each tier when the second national lockdown ends on **Wednesday 2 December 2020**.

## 2. **PM Statement on Covid-19 Winter Plan**

The UK Government's Covid-19 Winter Plan presents a programme for suppressing the virus, protecting the NHS and the vulnerable, keeping education and the economy going and providing a route back to normality. The plan sets out the Government's approach to ending the national restrictions on **2 December**. The Government's Winter Plan publication can be found [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:

- Tuesday 1 December – **Special Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Thursday 26 November) Click [here](#) for the Agenda and report packs.
- Wednesday 2 December – **Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Friday 27 November)
- Thursday 3 December – **Special Full Council** to consider the Stronger Somerset Business Case 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Monday 30 November)
- Monday 7 December – **Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Wednesday 2 December)
- Tuesday 8 December – **Special Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Thursday 3 December)
- Thursday 10 December – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Monday 7 December)
- Tuesday 15 December – **Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Thursday 10 December)
- Wednesday 16 December – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Friday 11 December)
- Thursday 17 December – **Special Audit, Governance and Standards Committee** to consider the Statement of Accounts, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Monday 14 December)

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](mailto: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.**

#### **4. SWT opens Additional Restrictions Grant scheme**

SWT's grant scheme providing extra support for businesses affected by the current national lockdown is now open. The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) is part of a package of measures announced by the Government to assist businesses severely impacted by restrictions put in place to control the spread of Covid-19.

SWT's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) will provide assistance to those that were not eligible for the Local Restrictions Support Grant (LRSG) for businesses that were required by law to close for 28 days during the national lockdown from 5 November to 2 December 2020.

Any business owner or sole trader whose business has been severely impacted by Covid-19 restrictions can apply for the ARG including homeworkers and mobile workers.

Online applications with all relevant supporting information must be submitted before the closing date at 9am on **Monday 14 December**.

The application process can be accessed [here](#).

#### **5. SWT to appraise rough sleeping provision**

SWT is set to undertake a review of its accommodation requirements for homeless and rough sleeping provision. The Council wants to evaluate resources and demand to ensure it can provide enough accommodation to work to end homelessness and rough sleeping in the district in line with its corporate priority for homes and communities.

Executive members have approved a proposal to undertake an options appraisal and report back with recommendations. The appraisal will consider all options and sites with the aim of providing more accommodation and support to the homeless and rough sleeping population.

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

#### **6. Have your say on climate positive planning**

SWT is seeking the views of residents and developers on an Interim Planning Policy Statement, intended to clarify existing planning policy for the district in

response to the Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience (CNCR) Action Plan and the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration.

SWT recognises how planning decisions can play a key role in the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change and has already begun work on a new [Local Plan](#) to incorporate environmentally-friendly policies up until 2040. However, it will be some time before the plan attracts significant weight in the decision making process.

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

## **7. SWT recognised as a leader in responding to the climate emergency**

SWT has been recognised as a leader in responding to the climate emergency by the not-for-profit charity CDP. The Council achieved a score of "A-" (Leadership) for its 2020 disclosure, a major improvement on last year's score of "C" (Awareness). The disclosure identifies the ways in which SWT are working to mitigate and adapt to the projected impacts of climate change.

To read the full press release and access the [CDP Snapshot Report](#) please [click here](#).

## **8. Somerset West Lottery Christmas bonus draw**

SWT is inviting people to support local good causes this festive season and be in with a chance to win a great prize in the Somerset West Lottery. Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets before **19 December 2020** will be in with the chance to win one of five bundles containing an Amazon Echo Show 8, Echo Dot 3rd Gen and a Fire 7 Tablet courtesy of the external lottery management company Gatherwell.

All tickets bought during this timeframe will automatically be entered in to the Christmas bonus prize draw as well as being in with a chance to win up to £25,000 in the weekly lottery run by SWT. Five players were drawn at random to win £100 B&Q gift cards in the summer prize draw where a Somerset West Lottery player supporting Taunton Town FC also won £2,000.

