

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 39. Week ending 20/12/20

Please remember: #Keepitsmall #Keepitshort #Keepitlocal

It is also important to remember the coronavirus basics

- **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 Christmas Arrangements

SWT phone lines will be open as usual until the **24 December** when they will close at **1:00pm**. We then remain closed until 8:00am on the **4 January**. Throughout this period our Out of Hours service will be available for any emergencies. This is reached on the normal number: 0300 304 8000. The building will be closed from 1pm on 24 December until the 4 January.

All housing emergency repairs and emergency housing need calls will be managed by the Deane Helpline Out of Hours Service. This is accessed by calling **0300 304 8000** and following the instructions. Non urgent service

requests can be logged on the website and will be dealt with after the **4 January 2021**.

2. 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. If you would like to find out more about the Corona helpers, offer assistance, or need support 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 6 January – **Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 31 December)
- Thursday 14 January – **Planning**, 1pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 11 January)

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.

4. Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping this Winter

Through the pandemic SWT has been working closely with other partners including ARC and the YMCA to house the majority of those that were rough sleeping and have done so with great success. But now the colder weather is approaching our support and resources are at greater demand.

If you are aware of any rough sleeper in your ward, please report this to SWT via the StreetLink website (www.streetlink.org.uk), downloading the Streetlink App from the Apple Store or Google Play, or by calling **0300 500 0914**.

5. Blue Anchor Defence Update

SWT has completed the first two emergency phases of sea defence works at Blue Anchor Bay. It has been a project about big numbers in many ways – 18 tonnes of concrete poured into a void in the sea wall, 10 tonnes of grout injected into the face of the sea wall to fill small holes and cracks and 1800 tonnes of granite shipped from Cornwall, round Land's End. The rock was dropped onto the beach from a barge and then carefully placed (using 50 tonne machines) to protect the cliffs from further erosion over the winter.

This project has been managed by SWT External Operations and the work was 100% funded via a grant of £375,000 from the Environment Agency. At Full Council on 1 December the third phase of the scheme was approved and planning for a £4m permanent solution to protect the cliffs, the properties and road has already started.

6. SWT Housing Newsletter – Winter 2020/21

SWT Housing has produced its latest tenants' newsletter which is due to hit doormats next week. Approximately 6000 publications are being printed and will be distributed to all SWT tenants and leaseholders signposting readers to help and support. In this edition there has been a particular emphasis on tenancy sustainment and how tenants can access available services.

A digital copy is available if you [click here](#).

7. Voting safely at next year's elections

On Thursday **6 May 2021** residents in Somerset West and Taunton will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them at the postponed Police Crime Commissioner Election, County Council Elections and various Parish/Town Council elections.

While the elections are not until May, the Council is already making plans to help you stay safe while casting your vote.

There are a number of ways to have your say in the elections in May - you can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

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

8. Planning Obligations and S106

A S106 is a legally binding agreement between the Council, the Developer and any others with an interest in the site to be developed. This may include Somerset County Council and the landowner. The agreement is to regulate the future development of the land, compensate the local community for any impact caused by a development, for example, if open space is lost, and help shape the new development e.g. to make sure a certain number of houses are affordable homes.

Many of these agreements include paying financial contributions. Planning obligations can also be non-financial, e.g. providing land for public open space, affordable housing or creating environmental monitoring schemes.

Do you need funding for a project which will benefit communities in Somerset West and Taunton? If so there may be funding available generated by planning obligation payments. The SWT website has recently been updated so please check and see [Section 106 funds available](#) in your area.

9. REMINDER- Have your say on climate positive planning

SWT is now consulting on 'Climate Positive Planning', an Interim Policy Statement on Planning for the Climate Emergency. The consultation is taking place now until **Monday 4 January 2021**.

To have your say on the new Interim Policy Statement, visit the Council's [consultation portal](#).

10. REMINDER- SWT offers Christmas Parking incentive

The Council has offered free parking on each Saturday leading up to Christmas in its car parks at Dulverton, Dunster, Minehead, Porlock, Watchet, Wellington and Williton to support traders, residents and visitors.

In Taunton parking will be free after 3pm on **Saturday 19 December**. This offer excludes the Kilkenny car park which is a long stay commuter car park.

11. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

We all love the festive days off but they do disrupt SWP's recycling & rubbish collections. Please [click here](#) to check out the revised dates for collection and make sure you don't miss a thing. Now's also a good time to clear your decks of any recycling that's lying around so you're ready for the festive season.

