

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 47. Week ending 28/02/2021

#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. Roadmap out of National Lockdown

From **8 March 2021** pupils [return to face-to-face education in school and further education](#) in England. Wraparound childcare, such as after-school clubs, can reopen to enable parents to work, attend education, access medical care or attend a support group.

Outdoor recreation, such as a picnic, is allowed. This can be on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble. Indoor visits to care homes start again for a single named visitor. Please [click here](#) for more information relating to the changes happening on 8 March 2021.

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 3 March – **Scrutiny Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 26 February)
- Monday 8 March – **Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 3 March)

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. COVID-19 Business Grants Update

So far SWT has paid out over £47m in COVID-19 business support grants. The grants are designed to help businesses meet their fixed business costs during periods of restrictions, when cash-flow has been disrupted. The grants are not loans and are therefore not repayable. These grants focus on businesses which are directly affected by the particular restriction periods.

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 22 February 2021, regarding the extension of the national COVID-19 restrictions, SWT will be making further grant payments to rated businesses that are required by law to remain closed, as part of the [Third National Lockdown Support Package](#). The further grant payment will cover the 44 day period from 16 February to 31 March and will be for £2096, £3,143 or £4,714 depending on the rateable value of the premises concerned.

For future updates relating to COVID-19 business support grants, please visit the [SWT website](#).

4. Working together to deliver a successful Census 2021

The Office for National Statistics – which runs Census 2021 – is working with Somerset West and Taunton Council to deliver a successful census and help local services to fully meet future needs.

Understanding the needs of the nation helps everyone from central government to local organisations, such as councils and health authorities, plan and fund public services across England and Wales.

Census outputs inform where public funding is spent on services like transport, education and health – on cycle routes, schools and dental surgeries. The census, taking place on **21 March 2021**, will shed light on the needs of different groups and communities, and the inequalities people are experiencing, ensuring the big decisions facing the country following the Coronavirus pandemic and EU exit are based on the best information possible.

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

5. Unitary Somerset Public Consultation launched

The Local Government Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP launched the consultation on Unitary Proposals for Somerset on Monday 22 February. The consultation period will run for 8 weeks until **Monday 19 April 2021**.

To respond to the Government's consultation, go to <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/>. You can also respond by email or post.

Stronger Somerset proposes two unitary authorities, covering western and eastern Somerset, to replace the five current councils. This arrangement reflects and serves the geographic, social and economic differences across the county. Every Somerset resident will have one council responsible for their services, one set of councillors, and one council tax bill. These new councils would work closely with each other to coordinate policy and share back-office services where it makes sense.

Please [click here](#) for more information on the Stronger Somerset proposal. You can also [click here](#) to read the latest press release.

One Somerset, is the alternative proposal put forward by Somerset County Council, which proposes one unitary authority to replace the five current councils. [Click here](#) to find out more.

6. Temporary repair works to the Crescent Car Park

SWT will be carrying out temporary repair works to the [Crescent Car Park](#) in Taunton from **Monday 1 March**. Sections of the car park will be repaired along with the filling-in of potholes which have accumulated during winter. The necessary repairs will be carried out by the Council's in-house tarmacking team in preparation for a larger programme of scheduled works to revamp the car park in the near future. The work will take approximately two to three weeks, completing around 20 March.

SWT wishes to reassure the public that the Crescent Car Park will remain open for customer use during this period. The repairs team will follow COVID-secure working practices and cordon off areas to work in isolation.

7. Notice of Intended Disposal of Open Space Land Land at Rear of Wellington Sports Centre, Cormans Lane, Wellington

Section 123 (2a) Local Government Act 1972

Notice of Intended Disposal of Open Space Land

Notice is hereby given that Somerset West and Taunton Council intends to dispose of a parcel of land, which for identification purposes are described in the Schedule to this Notice, which consists of Open Space Land.

See plan that identifies the [location of the parcel of Open Space land](#), shown outlined in red on the plan.

