

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 42. Week ending 24/01/21

#StayAtHome #ProtectTheNHS #SaveLives

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 pandemic 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. Third National Lockdown Support Package Available

This support is for the period of the third National Lockdown, which started on 5 January 2021. During the lockdown a significant number of businesses within the rates system are required by law to close in order to manage the spread of coronavirus. This package is to provide support to those businesses and takes the form of a grant and a further one-off Closed Businesses Lockdown Payment.

Where a business was required to close its main in-person service but adapts its business to operate takeaway, click and collect or online with delivery

services, it will be considered closed and be eligible to receive grants under this scheme. The Government has published [guidance about this support package](#) on their website which you are encouraged to read.

Please [click here](#) to view eligibility details and how to apply.

Additional Restrictions Grant

The Government has awarded local authorities funding to support those businesses falling outside the scope of other business support grant schemes. With this funding, SWT has developed its own policy for an Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Scheme to operate during times of Tier 4 and National Lockdown restrictions. Please [click here](#) to read the published details of the policy and addendum.

If you would like to be kept informed of regular Covid business support grants please sign up for the SWT [business newsletter](#).

2. 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 couple of weeks, which are as follows:

- Wednesday 27 January – **Scrutiny Committee (budget setting)**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 22 January)
- Monday 1 February – **Special Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 27 January)
- Wednesday 3 February – **Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 29 January)
- Thursday 4 February – **Planning Committee**, 1pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 1 February)

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.

3. Tenant Strategic Group Elections 2021

The Tenants' Strategic Group puts tenants at the heart of decision making about issues that affect their home and neighbourhood. It gives tenants the opportunity to have a say in housing services delivered by SWT. The group consists of ten tenants and two councillors and all ten positions are up for election.

Election information packs are being sent to tenants containing information about how the group works, alongside an application form. To apply: simply complete and post your paper application form to SWT or use the online [form](#). Applications close on **8 February 2021**; and please note that applications received after this date will not be considered.

The election will be a combined postal and online ballot run by Civica who are very experienced in conducting elections. After the ballot closes on **30 March 2021** the votes will be counted and the ten candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected to serve on the Tenants' Strategic Group.

If you require another copy of the application form or are having any issues applying, please ring **0300 304 8000** and ask for a member of the Housing Performance Team or email housingperformance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

4. SWT Community Chest Fund Update

There is still time to apply for funding from the Community Chest. Since its launch the Community Chest Fund has paid out £185K to 53 groups for a range of causes across the SWT area and in some cases applicants have been referred to other funding sources to enhance the offer. Please refer to the Community Section of this newsletter for further details.

SWT is particularly keen to hear from groups and parishes that have so far been unrepresented. The maximum amount payable under the scheme is £7.5K. SWT would particularly welcome applications from the following ward areas:-

- **Old Cleeve and District**
- **Porlock and District**
- **Quantock Vale**
- **Cotford St Luke and Oake**
- **Norton Fitzwarren and Staplegrove**
- **Trull, Pitminster and Corfe**
- **Hatch and Blackdown**

Priority will be given to:

- projects submitted by small community groups, defined as having an income of less than £10K per year and no paid staff
- initiatives that will help community groups to become sustainable in the longer term

- initiatives that will help the community to recover from the effects of Covid-19
- groups who have not received a grant/other funding from the Council projects aligned to SWT Corporate Priorities

Projects will normally expect to hear an outcome from their application within two weeks.

To find out more information and make an application please [click here](#).

5. Taunton Garden Town and Future High Street Fund Webinar

On **Wednesday 27 January at 6pm**, SWT is hosting a webinar to present an update on Taunton Garden Town and a presentation on the Future High Street Fund. If you have any questions, you can submit them prior to the webinar. Please email openinghighstreets@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Please [click here](#) to book your place at the online event.

6. SWT to support UK Holocaust Memorial Day 2021

SWT is once again supporting the UK's Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), to commemorate victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. HMD is a national awareness day organised annually by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT), as a meaningful opportunity for people in the UK to come together and learn from genocide for a better future. Due to the current restrictions, the event organisers will be live-streaming the national ceremony online from **7pm on Wednesday 27 January**.