At the end of a troubled 2020, everyone wants to make the most of the festive season. A year of change is a good time to get into new routines and there are lots of small steps everyone can take to waste less this Christmas. Just making one or two changes can make a difference. By reducing, reusing and recycling you can end 2020 and start 2021 doing your bit to protect our environment and help tackle climate change – as well as saving money.

Make it crunch time for wrapping paper

Steer clear of any glittery, plastic or foil wrapping options and stick with good old paper wrapping (recycled if possible) which can be recycled after use.

If in doubt, give it the scrunch test; scrunch it and if it stays scrunched, it is recyclable. Please ensure it doesn't have tape or glitter on it. If it does not stay scrunched, it cannot be recycled and needs to go straight into your rubbish.

Real Christmas trees

If your tree is taller than 6ft or has a trunk wider than 4 inches, you will need to take it to a recycling site as that's just too big for the SWP crews and vehicles to handle. You will need to take your tree, decoration-free, to a recycling site and put it in the Garden Waste skip. They will not be collected from the kerbside.

Compost your tree at home if you can, or turn it into a garden wildlife corner if you have the space. **If you are a subscriber to SWP Garden Waste Service**, leave your tree, decoration-free, next to your garden waste bin for collection – as long as it is no taller than 6ft and its trunk is no wider than 4 inches.

Collections restart on **Saturday 9 January 2021** (Friday 8 January collections will take place on Saturday 9 January, usual garden waste collections resume from **Monday 11 January**).

Please [click here](#) for further information and tips on how you can reduce your carbon footprint over the festive period.

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 2020 Round-up

2020 certainly has been an interesting year. We started off with a very wet winter and there was significant flooding in various places, especially on the Somerset Levels & Moors, which were under water for much of the time. At one point in February we experienced three named storms in four weekends. There were also a few landslips and some roads were closed for periods of time whilst things were allowed to stabilise or SCC Highways had to carry out repairs. The automatic cliff monitoring system at B3191 Cleeve Hill was triggered and the road was closed for the first week in January as a precaution.

Then, as we all know, the pandemic landed on the shores of the UK and we all went into the first lockdown. As a strategic service, SCC Highways had to keep going in maintaining a safe road network for all users. SCC Highways, therefore, focused on the key basic services of safety defect repairs, out-of-hours emergencies and, for what was left of the season, winter salting. By coincidence this period also coincided with a dramatic change in the weather as we also entered a two month long dry spell, which was a great help.

As we all learned more about the virus, safe systems of work were developed to allow SCC Highways to deliver more and more of their usual highway services. This included grass verge cutting, drainage cleansing and general construction work. A full carriageway surface dressing (popularly known as “tar & chip”) programme was delivered during the generally dry June and July period. Also, where road conditions were too poor for this process, SCC Highways carried out major resurfacing work of the A39 at Nether Stowey; A39 Selworthy: A358 West Bagborough; A358 Staplegrove Road; A3807 Castle Street, Taunton; Canon Street, Taunton, Bury Hill, Brompton Regis and Wrangcombe Road on the Blackdown Hills.

An unusual scheme for SCC Highways was the successful installation of a new cattle grid and major re-profiling of the road at Hill Road, Minehead, leading up to Selworthy Beacon. This was delivered during Lockdown 2 to take advantage of the reduced levels of traffic. SCC Highways did similar things during the first Lockdown period to deliver a new footway (small improvement scheme) at A358 Cross Keys and footway resurfacing in Williton alongside the busy A358 High Street and A39 Long Street.

Despite the generally good weather, SCC Highways still had some bad interludes, with three named storms between August and October. A major landslide occurred on the B3227 near Milverton in June and the road was closed for two weeks whilst SCC Highways cleared the debris and stabilised the cutting slope. There were intervening periods of very hot weather and melting “tarmac” at A39 Bilbrook and A38 Exeter Road, Sampford Arundel needed emergency treatment. There was also a major oil/diesel spill on the road in late October which resulted in the A39 Porlock Hill being closed overnight.

Somerset County Council would like to take this opportunity to thank the residents of Somerset West and Taunton for their patience and support over 2020 in their task of keeping the road network safe. 2021? It’s going to be busy!

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.

Wessex Water

REMINDER- Temporary Road Closure: ttro416994TD - Burton Place, Taunton

The works are expected to commence on **11 January 2021** and last for 5 days to enable Wessex Water to carry out supply separation works.