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

## **9. Taunton's Virtual Christmas Switch-on 2020**

In a change to the usual format, the lights in Taunton town centre and Christmas tree lights were switched on remotely by the Mayor of Taunton, via video link from home on Sunday 22 November.

Please [click here](#) to watch the switch on.

## **10. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)**

### **Personal waste disposal advice**

The Government has provided guidance on how to dispose of personal waste, like tissues and disposable cleaning cloths, if you have coronavirus symptoms.

The guidance is for anyone with symptoms, including those diagnosed with the infection who must remain at home until they are well. It also applies to people in households with someone showing symptoms (a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature) that may be caused by coronavirus.

Personal waste, should be stored securely in disposable rubbish bags. These should then be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within your home. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in your usual rubbish outside your house, which will be collected as part of the usual collections. Other household waste can be disposed of as normal.

Before putting waste containers out for collection and after taking them back in, please wash hands and disinfect container handles. Please maintain social distance from all waste staff.

### **Check your collection days for Christmas and 2021**

At [somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://somersetwaste.gov.uk), check all your collection days with *My Collection Day*. While there, if you need a recycling box, click on *My Waste Services* and select *Managing waste containers* from the drop-down menu. No fuss, no queue, no calls 24/7. *My Waste Services* is also for reporting any missed collection after 7:00pm on the due day or within the next five working days (rubbish, garden waste) or three working days (recycling).

To keep up to date with recycling sites, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter at [www.somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk) and follow @Somerssetwaste on Facebook or Twitter

### **11. Stronger Somerset**

You will find the latest version of the Stronger Somerset business case and other associated documents [here](#). You can also sign up to receive the Stronger Somerset newsletter by [clicking here](#).

Please [click here](#) to read more on the Stronger Somerset Ipsos MORI survey results.

## **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.

There is never a dull moment in Highways. On Monday afternoon everything was going well, the weather was fine, there were no major issues and then.....SCC Highways detected a problem with a manhole cover on the A39 between Carhampton and Dunster. It had started to move and sink and it looked like the bedding material fixing it to the chamber beneath had failed. SCC Highways rapidly

organised a “tarmac” patch to protect it in the short term whilst a permanent solution was found. First, identify the owner. This turned out to be BT, who were contacted and said that they would get there as soon as they could, so the next challenge was to keep everyone safe in the meantime.

SCC Highways positioned staff on site to keep an eye on things. The temporary repair was holding up well but, then again, this is one of the busiest roads in Somerset. Eventually, as darkness was falling, the cover started to move again so the team positioned one of their SCC hi-visibility vehicles, with its beacons flashing, on top of the manhole and directed traffic around the site.

SCC Highways sent out some public communications at this point so that the travelling public knew what was going on. They kept this going until BT arrived and set up temporary traffic signals and took over the site. BT carried out a permanent repair the following day and, after allowing sufficient time for their work to harden and be fully trafficable, the traffic lights were removed on Friday.

On the other side of Minehead, the rebuilding of North Hill cattle grid is going well. The new concrete walls, drainage and steelwork are now in. For the week ahead SCC Highways will be focusing on the extensive resurfacing and reshaping of the road on its approaches to the grid. They will also be installing the new fencing, gates etc. SCC Highways are aiming, if all goes well, to get everything complete by the weekend to allow the re-opening of the road so that, once again, everyone can access **North Hill and Selworthy Beacon**.

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

### **Useful links to report faults**

As the clocks have now changed and it's getting dark earlier, there are more queries about overgrown trees, verges or hedges, blocked drains and street lights that don't work.

To report faults in the following areas, please click on the relevant link:-

[Dangerous/Overgrown Tree alongside the public highway](#)

[Report an overgrown verge or hedge on the road](#)

[Street light not working](#)

[Blocked surface water drain on the highway.](#)

## **M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme**

### **Toneway**

During the next few weeks, contractor, Alun Griffiths will be continuing to install the traffic signal equipment, the dressing of the verges and re-profiling to suit the agreed plans.