Residents can watch the national ceremony by registering via hmd.org.uk/uk-holocaust-memorial-day-2021-ceremony to receive a link in advance, or by following the hashtags #HolocaustMemorialDay and #LightTheDarkness via social media.

'Be the light in the darkness' has been chosen as this year's theme to evoke reflection on both the darkest periods in human history and the ways individuals and communities have resisted that darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after genocide.

Following the ceremony, the HMDT is encouraging households to 'light the darkness' by displaying a safely lit candle in their window as a symbolic rejection of prejudice and hatred, and to remember those who suffered.

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

7. Around the world in less than 80 days

E-scooter users in the Taunton trial have made enough journeys to travel once around the world and if these rides were replacing car journeys it would be the equivalent of removing an estimated three tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere.

The 12-month trial being run by SWT with e-scooter operator, Zipp Mobility, provides a zero-carbon way to get around town and allow for social distancing. Since the launch in Taunton in October 2020 the scheme has registered over 6,000 users, making a total of more than 15,000 rides to date.

Just 45 days after the trial started the number of miles travelled on e-scooters hit 24,901, the equivalent distance of once around the world. The total number of miles travelled to date has now surpassed 30,000.

As a mark of its success the Department for Transport (DfT) approved trial, which remains operational throughout lockdown, is now being extended out to Bathpool and Monkton Heathfield.

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

For more information visit the SWT [website](#).

8. Covid-19 vaccinations in Somerset

It is known that patients and all health and care staff are eager to find out when they will receive their Covid vaccination. The NHS is prioritising vaccinating those people who, experts have agreed, will benefit from it the most and they are systematically working through all eligible groups according to the national priorities.

Please do not call or turn up at your GP surgery or the local hospital to enquire about Covid vaccinations.

People are asked to support the NHS:

- By not contacting GPs and health services about vaccinations. You will be contacted when it is your turn to be invited for your vaccination. Some phone lines are jammed with people asking about vaccinations and this is preventing people who need help from getting through.
- When contacted, please attend your booked appointments
- Please continue to follow all the guidance to control the spread of the virus and save lives.

Please continue to attend any appointments as planned – if there is a requirement to change any details for your vaccination appointment you will be contacted directly.

9. The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

In Somerset, the Councils have responded to over 11,000 phone calls on the Coronavirus Support Helpline and have emailed or written to over 22,000 residents shielding to advise them of the helpline and to make contact if they need support.

This 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](#).

10. REMINDER-ShopAppy – Why Shop with ShopAppy

[ShopAppy](#) is about supporting your local, independent shops – to spend money in your community. By shopping closer to home, you support your local economy, local shops of all kinds and local jobs, preserving your area's unique character, supporting innovation, suppliers and saving our high streets from becoming clone-towns (i.e. a town where the shopping area is significantly dominated by chain stores). ShopAppy does not take any commissions from shops, meaning every penny you spend (minus bank charges) goes straight to the shopkeepers.

ShopAppy is currently expanding its online platforms in **Taunton, Wellington, Minehead** and **Dulverton**.

11. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Coping with Covid-19 Recycling and rubbish collections

SWP kindly asks you to keep a social distance from collection crews and wash and disinfect container handles before and after putting out recycling boxes and bins. If you have Covid symptoms, or live in a household with someone who does, your personal waste (things like tissues, facemasks and disposable cleaning cloths) need to be handled differently. It should be double-bagged in disposable rubbish bags and kept separate from other waste in the home for 72 hours. It should then go into your rubbish bin outside your home and will be picked up in the usual rubbish collections.

Make the most of your recycling space:

- Squash! Plastic bottles (with the lid off, then put the lid back on)
- Crush! Tins and can if it is safe for you to do so
- Flatten! Cardboard boxes if you can.

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 Report

A busy few weeks coming up in the world of highways. Last week SCC Highways completed Phase 1 of a drainage improvement scheme on the A358 at Bicknoller. This week, and for the next few weeks, they will be moving on to Phase 2 which involves a temporary closure of **Chilcombe Lane**.