For any further information about this closure please contact Wessex Water on **0345 600 4 600** quoting reference: ttro416994TD - Burton Place, Taunton. Please [click here](#) to view the road closure.

Please note that should you require to view a closure which is more than two weeks ahead you will need to register for free with www.One.Network

Temporary Road Closure: ttro419289TD - Silk Mills Road and Silk Mills Lane, Bishop's Hull

The order becomes effective on **14 January 2021** and will remain in force for eighteen months.

The works are expected to commence on **18 January 2021** and last for 2 nights to enable Somerset Highways to carry out patching works.

For any further information about this closure please contact Somerset Highways on **0300 123 2224**, quoting reference: ttro419289TD - Silk Mills Road and Silk Mills Lane, Bishop's Hull.

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

Temporary Road Closure: ttro419295TD- Priorswood Road, Cheddon Fitzpaine

The order becomes effective on **14 January 2021** and will remain in force for eighteen months.

The works are expected to commence on **18 January 2021** and last for 2 nights to enable Somerset Highways to carry out patching works.

For any further information about this closure please contact Somerset highways on **0300 123 2224**, quoting reference: ttro419295TD - Priorswood Road, Cheddon Fitzpaine.

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

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 Road Closure

Week Commencing 7 December M5 Junction for **25 NIGHTS**.

- Full closure on Southbound off and on slips 20.00hrs-06.00hrs.
- Lane 2 closure on Northbound off and on slips 20.00hrs-06.00hrs.
- Toneway outbound closed from Hankridge Roundabout to M5 Junction 25 roundabout.

Please [click here](#) to read the latest project bulletin.

Food support for families in need this Christmas

A £1million support package is in place to support Somerset families in need with food this winter. Somerset County Council, the District Councils and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group have been busy working with partners to ensure a robust system is in place so that help can be directed where it is needed.

Through partnership working, a wide network of community food support has already been established in Somerset during the pandemic and the Government's Winter Covid Grant Scheme has bolstered this by providing additional funding to support families. All schools in Somerset will be provided with £30 for every child who receives free school meals for the Christmas Holidays and £15 for February half term. Schools will use this funding to provide vouchers or food and will contact their families accordingly. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Library Choice for festive season

Pop in and try something new with the 'Library Choice' service at Somerset Libraries today. The Library Choice Service is where library customers complete a simple form advising staff what kind of books and authors they like to read. Staff will then do their best to pick out a number of books which may suit.

The service has been hugely popular over lockdowns, with customers saying how much they have enjoyed their 'mystery reads' picked out for them by friendly, knowledgeable library staff. Please [click here](#) to find out more.

REMINDER- Stay up to date with Clinton Rogers' weekly Covid Catch Up

The second 'Weekly Covid Catch up' video, fronted by former BBC Points West correspondent Clinton Rogers, looks at the launch of the vaccination programme and important guidance to follow. The weekly bulletins aim to help people understand how Covid-19 is affecting Somerset, and what we can all be doing to help beat the virus and will be shared on social media. Please [click here](#) to watch the second weekly catch up.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Open water swimming advice

Open-water swimmers and cold-water dippers: be prepared and follow the HM Coastguard's top tips before entering the sea this Christmas and New Year.

Sea swimming is an annual festive tradition for many, but with organised events with safety marshals being called off this year, please be aware of the risks and know how to swim safely – especially during the winter season:

- Be prepared: Check the weather forecast and tide times, take a phone in a waterproof pouch and warm clothes for before and after your dip.
- If in doubt, stay out – there is always another day to go for a swim.
- Never swim alone, be seen and wear a wetsuit – it will help increase your buoyancy and reduce the chances of suffering cold water shock.
- Acclimatise to the water temperature slowly, stay in your depth and know your limits.

- If you get into trouble remember FLOAT to live by leaning back in the water, extending your arms and legs, and resisting the urge to thrash around to gain control of your breathing.

So before you plan your seasonal dip, please [click here](#) to read the latest advice and guidance to keep you and others safe.

Remember, if you see anyone in difficulty at the sea or along the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. They are on call 24/7 all year round.

Be Mountain and Moor Safe

The HM Coastguard search and rescue helicopters are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, ready to respond to any request for assistance from our partner emergency services. #OneFamily #OneTeam #OneAim

Helicopters cover everything from the rescue of those in emergency situations at the coast and at sea to assisting the amazing mountain rescue teams in their challenging missions high up in the mountains of the UK, where we'll help by swooping in and winching those in trouble to a place of safety.