### **Blackbrook Bridge**

During the next few weeks, the contractor will be continuing to install the traffic signal equipment, the dressing of the verges and re-profiling to suit the agreed plans. Surfacing works around and over Blackbrook Bridge, on the carriageway and

footpath, will continue during the next few weeks and is progressing well. The footpath and cycle lane is well underway, with the anti-slip paving. The contractor has installed the electrical feeder pillar cabinets for the street lighting and motorway communications along with the ducting for the M5 communications.

Please [click here](#) for updates on the new Nexus 25 roundabout and the Gyrotory system.

If you would like to subscribe to receive future Newsletters and Bulletins from Alun Griffiths, please [click here](#) and complete the online form for Mail Chimp.

## **IMPORTANT- Road Closures**

Week Commencing **30 November**

A38 Bridgwater road. Full closure from **30 November to 4 December** 8pm – 6am.

M5 Junction 25 on **2, 3 & 4 December**

Gantry install on the roundabout. Whole roundabout down to single lane running. There will be a requirement for both inner and outer ring running during the week. 8pm – 6am.

Week Commencing **7 December**

M5 Junction 25

Full closure on Southbound off & on slips 8pm – 6am

Lane 2 closure on Northbound off & on slips 8pm – 6am

Toneway outbound closed from Hankridge Roundabout to M5 Junction 25 roundabout.

## **Highways England**

### **A358 Taunton to Southfields dualling scheme update**

Highways England reported the scheme has been allocated to Taylor Woodrow following a competitive tender process through the Regional Delivery Partnerships framework. Highways England is now in the process of finalising the scheme contract with Taylor Woodrow, which is scheduled to be awarded early next year. Taylor Woodrow are also progressing early works on the scheme's preliminary design.

You will no doubt be aware that the scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. This means Highways England will need to make an application for a special type of planning permission called a Development Consent Order (DCO) to gain authorisation to acquire the land and construct the scheme.

For more information on NSIPs please visit the [Planning Inspectorates website](#).

Before the application is submitted, Highways England will hold a statutory public consultation on the design where people will be invited to comment on the proposals. Highways England is still finalising the future programme for the scheme, but anticipate holding this consultation next year.

If you have any questions about the project, please don't hesitate to contact the project team by emailing [A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk) or phoning **0300 123 5000**.

## **BREXIT**

### **EU citizens protect your rights by applying to the EU Settlement Scheme**

If you are an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen, you and your family can protect your rights by applying to the EU Settlement Scheme to stay in the UK. You do not need to apply if you are a British or Irish citizen, or you have indefinite leave to remain or enter. **The deadline to apply is 30 June 2021.**

The [EU Settlement Scheme](#) allows you and your family to get the immigration status you need to:

- continue to live, work and study in the UK
- access public services like the NHS

You need to complete a short online application form using a computer, tablet or mobile phone. The application will ask you to:

- prove your identity
- prove that you live in the UK
- declare any criminal convictions

Successful applicants will receive settled status or pre-settled status, depending on how long you have lived in the UK. You will get digital proof of your status through an online service. Please [click here](#) to apply and find out more information.

A guide on EU Settlement Scheme Important Information can be found [here](#). A copy has also been attached for your ease of reference.

### **Somerset Independence Plus (SIP) Hoarding Service**

Do you know about the Somerset Independence Plus (SIP) Hoarding Service?

Hoarding has been identified by SIP as an area of need where there was previously little support and no hoarding specific agencies offering services to assist with tackling the problem. There are many complexities around clients with hoarding disorders which require delicate and tailor made solutions which do not just centre around the hoarding problem itself, as for many customers hoarding is a complicated issue mixed in with other issues such as the threat of homelessness, fuel poverty, financial debt and poor living conditions due to the disrepair of the property.

Invariably the customer is not able to engage with a multiple set of agencies to help themselves to resolve the problems they face.

SIP recognised the need for a service which involves more than just clearances. There is a need for a support service in the area of hoarding to assist clients to address their hoarding disorder and help with any mental health issues they have. SIP service is the preferred hoarding service provider for the Council's in Somerset, commissioned by Somerset County Council and the District Councils. SIP has the

advantage of being in house, having the dual role of being the Home Improvement Agency and Local Authority, providing the set of skills and access to agencies that is required.