Objections to the proposed disposal must be made in writing to Sally Stark, Assets Manager (Interim), Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE or via email to s.stark@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk by no later than **18 March 2021** quoting the reference: Rugby Club/Beech Grove

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

8. Councils publish phosphates calculator

Somerset's four district councils and the county council have been working hard to minimise delay and uncertainty around planning applications following recent guidance over unacceptable amounts of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors Ramsar site.

The local authorities are working in partnership to develop a way forward after Natural England advised that they should undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) before determining applications that may give rise to additional phosphates in the catchment area.

The remit includes work with the Somerset Ecology Service at the county council on a Somerset-wide nutrient strategy to identify both short term solutions to help clear the current backlog of planning permissions and longer-term solutions to address the existing and future growth commitments.

The first stage of this work is now complete with an easy to use calculator set to help affected applicants understand the likely phosphate load associated with their scheme as well as the extent of compensatory measures required to ensure new development is phosphate neutral.

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

9. Praise for SWT Customer Champions and Leads

Over the last month all of the Somerset District Councils have been working in co-operation with Somerset County Council and the NHS to help make phone calls to book vaccination appointments for our most vulnerable citizens and SWT Customer Champions have made thousand calls as part of that effort.

The rate of vaccinations in Somerset is at 93.4 per cent of all of its over-70s having had their first vaccination. This has been a fantastic example of team work with all the SWT Customer Champions and Leads pulling together to make these appointments and still maintain excellent customer service to SWT callers.

10. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Sorry; missed recycling

This week Coronavirus-related staff shortages have led to missed recycling collections in and around Taunton. Please [click here](#) to see the list of affected roads. SWP regret that immediate return collections are not possible; please re-present recycling next week.

Rubbish, garden waste, clinical and bulky waste collections are NOT affected.

Expecting lots of recycling by next week? Flatten/tear up card; rinse, squash and put tops back on plastic bottles; rinse and, if safe, crush cans. Stack boxes, heavier above, locked food bin on top. Extra material can be carefully sorted into bags (not black sacks) beside your recycling, or store and put out over time.

If materials cannot be stored or present a health or fire risk, recycling sites – on usual schedules for essential visits – can take kerbside materials for recycling. The only exception is food waste, which should be double bagged and put in your rubbish, or added to the energy-from-waste skip at any recycling site.

Please observe all Coronavirus safety advice for kerbside collections, including washing/sanitising hands before and after handing waste containers, disinfecting handles, and maintaining social distance from waste staff.

For an explanation of Coronavirus safety measures for collection crews and the change to 6am starts until at least the end of March, please [click here](#).

For the latest information, check [somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/coronavirus)

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

February 2021 was certainly a month of extremes for SCC Highways! We experienced the coldest spell of weather for 10 years at the start of the month, with significant ice problems in places and some snow. Week 3 was extremely wet, with

50mm (2 inches) of rain falling in Taunton, resulting in flooding in various locations. The final week of the month was warmer than average and quite blustery at times, with the wind direction switching around from predominantly north-easterlies to blowing from the south. This allowed the roads to dry out and, with no winter salting required, SCC Highways were able to focus on the repair of safety defects, such as potholes, and programmed drainage improvement works.

So what of March? The long-range forecast from the Met Office is for it to be slightly dryer than average. Settled conditions can make it pleasantly warm during the day, although the trade-off is that it can be chilly at night. If the skies are clear then the gritting fleet will be out on the road, laying down salt to reduce the risks of frosty road surfaces and icy patches. Salt stocks in the depot barns remain good, so SCC Highways do not anticipate any problems on that front.

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

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.](#)

BREXIT

EU Settlement Scheme

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](#).

EU Settlement Scheme Deadline – have all your staff and service users applied?

Most EU citizens living in the UK (as well as those from the EEA and Switzerland) need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to gain Settled Status so they can continue to live and work in the UK after 30 June 2021. The pandemic is having an impact on application times to the EU Settlement Scheme, so it's vital that people apply as soon as possible.

You can apply for settled status at <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

You should consider the impact on your organisation if staff do not have Settled Status, as they will not be able to work after **June 2021**. You can also play an important role by sign posting your service users to the scheme, as some people and children in our community may not be aware of the need to apply or may need help.