Please remember, if you're out exploring this Christmas, UK mountains should not be underestimated: the conditions can be unforgiving for even the most experienced. For more mountain safety advice [click here](#).

Be #AdventureSmart, be prepared, don't take risks and tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back. For Adventure Smart safety advice, please [click here](#).

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Be fire safe this Christmas

In Devon and Somerset, December is the busiest month of the year for house fires. And on Christmas Day itself, on average there will be five call-outs to house fires. More than half of the fires Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service attend around Christmas are cooking-related. When you are in the kitchen, always keep an eye on your cooking.

Top 3 likely causes of cooking fires

- Many cooking fires are caused by getting distracted - whether that's by animals, young children, unwrapping presents, or too much sherry.
- Unattended cooking - we've attended incidents caused by people leaving their cooking in the oven and then going out. This is easily preventable. Never leave anything cooking when you're not at home, or even when you're asleep.
- Alcohol is also a common factor when it comes to fires around cooking - either because the 'chef' is drinking too much, or doing some flamboyant cooking with high volume alcohol. Please take care around alcohol.

Please [click here](#) to read some real life Christmas fire stories and how to prevent future fires.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Young Somerset

Support available for Young People over the Festive Period

Christmas is a period when your mental health might be affected by everything that's going on. It's a time of year that often puts extra pressure on us, and it can affect our mental health in lots of different ways.

For example, you might feel alone or left out because everyone else seems happy when you're not. You also may feel frustrated by other people's views of a 'perfect' Christmas. On top of this, the current uncertainty of COVID-19 and how this will affect Christmas this year, can be overwhelming.

Young Somerset want you to know that there are services available for young people to access in Somerset over this festive period, including Christmas Day. Don't be afraid to reach out for support this Christmas.

For further information about helplines and support please [click here](#).

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Get West Somerset Moving is getting into gear

Somerset charity CCS (Community Council for Somerset) called on the generosity of Somerset's people to donate their second-hand cars, which are in working order but that they no longer need, to help get West Somerset moving. In the first weeks of asking Somerset for donations, the CCS have got two great cars on the books and are searching to match them up with new owners from West Somerset.

This new initiative aims to further improve access to employment and education for local people who may need to travel longer distances to take up opportunities. CCS appealed to potential donors across Somerset who have cars they no longer want – they may have already purchased another vehicle or perhaps they are giving up driving.

Now with the aid of our CCS Village Agents and West Somerset Advice, they are working to find the cars new owners to better their lives where they had been previously been restricted without access to a vehicle – perhaps it will aid their employment options, health and wellbeing.

Minor mechanical problems and no MOT are not a barrier as qualified mechanics, working at local not-for-profit social enterprise Rusty Road 2 Recovery, will carry out a full service and safety check before handing the vehicles over. Any vehicles that are beyond repair will be sold for parts, with all the profits put back into the project.

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

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Annual Review 2019/20

Somerset Community Foundation has produced their annual review for 2019/20. To view the SCF Annual Review 2019/20 and other publications, please [click here](#).

EDF

REMINDER- Community Bus Service

The Hinkley Point C Community Bus Service between Bridgwater and Minehead has started again, initially operating for two weeks between **Monday 7 and Friday 18 December**. After the Christmas holiday period, the service will then re-commence on **Monday 4 January**.

Buses used on the service have been modified to allow for social distancing. These measures include the installation of Perspex screens and a clear indication of which seats can be used.

In line with Government guidance, a face covering must be worn by all passengers.

The latest timetables can be viewed if you [click here](#).

Health and Welfare

Christmas: Keep it small, keep it short, keep it local

The Government issued further advice on Christmas get-togethers with the message: Keep it small, keep it short, keep it local and think of the vulnerable. Restrictions are being relaxed between **23 and 27 December** but the advice is to be cautious and to recognise the risks. People should continue to follow the hands, face, space guidance and to self-isolate if they show symptoms of coronavirus.

People who test positive should continue to self-isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms or 10 days from point of taking a positive test if asymptomatic.

Please [click here](#) to see some graphics that illustrate why it's so important to complete the full self-isolation period. Please share with your friends, family and colleagues.

Advice for the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable at Christmas

You can choose to be part of a Christmas bubble if you are clinically extremely vulnerable, but it does involve greater risks for you as you will be increasing the number of people you have contact with. From **23 to 27 December**, the Government will be changing some restrictions on social contact. This allows you to form a 'Christmas bubble' in which you can spend time indoors and outdoors with people from up to three households, including your own.