The contact number for SIP is **0300 303 7794** and their email address is [SomIndPlus@sedgemoor.gov.uk](mailto:SomIndPlus@sedgemoor.gov.uk)

## **Exmoor National Park**

### **‘Give the Gift of Exmoor’, this Christmas**

A new campaign encouraging people to buy local Exmoor produce at Christmas, and those from further afield to get Exmoor delivered, has just been launched by Exmoor National Park Authority and Visit Exmoor as part of their on-going #EatExmoor initiative.

The campaign aims to take the worry out of present buying by highlighting the wide range of Exmoor producers offering online ordering and nationwide deliveries.

Follow [Visit Exmoor](#) on social media, or head to [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/buy-local](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/buy-local), for inspiration from local producers and tourism businesses offering gift vouchers for stays and meals, online shops, takeaway and local delivery services, plus Exmoor giveaways you don't want to miss!

To read the full press release and find out more information please [click here](#).

## **REMINDER- Step Up Somerset**

During these uncertain economic times, Step Up Somerset is a one-stop-shop for people and businesses looking for support, advice and information about employment, skills, careers and apprenticeships in the county. The site has resources to help anyone looking to realise the next step of their career ambitions, as well as support for people looking for work, worried about money, or facing redundancy. For more information, visit: [www.stepupsomerset.org.uk](http://www.stepupsomerset.org.uk)

## **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service Electrical Fire Safety Week**

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service attend at least one fire every two days caused by faulty electrics, appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets.

How to avoid electrical fires:

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on every floor of your home.
- Make sure an electrical appliance has a British or European safety mark when you buy it.
- Remember - one plug per socket. If you need more plugs than there are sockets, use a bar-type fuse adaptor and NEVER block plug adapters.
- Unplug appliances at night or when you're not using them to reduce the risk of fire - unless they are designed to be left on all the time such a fridge or freezer.
- Never use appliances when you're out, or asleep. For example, dishwashers, washing machines or tumble dryers should only be used if you are at home,

and awake. If you're out, or asleep, you will not be able to respond to the smoke alarm should a fire happen.

- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order to prevent them starting a fire.
- Don't put anything in the microwave that is made of metal, or has a metallic finish or parts.
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service are sharing some real-life electrical fires they've attended to help highlight how you can avoid this happening to you. Please [click here](#) to read a real life story of an overheating laptop that caused a fire in a lounge.

### **REMINDER- #StayHomeForSomerset**

You may have spotted the #StayHomeForSomerset campaign featured on BBC Points West last week. Somerset County Council (SCC) is asking everyone in the county to pull together to keep Coronavirus at bay and support the campaign. SCC want to fire up the amazing community spirit shown in Somerset throughout the lockdown earlier this year – and recognise that “we are all in this together.” From now until **2 December**, SCC is asking people to take a “selfie” featuring the name of, or photo of, who they are staying home for. It could be to protect a vulnerable family member or friend or because you want to protect the NHS from extra pressure. The photos can then be uploaded to social media using the hashtag **#StayHomeForSomerset**

### **Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

#### **Oake's NEW Community Kitchen**

Somerset Village Agents partner with Morrison's to provide free meals for people in and around Oake. CCS Village Agent Christine Brewer has teamed up with the Community Champion from Morrison's in Taunton, starting a fortnightly community kitchen based at the Oake Community centre.

If you would like to offer help, or want to register yourself or someone else for a hot meal delivery, contact Village Agent Christine Brewer on **07535 276680** or go to Oake Post Office where they can leave their names, or the name of somebody (with their consent) who would appreciate a meal. Please [click here](#) for more information.

### **REMINDER- Food for thought!**

Are YOU providing meals or access to food to your local community?

Do you want to start helping those in need?

CCS can help with funding, advice, equipment & ingredients!

Smart Communities could provide you with the tools to set up a food bank, collection services or funds to purchase Fridges, Freezers and other equipment to help you store food safely, and help stock them for the people in your local area.