A bit further along the A358, towards Taunton, SCC Highways are now in a position to carry out permanent repairs to the collapsed verge and embankment at **Combe Florey** which has been covered by temporary traffic signals for the last few weeks. The work will involve the placing of wire cages filled with large stones (known as gabion baskets) below the edge of the carriageway to support it and also to resist future erosion from the stream running alongside the road. Due to the space required to carry out this work, there will be a full temporary road closure of the A358, in operation for 24 hours per day, starting on **Monday 25 January**, for three weeks.

Somerset County Council apologise for any disruption that this may cause whilst these essential works are being carried out and thank the residents and road users of Somerset West and Taunton for their patience.

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

First Bus Somerset A358 Combe Florey – Service Update

For three weeks from **Monday 25 January 2021** the **A358 between Combe Florey and Williton** will be closed to allow Highways to rectify the issues along that stretch of road. This means buses will divert via Raleighs Cross as this is the prescribed diversionary route.

In partnership with Somerset County Council, First Bus will operate a shuttle service for the areas who will be left without a service. **This will operate between Williton and West Bagborough**. The diversion is likely to cause delays of up to 20 minutes. To read the full press release and the timetable for the shuttle bus, please [click here](#).

Service Information - Lockdown #3

First Group is making temporary changes to some buses in response to the national lockdown. Some of their buses in Somerset will run slightly less often due to lower numbers of people travelling.

Services will revert to similar patterns operated in the first lockdown.

Town Services 1, 4, 6, 7, in Taunton will reduce by half: 1, every 40 minutes and the rest hourly Monday to Friday, no changes to the Saturday service.

Network Services 21A and 28, will be hourly for the duration of the day. Basically operating the current Saturday timetable Monday to Saturday.

Please [click here](#) for the revised timetables.

Useful links to report faults

Throughout winter, 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.](#)

Taunton Racecourse announced as Somerset's new large vaccination centre

Taunton racecourse opened its doors on Monday 18 January as a new large vaccination centre for Somerset, part of a wave of 'large' vaccination centres opening across the country. The large vaccination site is open seven days a week, 8am - 8pm to offer the Covid-19 jab to people across Somerset, supporting the accelerated roll out of the local vaccination programme.

The racecourse is providing vaccines for people in the highest priority groups including the over 80s and health and care staff. Health and care organisations have been working together over the last few weeks to put detailed plans in place to prepare the site to deliver the large scale vaccination programme.

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

Somerset Covid-19 Catch-up

Clinton Rogers finds out more about vaccinations

In the latest Somerset Covid Catch Up film, former BBC Points West producer Clinton Rogers looks at how vaccinations are being rolled out in Somerset. The short film focuses on how Somerset's councils are working with the NHS to make sure priority groups get their jabs. Please [click here](#) to watch the film.

Magna Housing Association

An update to customers from Tony Murray, CEO

I'm writing to let you know that we will be making some changes to our services as a result of the most recent lockdown. Our priority is to keep you and our teams safe, so we will only be reducing those services which we feel can safely be put on hold at this time.

We will continue to carry out urgent and emergency repair work in your home as needed. Work outside, in communal areas and empty properties will continue, as will the safety work that we are legally required to do (gas servicing for example), our construction work on new-build sites, and our support for extra care and sheltered plus schemes.

Some services will be reduced such as mutual exchanges. We are still accepting applications and enquiries and can give advice on getting ready to exchange but you will not be able to exchange homes at the moment. If you have an existing application, your housing officer will have spoken to you about this. However, we will be putting some services on hold, such as our planned kitchen and bathroom replacement programme, non-essential home visits, regular electrical tests, asbestos re-inspections, home condition surveys and garage lettings. A full breakdown of our service status can be found on our website, www.magna.org.uk/coronavirus-covid-19. You can also see what steps we are taking to keep you and our teams safe when we do need to visit.