If you do decide to form a Christmas bubble, it is advised that you maintain social distance from those you don't normally live with at all times, avoiding physical contact. Everyone should wash their hands more often and touch points, such as door handles and surfaces, should be kept clean. It is also important to allow fresh

air into the space where you spend time with those you don't normally live with. You may want to think about who you sit next to, including during meals, and also consider wearing a face covering indoors where social distancing may be difficult. If you don't feel comfortable spending time with other people indoors, think of other ways that you can safely spend time together, for example on walks outdoors or supported by technology, and how you can make that time feel different and special. Going outdoors carefully for exercise is also encouraged. It is important that you do not feel pressured to celebrate Christmas in an environment that makes you anxious. There may be a lot of expectation and pressure around celebrating Christmas together, but you should feel comfortable to do what is right for you over this period. To do that, it is important that the other people in your Christmas bubble understand your needs and increased risk. They can help by being extra vigilant in the days before you get together, reducing any unnecessary contact with people, especially as some people with the virus have no symptoms.

Once the Christmas bubble period ends on **27 December**, you should follow the guidance that was in place before Christmas, in line with the restrictions for your local area.

It is important that you and the other people in your Christmas bubble consider these risks carefully before agreeing to form a bubble. Forming a Christmas bubble is a personal choice and should be balanced against the increased risk of infection. More information on Christmas bubbles can be found [here](#).

[Click here](#) for more information and guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable individuals from COVID-19.

Christmas bubbles with friends and family

The Government has published the guidance for [UK Christmas arrangements](#).

The main points are:

- You can travel between tiers and UK nations to and from your Christmas bubble between **23 and 27 December**.
- Once at your destination you should follow rules in that tier.
- Three households can form a Christmas bubble together.
- You can only be in one Christmas bubble.
- You cannot change your Christmas bubble.
- You can only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces.
- You can continue to meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble outside your home according to the rules in the tier where you are staying.
- If someone is in your Christmas bubble, you can visit each other's homes and stay overnight.

Further details:

- Making a [Christmas bubble with friends and family](#).
- Student movement and [plans for the end of term](#).
- Local restriction tiers: [what you need to know](#).

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

A quick guide for parents/carers at Christmas

Please see attached an updated COVID-19 guidance document from the Public Health team for parents/carers during Christmas. You can also download a copy [here](#).

Somerset COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan Dashboard

Please [click here](#) to read the latest national and local information relating to COVID-19. Scroll down until you find the COVID-19 Dashboard. Here, you can view the latest statistics and trends for COVID-19 cases in Somerset. This site is updated daily.

First COVID-19 vaccination sites launched in Somerset

Vaccinations will initially be delivered from four different sites in Somerset including Taunton Vale Healthcare, Taunton; The Mulberry Centre, Berrow; West Mendip Community Hospital, Glastonbury; and The Gateway Centre in Yeovil. These initial GP-led sites have been developed by primary care networks (groups of local GP practices) who have been working closely together to develop detailed plans to deliver COVID-19 vaccinations in community locations. For further information please [click here](#).

REMINDER- Get vitamin D supplements

You can get free daily vitamin D supplements if you're at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable) from Coronavirus (COVID-19). To make one application for vitamin D supplements you will need to be in receipt of your letter that confirms you are on the shielded patients list of people at high risk from Coronavirus. You need to apply before **4 January 2021**. Please [click here](#) for more information and to apply.

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.

REMINDER- Christmas travel measures

Travel safely this Christmas is the message as the Government announced measures to minimise disruption and help people travel in the festive season. The plan for the Christmas travel window between **23 and 27 December** includes lifting road works, enhancing rail services, postponing and accelerating rail engineering works and cutting ticket charges. The Government is also urging passengers to plan their journeys carefully, consider quieter routes and, where possible, to book ahead.

Travel between different tiers is permitted however, you must stick to the advice of only making journeys for essential reasons, and travel to Tier 3 areas is particularly advised against. Once you are in another tier, you should stick to the guidance of your own tier if you have come from a higher one, or act under the guidance of the higher tier if you are 'moving up' into it.

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've heard the rules for self-isolation have recently changed?

A. Self-isolation is essential to reducing the spread of COVID as it breaks the chains of transmission. After reviewing the evidence, the Government is now confident that we can reduce the number of days that contacts self-isolate **from 14 days to 10 days**. People who return from countries which are not on the travel corridor list should also self-isolate for 10 days instead of 14 days. People who test positive should continue to self-isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms or 10 days from point of taking a positive test if asymptomatic.