Local charity **Diversity Voice**, in partnership with SCC are working with the Home Office to provide help from regulated advisors for those who need it, including vulnerable people and employers. They can provide posters, hand-outs for service users and 1:1 help for applicants in any language. **There's no charge for this service.** Contact euss@diversityvoice.org.uk, **0300 075 0105**.

Spark Somerset

Online Networking Forum for VCSE Groups

REMINDER - Thursday 4 March, 10am – 11.30am

Spark Somerset is running an online networking event for VCSE groups in Somerset West and Taunton. It's free and VCSE staff and volunteers from across the area are welcome to come along to catch up on what's happening locally, network with other groups, and find out about the support on offer.

The events will be hosted by Jenny Hannis, Voluntary Sector Adviser, along with Gill Harrison, Community Development Worker. Click here to [register your attendance](#).

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP)

Live Longer Better Conference

SASP (Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership) in association with Age UK Somerset are very excited to bring you the first **Live Longer Better conference** for Somerset on **Thursday 11 March 2021 from 10.30am - 12.30pm**.

Together SASP and Age UK will aim to have a series of regular events over 2021 to keep up with the optimal ageing agenda, challenge mind-sets about what older means, hear and learn from partners and individuals nationally and locally regarding their inspiring work and understand our different perspectives and unique organisational and individual contributions to this agenda. The inaugural event is 2 hours but subsequent events will be shorter.

Live Longer Better will look to share the latest in ageing science and impact of COVID-19, digital opportunities, social prescribing, active ageing insight and more.

SASP have some amazing speakers from around the country including Somerset. It is hoped that they will be able to form an interested operational group from parties across Somerset, who will help inform future events and will be key to positive momentum with the Active Ageing agenda.

For further information or to book, please visit:

<https://www.sasp.co.uk/events/2021/03/live-longer-better-conference> and add the Zoom link to your calendar.

Somerset Skills and Learning (SSL)

Online Workshops

SSL are offering **Community Learning Courses** and workshops designed to support and develop new skills, build confidence, motivation and resilience. The Community Learning Workshops and Courses are free for anybody aged 19+, who live in Somerset and lived in the UK for the last three years. SSL's goal is to support health and wellbeing and to develop stronger communities.

To find out more about the range of courses on offer please [click here](#).

Somerset Arts Business Cultural Alliance (SABCA)

The Search is on for Somerset's Creative People & Places

Are you an artist, musician, band, gallery, theatre, venue, tutor or community group that contributes to the creativity of Somerset? If so, not-for-profit organisation 'Somerset Arts Business Cultural Alliance' (SABCA) is mapping all arts, culture, heritage and creative industries in Somerset and needs your help.

The county wide mapping, supported by all Somerset local authorities, is designed to paint a picture of the creative sector and how it contributes to those who live, work and play in the county. With the addition of sharing your work and services to the public for free, Somerset's creative people and places can make an impact locally while encouraging others to join, partake or visit in creative arts and culture activity.

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

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Rural Enterprise Exmoor

Businesses, communities and stakeholders across Exmoor are being invited to shape a future vision for rural enterprise within the National Park as part of the [Rural Enterprise Exmoor](#) (REE) Network. Anecdotal evidence suggested that national datasets underestimated the breadth and depth of business activity undertaken on Exmoor due to utilizing VAT and PAYE registrations and thus overlooking sole traders and many micro businesses that dominate our rural economy.

The research for Rural Enterprise Exmoor aimed to map the true extent of business activity and to engage with a range of micro-businesses who have chosen to operate within Exmoor and report their views. As the primary data for the Rural Enterprise Exmoor work was collected prior to the impact of COVID-19 on the UK economy a further survey was undertaken to sit alongside the baseline data collected to provide an overview of the economic impact of the pandemic.

Exmoor plays host to over 1,200 businesses, many of whom contributed to the survey last year aimed at identifying the unique challenges and opportunities they face. The development of a shared vision is the next step in the journey.

Alongside development of the vision, the project will use case studies and social media campaigns to celebrate the role of enterprise on Exmoor, whilst encouraging greater use of the Exmoor brand to raise the profile of doing business within the National Park.