As you may be aware, we have recently introduced a single contact number and email address. (**0800 3586025**, contactus@magna.org.uk). Please be aware that we are very busy at the moment, particularly on Monday mornings, so if you can avoid this time for your call, it will reduce your waiting time.

You should also know that if you have provided your email address to us, we will be confirming appointments through email. Please check your email inbox or spam on a regular basis if you have made an appointment with us so you know the date and time of our visit. We know this can be a difficult time for many of you and if you are concerned about your finances then please do let us know so we can talk through what options you have.

We will be reviewing our service status in March and will update our website as and when things change.

Please do keep safe and by working together we can make sure that we are all supported at this time.

Best wishes
Tony Murray
Housing Director

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service has been supporting South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust since April 2020 by driving ambulances, dual-crewed with a medic. They are proud to continue working alongside their emergency service colleagues to support the national effort to deal with this pandemic. Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue staff are learning a lot from their ambulance service colleagues about patient care and first aid skills.

Please [click here](#) to see how Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service helped in December 2020.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Don't try to beat the tide

With weather warnings issued for rain across parts of the UK, as well as expected impact from snow, wind and ice in places, please don't take unnecessary risks and follow your nation's guidance at all times.

In areas impacted by heavy rainfall, please avoid driving through flood water at the coast, slow down on wet and winding coastal roads and never try to beat the tide when crossing causeways:

- Driving through flood water is the number one cause of death during flooding – turn around and take a different route
- Always check tide times and make sure that you get back in plenty of time if driving across causeways to ensure a safe crossing – never underestimate the rate of the incoming tide
- Listen to local safety advice, take note of warning signs and road closures

But if you do get stranded on a causeway, or in trouble at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. Weather warnings can be viewed [here](#).

Trading Standards Farming Partnership Mental Health and Wellbeing in Farming Online

An evening of talks about mental health and wellbeing support for the farming community is scheduled for on **Tuesday 23 February 2021 at 6pm – 8pm**.

Farming can be a challenging way of life, with its own particular issues. Sometimes it can be hard to know what to do or where to go for support, whether you simply want a listening ear from someone who understands farming and rural life or need help with running your business.

To find out how you can support your wellbeing and get the right help if and when you need it, join others for an evening of talks about mental health and wellbeing in farming. Please [click here](#) for further information and to reserve your place at this online event.

Exmoor National Park

REMINDER- Proposed Diversion WL26-27 (Old Stowey)

The ENP Authority is proposing to divert part of public footpath WL6/27 in the parish of Cutcombe. Prior to making a Diversion Order, ENP would like to hear your views on this proposal. Please return any comments on the proposal by **29 January 2021** to cerirapsey@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or to Ceri Rapsey, Rights of Way Support Officer, Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, TA22 9HL.

REMINDER-Steam Coast Trail

Recently the Steam Coast Trail added new shovels to a Shingle Digging Station kindly donated by Travis Perkins Minehead. If there's shingle on the path after a big tide or a storm (and you're feeling fit, well and willing) then please sanitise your hands, grab a shovel and chuck some back on to the beach. The Steam Coast Trail team will, of course, try to get to the path to clear it ASAP but if you get there first you could consider this part of your daily exercise.

Please remember to only do what you're physically capable of and **do not touch the shovels if you do not have any hand sanitiser with you.**

Please [click here](#) to view a short video made by the BBC about the shingle digging station.

Community Support – What help is out there? Voluntary and Community Sector Support

SWT Community Chest Fund Update

The Community Chest Fund was launched in October 2020 to help communities recover from the effects of Covid-19. The £250K fund supports 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.

Please see below a list of some organisations/groups who have secured funding.