The Somerset Food Resilience Taskforce, CCS and Somerset County Council have been working together to increase food security for residents in Somerset. CCS Village Agents and volunteers have delivered nearly 1,000 meals to families in need

to help prevent holiday hunger, and have also recently delivered nearly a tonne of donated potatoes to people in need, distributed through 10 community groups.

So, if you think your community could support those in need locally get in touch either by calling **01823 331 222**: or visit [www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk/food](http://www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk/food) or email [ccsmartcomm@somersetccc.org.uk](mailto:ccsmartcomm@somersetccc.org.uk)

## **Community Support – What help is out there?**

### **Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

#### **Young Somerset**

##### **The Somerset Big Tent Website is launching on the 30 November**

The Big Tent is a VCSE (Voluntary Community Social Enterprise) alliance of emotional wellbeing and mental health providers for children and young people aged 8-18 within Somerset, operating under a quality and safety assurance process. The Big Tent, funded by Clinical Commissioning Groups and facilitated by Young Somerset, is designed to broker the best local solution for a child / young person's needs, making it easy for them, their parents / carers, and professionals to access support.

The Big Tent website provides an online space for children and young people and their parents and guardians to know what wellbeing support is available for them in their area. They can navigate the support based on their feelings, type of support, location, age to ensure that they can discover support options which are suitable for them.

The Big Tent website also offers a professional area with details of upcoming training events, wellbeing campaigns and more to support professionals about how best to support children and young people.

You will be able to find the website on line from **30 November** by going to [www.somersetbigtent.org.uk](http://www.somersetbigtent.org.uk)

#### **Are you Proud to Care?**

If you, or someone you know, is looking for work visit <https://www.proudtocaresomerset.org.uk/> to find regularly updated jobs and opportunities in Somerset's growing Health and Social care sector.

For those who may have just left college, recently been made redundant, or are looking for a career change, working in Somerset's amazing Health and Social care sector could be the next step in an exciting new career. There's good job security as our care sector is growing – with more people needing care than ever before – and care is an interesting, rewarding, and meaningful career choice. Candidates will be working with creative, dedicated, supportive care professionals who have helped Somerset remain in the top 20% in relation to the proportion of good or outstanding care.

For more information please [click here](#). #ProudToCareSomerset

## **Somerset Community Foundation**

### **Surviving Winter Campaign**

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) has launched this year's Surviving Winter campaign, which encourages people who can afford it to donate some or all of their Winter Fuel Payment to help local people who are unable to afford to heat their homes.

As we head into winter, many of us face an expensive – but essential - bill for heating our homes, while hundreds of our older neighbours here in Somerset are forced to choose between heating and eating. The coronavirus outbreak means that, for many older and vulnerable people, this winter will be even more difficult and worrying. Many will need to stay at home to keep themselves safe, and will find themselves cut off from family and friends, facing higher costs to heat their homes.

A shocking 10% of households in Somerset live in fuel poverty. Surviving Winter encourages people who don't need their Winter Fuel Payment to donate some or all of it to help local older people who are unable to afford to heat their homes.

SCF hopes to build on the fantastic support they received last year to help even more older people in the county this winter. Thanks to support from a generous funder and The Big Give, **online** donations to the campaign that are made **during the week-long Big Give Christmas Challenge - midday Tuesday 1 December to midday Tuesday 8 December** - will be doubled! So, not only will **your donation be worth twice as much**, but SCF will also be able to help even more elderly and isolated people across Somerset feel warm, safe and well this winter.

If you would like to donate to Surviving Winter, visit [www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter) or call 01749 344949. Don't forget that the first £15,000 of donations made **online** between midday **Tuesday 1 December and midday Tuesday 8 December** will be **doubled**.

### **Quantock Landscape Partnership (QLP)**

The QLP is a landscape partnership scheme funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Quantock Hills AONB to live, learn and inspire local communities.

#### **Grow your own tree for the Quantocks!**

At sites like Cothelstone Hill over the next few years QLP will be planting new trees to help diversify the woodland and to repair the damage done by ash dieback disease. To do this QLP will need young trees to plant – and trees grown from local seeds, from the Quantock area, would be ideal. This is where you come in!