Q. I've had my flu vaccination, do I need the COVID-19 vaccine as well?

A. The flu vaccine does not protect you from COVID-19. As you are eligible for both vaccines you should have them both, but normally separated by at least a week. Please find attached two leaflets relating to COVID-19 vaccinations.

Crime / Safeguarding

ManKind Initiative

Support for male survivors of domestic abuse in Avon & Somerset

Have you, or someone you know, experienced Domestic Abuse and want to join up with other men with similar experiences, learn new skills and make sense of what happened?

The [ManKind Initiative](#) are hosting a 9 week online course designed for male survivors of domestic abuse in Avon and Somerset. For further details call **01823 334229** or email: training@mankind.org.uk

[#YouAreNotAlone](#)

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

‘You Are Not Alone’ – knowing the signs of abuse this Christmas

The festive season has arrived. For many this is a time for happy reunions and celebrations, however the reality for others is quite different. This year will be particularly difficult for a lot of people. COVID-19 restrictions, the prospect of not being able to see loved ones as usual, increases in unemployment, as well as financial hardship could lead to a rise in abuse taking place at home.

Last December, A&SP logged a total of 3,063 cases of domestic abuse – 10.9% higher than the average of the total number of domestic abuse cases recorded between January and November (2,762 cases). Also logged were a total of 132 child abuse, child sexual exploitation, and child sexual abuse cases – 8.5% higher than the average total number of cases recorded between January and November (122 cases).

More than ever, A&SP are urging communities to look out for one another, to learn to identify the signs of someone being abused, and to know the steps to take if they suspect someone is being abused.

To read more on this campaign and how to spot the signs of abuse please [click here](#).

The Police Enquiries Desk, Deane House, Taunton

The police enquiries desk will be open on the following dates:

- 24 Dec 08:30-16:30
- 29 Dec 08:30-16:30
- 30 Dec 08:30-16:30
- 31 Dec 08:30-16:30

Thinking of buying an e-scooter for Christmas? Make sure you know the law first

Avon & Somerset Police is asking those considering buying an electric scooter this Christmas to ensure that they fully understand the law before doing so. E-scooters have become commonplace in towns and cities this year, after the Government permitted the start of trials for rental schemes in recent months.

While the use of rental e-scooters is now legal within certain trial areas, Avon and Somerset Police is keen to remind people that it remains against the law to ride a privately owned e-scooter in any public place in the UK. This includes roads, pavements, parks, town centres or canal towpaths. The only place a privately owned e-scooter can be used is on private land. This is because e-scooters are classified as Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEVs) so they are treated as motor vehicles. As such, if they are used on a road, pavement or public place they are subject to the same legal requirements as any motor vehicle.

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

REMINDER- A&SP Drink Driving Campaign, Op Tonic Underway

Avon and Somerset Police are part of a nationwide operation targeting motorists who choose to drink/drug drive throughout December as Op Tonic, the annual Christmas

roads policing operation, started on 1 December. The activity comes as research shows over a fifth of people in the UK admitting to drinking more since lockdown began.

The public are being called on to play their part and report if they see someone getting behind the wheel having been drinking or taking drugs, with police reminding people that they could save lives by doing so. Last year police received 218 reports from the public with 73% of these attended or resolved, with the remainder informing patrol plans.

If someone is habitually drinking or abusing drugs and driving this can be reported [online](#) or by calling 101. If someone is currently driving under the influence of drink or drugs, call 999.

Independent alcohol advice, information and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking can be found at www.drinkaware.co.uk.

Latest Facebook Live

In the most recent Facebook Live interview, Chief Constable Andy Marsh talked to PCC Sue Mountstevens about:

- targeting drink/drug drivers
- tier system regulations
- policing of protests and,
- concerns around abuse in the home this Christmastime.

In case you missed the discussion, A&SP have rounded-up the key points for you [here](#). If you have a question that you would like the PCC to ask in the next Facebook Live interview, please follow this [link](#).

Finally

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners and colleagues, who have made regular contributions to this weekly newsletter. This is the final edition of 2020; however, please be aware the next edition will be distributed on Friday, 8 January 2021. Deadlines for submitted articles is Thursday, 7 January 2021.

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.

#Keepitsmall

#Keepitshort

#Keepitlocal

Attachments:

School Christmas Support Leaflet

A Quick Guide for Parents & Carers at Christmas PDF

PHE Covid: What to expect leaflet

PHE Covid: Guide for Adults leaflet