Organisations/Groups whose normal fund raising activities have been adversely impacted by Covid-19

Bishops Hull Village Hall and Playing Field Trust	£3,000
Creech Village Hall Film Club	£5,250
The Crowcombe Hall	£3,000
Friends of Dunster First School	£3,000
Exmoor Search and Rescue	£5,000
Minehead Regal Theatre	£5,000
Wiveliscombe Primary School PTA	£2,500

Organisations/Groups who are directly contributing to the Covid-19 recovery

Exmoor Community Bus Association	£1,161
West Country Health Education and Research Enterprise	£2,000
Taunton East Development Trust	£6,750
Transition Town Wellington	£5,068

Organisations/Groups who are providing activities that will benefit physical and mental health

Dandelion Seeds Foundation	£4,500
Taunton Wombats Cricket Club	£4,500
Galmington Youth and Social Club (Trident)	£5,000
Somerset Wyverns American Football	£2,000
North Curry Sport	£2,500
Neroche Woodlanders	£1,200

[1st Watchet Sea Scouts](#)

£3,000

If you are an organisation / group wishing to make an application to the Community Chest Fund, please [click here](#) for more information.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Online Workshop Community Buildings

An online workshop is scheduled for **Tuesday 26 January 2021 at 10am – 12noon** to discuss the many different ways parish councils can make use of community buildings and support their local communities. This event will be led by Robert Horn and Sally Sargent, CCS. They will also be joined by other speakers. If you would like a presentation slot to talk about the activities, services and events taking place in your hall, please get in touch with Sally by emailing Sallys@somersetccc.org.uk

Booking: Spaces are limited so book early (max. of two places per hall). This event is free for CCS members. There is a charge of £10 for attendees from non-member halls. The Zoom link to join the event will be emailed to you after booking. Please [click here](#) for further information and to make your reservation.

REMINDER-The Local Connections Fund – Grant opportunity

The Local Connections Fund is offering grants of between £300 and £2,500 for small local charitable organisations, including charities, social enterprises, Community Interest Companies and Faith groups in England working to bring people and communities together and reduce loneliness and isolation caused by Covid-19.

Application deadline: **Tuesday 26 January 2021.**

Funders: [The National Lottery Community Fund](#) and the *Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport* (DCMS). Please [click here](#) for full details and how to apply.

Somerset Skills and Learning (SSL)

As you'll be aware, new national restrictions have come into force to help limit the spread of Covid-19. Like other colleges and adult education providers across the country, SSL centres are now closed and all delivery will move to online and distance learning.

SSL want to reassure you that they will be supporting all their existing and new students during the latest period of lockdown and will continue to provide high quality teaching, remotely.

Health and Care- Level 1 Skills for Employment Award

Explore the range of career options available in the Health and Care sector. This course could be your first step to getting into work in Health and Care. Every day Health and Social care heroes look after the nation - can you see yourself as part of that? Please see attached leaflet for further information.

For more information on what SSL has to offer, please [click here](#) to visit their website.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Somerset Coronavirus Appeal

The Somerset Coronavirus Appeal, launched by local charity Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) at the start of the pandemic, has raised a phenomenal **£1.5 million**. The funding has enabled the Foundation to award grants to over 300 local charities *[correct as at 19/01/2021]* in just 10 months, thanks to the generous support of local individuals, businesses, charitable trusts and public sector partners, as well as funding from a national appeal run by [National Emergencies Trust](#) (NET).

Donations to the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal are continuing to help provide grants of £100 up to £5,000 to local groups and charities, helping those in our communities across the county who are most impacted by the outbreak, including vulnerable older people, domestic abuse survivors, people experiencing mental health problems, and children and families living in poverty

Your donations will help enable more grants to continue the essential support being provided by many local charities and community groups recover from the impacts of the outbreak.

Funds from the appeal will support three separate grant programmes:

- Grants of up to £2,500 to continue their response to the coronavirus pandemic through the winter
- Grants of up to £5,000 for recovery from financial difficulty and to build more resilience for the future (for groups with a turnover of up to £250,000)
- Blended funding of grants and loans up to £20,000 for recovery from financial difficulty and to build more resilience for the future (for groups with a turnover over £250,000)

You can see a full list and a map of the grants made with funds from the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal [here](#).

SCF is passionate about doing as much as possible to support our communities, and is encouraging local people, businesses, charitable trusts and organisations who feel able to donate to the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal to visit the SCF website: www.somersetcf.org.uk/appeal or, if that isn't possible, call **01749 344949**.