You can help at home by growing new trees from seed you have collected. This time of year is great to get outside and look for them. Not only will you get to watch the magical transformation of a seed into a tree, you will also be helping to make the woodlands of the Quantock Hills AONB a better place. See the attached leaflet for details and don't forget to follow QLP on [@quantocklps](https://www.instagram.com/quantocklps) Instagram page or on the [QLP Facebook page](#).

## **REMINDER: Covid-19 Community Champions**

Spark Somerset is working in partnership with SASP (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership) to set up the Covid-19 Community Champions Network. The network will give local people a role in helping their community to get up to date information and make the right choices to stay healthy.

Spark Somerset are particularly keen to involve people living or working with communities that might find it hard to get the right information about how to stay happy and healthy at the moment, and areas where Covid-19 infections rates are highest in Somerset.

If you, or someone you know who might be interested in becoming a Covid-19 Champion, you can find more information and can sign up [here](#).

If you'd like to discuss how your organisation might support the network, please don't hesitate to get in touch with [Spark Somerset](#).

## **Health and Welfare**

### **New A&E project supports young people around alcohol and drugs**

An innovative new project to reduce and support the number of young people repeatedly turning up at A&E with alcohol, drugs or violence related illness or injury has launched at Musgrove Park Hospital. The Somerset Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) is funding Turning Point (who run Somerset Drug and Alcohol Services) to deliver 'Admit' – a new pilot running from now until March 2021.

Young people who attend A&E with alcohol, drug or violence related injury are given help and support to reduce their risk of experiencing harm. This help is delivered by two dedicated Young People Recovery workers located in A&E from 6pm to midnight every Friday and Saturday night.

'Admit' was launched after a recent study highlighted Somerset's rate of admissions to hospital for alcohol related conditions is higher than the national average at 711 per 100,000 (664 per 100,000 nationally). The County also has a higher rate of admissions for alcohol specific conditions in those under 18 years. In addition, latest police figures also show the percentage of serious violent crime in Somerset involving alcohol has been steadily increasing since 2016. Please [click here](#) for more information.

For more information on accessing free and confidential support for alcohol or other drugs from Somerset Drug & Alcohol Service, please visit [www.turning-point.co.uk/sdas](http://www.turning-point.co.uk/sdas)

### **Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service**

Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service is continuing to operate online, offering information and advice, 1-2-1 support, and Peer Support Groups.

Support is available to anyone in Somerset who has been bereaved, or affected by suicide either personally, or professionally. They continue to work in partnership with

Marie Curie Companions, offering support to those who've been bereaved, whatever the cause, since the pandemic began.

The Somerset Bereavement Support Partnership offers:

- 3 telephone support calls through Marie Curie Companions
- further bereavement support sessions through Mind in Somerset (the team + external support workers) if desired
- This support is available to anyone in Somerset who has been bereaved since the pandemic began.

The number to contact is: **0800 3047 412** (9am- 5pm)

Please [click here](#) to visit the Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service website.

### **The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline**

If you are self-isolating or need extra help, 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.

If you would like to find out more about the Corona helpers, offer assistance, or need support please [click here](#).

### **Please Download the NHS Test and Trace app**

You can now [download the NHS Test and Trace app](#) and help control the spread of coronavirus and protect yourself and your loved ones as case numbers rise.

The more people who download the app and contribute to the data will assist with monitoring and tracking the spread of the virus; this will enable Public Health England to allocate resources accordingly. The app will also 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.

### **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.

**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. What will the new tier rules look like until the festive break?**

**A.** From Wednesday, 2 December, England will move back into the three-tier system of regional restrictions. From Wednesday 2 December SWT will be under Tier 2 restrictions. For a list of what you can and cannot do please [click here](#).

**Q. Can I celebrate Christmas with my whole family this year?**

**A.** The UK Government and Devolved Administrations recognise that people will want to be with their friends and family over Christmas, particularly after an incredibly difficult year. For this reason, the Government is changing some social contact restrictions for a short period of time. When following these new rules, we must each continue to take personal responsibility to limit the spread of the virus and [protect our loved ones, particularly if they are vulnerable](#). For many, this will mean that it isn't possible to celebrate Christmas in the way you normally would.