Any charitable group wishing to apply for funding from the Somerset Coronavirus Appeal should visit the SCF website where they can find guidance on how to make an application: www.somersetcf.org.uk/coronavirus

REMINDER- Grants from The Somerset Fund available for local charities

Grants up to £2,500 are now available for smaller charities and grassroots groups based in Somerset. Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) manages The Somerset Fund and is encouraging smaller charities and community groups that run on less than £100,000 per year to apply now for funding.

The grants are 'unrestricted', which means they can be used to pay for ongoing running costs, also known as 'core costs'. Applications to the Fund can be made through SCF's website and the deadline to apply is **Monday 22 February 2021**.

The Somerset Fund has supported a wide range of local charities since its launch in 2018 thanks to generous local donors. If you run a business or are involved in a local, grassroots community project, please [click here](#) for more information and to apply.

Health and Welfare

More than 4 million people receive first dose of Covid-19 vaccine in UK

A significant milestone has been made this week as more than **4 million** people have received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. For further information, please [click here](#).

Moderna becomes third vaccine approved by UK regulator

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has authorised the third coronavirus vaccine for the UK, developed by Moderna. The vaccine has been approved after meeting the required safety, quality and effectiveness standards. Please [click here](#) to read more.

Somerset Covid-19 vaccination programme

Last weekend vaccinations began at **Musgrove Park Hospital** which is operating a vaccination hub seven days a week. Both the Pfizer Biotech and the newly approved Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines will be given in Somerset.

Three more GP-led community vaccination sites will start to vaccinate people in highest priority groups in Somerset this week. The final three primary care network (PCN) areas will join the existing ten sites launched over the past few weeks across the county, as part of a phased delivery plan.

The new vaccination sites include: Wincanton Community Hospital, **College Way Surgery** in **Taunton**, and **Wellington Community Hospital**. Practice teams have been working hard to develop and prepare the new community locations, ready to welcome the first people to have their vaccine over the next few days.

Health and care teams across the county have been working closely with national NHS colleagues to set up local GP vaccination services for the most vulnerable people, alongside the national delivery schedule. It is expected that the new GP-led sites will be using both the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine and the newly approved Oxford/AstraZeneca for the priority groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) including care home residents, people aged over 80 and frontline health and care staff.

Please [click here](#) to find out more on the NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group website.

Covid-19 Vaccine – Dispelling the Myths and Misinformation

This online event is scheduled for **Tuesday 26 January 2021 at 7pm – 8.30pm.**

Join healthcare specialists working with the Covid-19 vaccine in Bristol and South Gloucestershire and ask them the questions you want the answers to.

With three Covid-19 vaccines approved and more trials taking place, Dr Rajeka Lazarus, Consultant in Infectious Diseases at University Hospital Bristol & Weston, and the expert panel, will be available to discuss how vaccines work and help to dispel the myths and misinformation.

[Click here](#) to register your attendance at this online event.

Exercising safely while outdoors

Everyone must stay at home as much as possible in lockdown. But being outside is also so important for physical and mental wellbeing. Ordnance Survey has launched a useful guide on [getting outside safely](#), and it has been updated in line with lockdown rules.

The outdoors is still open, and everyone is encouraged to get outside and stay local to enhance physical and mental health. Just type in the location – Somerset for example – and choose what outdoor activity that is of interest, such as walking. The guide provides the latest advice for walking in Somerset – what's permitted, what's not, and helpful suggestions along the way.

The key is in knowing how to minimise risk to yourself and others when outside. Remember, outdoor exercise is allowed, but choose less busy places to go, and follow the guidance – social distancing, wear a face covering in enclosed spaces, and wash hands well as soon when back indoors.

Every Mind Matters

You might feel like there's been lots to worry about recently. It's normal to feel anxious at times, but there are lots of ways to manage. For advice on understanding, challenging and dealing with anxious thoughts, please [click here](#).

Need to seek help during these tough times?

If you, or someone you know are feeling like things are too much, please know that you / they don't have to be alone. Here are some numbers of organisations that can help in these tough times:

- Samaritans - 116 123
- CALM - 0800 58 58 58
- ChildLine - 0800 1111
- Anxiety UK - 03444 775 774
- Mind - 0300 123 3393
- National Domestic Abuse helpline - 0808 2000 247

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

[Somerset Covid-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan Dashboard](#)
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

FAQS

Q. My business has received a Covid-19 Business Support Grant from SWT since 5 November 2020. What should I expect to happen next?

A. SWT will contact you by email during the week commencing **18 January 2021** to ask you a few simple questions. This will enable staff to work out any further Covid-19 Business Support Grant to which you may be entitled. Depending on your e-mail security settings this email may go to your ‘Spam’ or ‘junk’ folder if not to your inbox.

Q. My business has *not* received a Covid-19 Business Support Grant from SWT since 5 November 2020. How can I register an Expression of Interest in receiving a Covid-19 Business Support Grant?

A. Whether or not your business is within the business rates system, you will shortly be able to register an Expression of Interest in receiving a Covid-19 Business Support Grant. From the information you provide SWT will work out whether there are any Covid-19 Business Support Grants you may be entitled to. Please make regular reference to the [SWT website](#).

Q. How can I volunteer or donate goods or services?

A. If you have surplus food, please think about donating it to a local food bank. You can find your nearest food bank by searching online or visiting the [Trussell Trust website](#), who run many local food banks.

You may also want to get involved by volunteering your time within your local community. You can register as a volunteer, via the [SPARK Somerset website](#) or if you’re furloughed or would like to share specialist skills like marketing, HR or finance, you may want to sign up to the [Somerset Skills Bank](#).

Crime / Safeguarding

Domestic abuse – hiding in the shadow of lockdown

Somerset County Council is reassuring the public that help is, and will continue to be, available for people seeking help who are experiencing abuse from their partner or a family member.

The current Government guidelines allow you to leave your home to flee danger, this includes an abusive relationship. Domestic abuse has regularly been defined as a “hidden crime”. Even before the current pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and restrictions, people often encountered controlling domestic abuse behind closed doors – making it difficult for them to seek help. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Covid-19 Vaccine Fraud

Criminals are using the Covid-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy.

Remember, **the vaccine is free of charge**. At no point will you be asked to pay.

- The NHS will never ask you for your bank account or card details.
- The NHS will never ask you for your PIN or banking password.
- The NHS will never arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine.
- The NHS will never ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport, driving licence, bills or pay slips.

Please find attached a Covid-19 Vaccine Fraud leaflet for further information.

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

#StayHomeSaveLives

Is your trip out really necessary? Bending the rules costs lives. Your local neighbourhood teams have been out spreading this very important message. "Stay at home and play your part. Protect the NHS. Save lives. [#Covid19](#)
[#stayhomesavelives](#) [#yourcommunity](#)

County Lines

County Lines drug dealing is happening in our region and A&SP need your help to put a stop to it. County Lines is a term used to describe gangs involved in exporting illegal drugs out of bigger cities into smaller towns across the UK using dedicated mobile phone lines.

These gangs are ruthless and will often exploit vulnerable and young people to store and distribute illegal substances. Victims will often be subjected to threats, violence, and forced to sell drugs 24 hours a day. By knowing the signs of County Lines and reporting them to the Police when you see them, you can help us protect the most vulnerable in our communities from this type of activity.

Signs to look out for include:

- An increase in visitors and cars to a house or flat
- New faces appearing at the house or flat
- Regularly changing residents
- Substance misuse and/or drug paraphernalia
- Young people seen in different cars / taxis driven by unknown adults
- Young people seeming unfamiliar with your community or where they are.
- Increase in anti-social behaviour in the community.

If you suspect County Lines drug dealing is happening in your community report to the police by calling 101. Always dial **999** in an emergency. If you would rather remain anonymous you can contact the independent charity Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

[#YourCommunity](#) [#NeighbourhoodPolicing](#)

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.

#StayAtHome #ProtectTheNHS #SaveLives

Attachments:

NHS SCC SS&L Poster PDF

Covid-19 Vaccine Fraud Leaflet