Please [click here](#) to read the Government's Christmas guidance.

## **Crime / Safeguarding**

### **Trading Standards urges consumers to think before they buy online**

Trading standards is advising online consumers in Devon, Somerset and Torbay to only buy from 'reputable' traders, and to refer to a new advice video if they experience any problems.

The [video](#) has been commissioned by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) ahead of 'Black Friday' (**Friday 27 November**) and 'Cyber Monday', (**Monday 30 November**), the two big pre-Christmas shopping days this month.

The Covid-19 lockdowns have led to a rise in consumer spending online and 87 per cent of UK consumers are estimated to have purchased a product online. The public spends around £2bn a week on online purchases. However, according to Citizens Advice Consumer Service the sharp increase in online spending has also led to a near doubling of complaints. People are having a range of problems when shopping online, including issues relating to scams and defective goods, and concerns about parcel delivery. There will also likely be a record number of electrical products purchased online this year, and Electrical Safety First warn that consumers should be extra vigilant when it comes to these kinds of products. Please [click here](#) for more information.

You can also find the Citizens Advice Consumer page by clicking [here](#).  
The public can call the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 1133**.

## **Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)**

### **Avon and Somerset Police take part in Operation Sceptre, national knife crime initiative**

A&SP has taken part in Operation Sceptre, a national initiative to tackle knife crime led by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC).

Operation Sceptre follows the launch of a new campaign by A&SP to engage young people in knife crime. The campaign, called Knife crime: A new way forward, has seen pupils from four schools based in Weston, Bristol and Taunton create short, original animations about the issues they see driving knife crime. The animations can be viewed here: [www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/knifecrime](http://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/knifecrime)

The operation took place in recent weeks with the aim of reducing the number of people carrying knives through targeted operational activity and by engaging with young people on the consequences of knife crime. It is just one of a series initiatives undertaken locally, and across Avon and Somerset to engage with young people, with the aim of diverting them away from criminal behaviour and educating them on the consequences of the choices they make.

### **Facebook Update**

Some big changes are coming to the local PCSO Facebook pages in the next few weeks. For those of you that follow PCSO and PC profiles across the Avon and Somerset Constabulary, they will be changing to fall in line with their working neighbourhood. There will also be an increase in administrators to each page as the number of people engaging and ultimately following the work of the A&SP, grows greatly in number every week.

#### [PCSO Supervisor Sam Bushen](#)

This page will no longer be called PCSO Supervisor Sam Bushen, but will change to **Taunton Neighbourhood Policing**.

#### [PCSO Katherine Williams](#) / [PCSO Linda Brooks](#) / [PC James Calloway](#)

These pages will be formed into the **Minehead and West Somerset Policing** Team

#### [PCSO Steve Hill](#)

This Facebook Profile has now switched to the [Wellington Neighbourhood Policing](#) team.

The new pages will be regularly monitored and will contain all the latest updates, appeals, advice and information on how to keep your communities safe. Whilst the pages are a useful source of reference, they should not be used to report crime. For non-urgent enquiries please continue to ring 101, and emergencies 999.

## **Local people share coronavirus concerns in recent PCC survey**

Nearly 2,000 local people shared their views on how the Coronavirus pandemic has impacted how safe they feel in their community. Due to the impact of the pandemic, 69% of respondents have concerns about safety and crime in their community or local area.

On hearing the results, PCC Sue Mountstevens explained Avon and Somerset Police has launched a dedicated Covid-19 enforcement team. The dedicated team will support the public and work with local communities to ensure people understand and adhere to the regulations that aim to lower the transmission rates of the virus.

Please [click here](#) to read more about the results of the survey.

## **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/](http://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.

**#StayAtHome**

**#ProtectTheNHS**

**#SaveLives**

### ***Attachments:***

*Grow your own tree for the Quantocks  
EU Settlement Scheme Document*