Please [click here](#) for further details and to sign up to get involved

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

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service

Important notice about home safety visits during the Coronavirus pandemic

Due to the Coronavirus, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) have had to adapt how they deliver home safety visits to the community in Devon and Somerset.

DSFRS continue to provide fire safety advice over the telephone, and are now booking full home safety visits for the highest priority individuals.

The home safety visits will be prioritised based on the following criteria:

- Where a significant high risk of fire has been identified by a referring partner agency, concerned relative or friend.
- Where a threat of arson has been made to a person or property and we have received a police referral.
- To replace a bleeping alarm where this cannot be safely silenced or removed by the occupier of the property.
- Where a significant high risk of fire has been identified by Fire Service personnel.

If you require a home safety visit and your situation meets the criteria listed above, please call the home safety team on **0800 05 02 999**. All home safety visits will be provided with a qualified home safety technician wearing the appropriate level of PPE. In all other instances, they will provide fire safety advice over the telephone on **0800 05 02 999**.

These changes are temporary and reflect instructions from central Government aimed at reducing the spread of the virus. DSFRS thank you for your patience and understanding at this time.

Please [click here](#) to watch a video outlining what happens during a home safety visit.

REMINDER - Public Consultation

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is redesigning their website and would welcome feedback to improve the site in the future. Please [click here](#) to take the short survey.

HM Coastguard Watchet

New signs on the West Quay at Watchet Harbour Marina

New signs have been erected on the West Quay at Watchet Harbour Marina by the harbour authority reminding anglers not to cast lines from the light house across the harbour entrance or approaches. This has been a continued problem which has caused many anglers to lose their rods or lines when vessels have not been able to see them and have dragged the rods into the water, as well as endangering vessels if their boat engines were to become disabled by lines wrapped around the propellers.

Last year one of the scout safety boat engines was written off where fishing line was caught and wrapped around the propeller and prop shaft, forcing its way through the gasket and dumping all the gearbox oil, replacing it with salt water and writing the engine off. As well as the damage to equipment, any who catches fishing line around them on a vessel, or having the rods pulled from the hands could end up with a physical injury requiring medical attention.

If you know of an angler who uses the harbour, please remind them not to cast across the harbour entrance. There is plenty of space along the remainder of the Quay to fish.

Remember in a coastal emergency to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

National Careers Week

1 - 6 March 2021

National Careers week, providing free Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) resources is scheduled for next week. All resources are free to use and helps you to link education with the world of work.

Visit www.nationalcareersweek.com to find out more and view all the resources available to you today. You can also [download and share The Parents' Guide to National Careers Week 2021](#) designed to inform, involve and guide parental support.

Please [click here](#) for online resources, tools and information to support schools, teachers, parents, learners and businesses to deliver education, careers related activities and advice for young people.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

COVID-19 vaccination update

Unpaid carers now qualify for vaccinations as part of Group 6.

To register for this you need to let your GP know you are a carer if you haven't done so already. Call them to let them know and if you need any help or support with this please do contact CCS on **0800 31 68 600**.

Please [click here](#) to see the latest COVID-19 Vaccination Guide from the NHS. For details of the vaccine roll out in Somerset please [click here](#).

Chat to Connect service launched by CCS

Smart Communities part of the CCS group has launched a 'Chat to Connect' service for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) adults in Somerset. They are reaching out to anyone on the CEV list in Somerset. COVID-19 has been exceptionally hard for those who are shielded from society.

Do you want to meet new people in a similar position to you, with shared interests? It's good to talk and share experiences. CCS can connect you with another person who is on the CEV list to keep your spirits up – you are not alone.

Please [click here](#) to find out more.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Surviving Winter appeal raises record-breaking amount to help local older people

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) is absolutely delighted to announce that the 2020/21 Surviving Winter appeal has smashed its target, raising an incredible, record-breaking £160,000, thanks to the generosity of local donors.

Since Surviving Winter first launched in Somerset in 2010, the appeal has raised an astounding **£950,000** in total for the county.

The Surviving Winter team at SCF, and their partners, have been distributing funding across the county to those in need. The appeal aims to support more than 700 people this year, helping to keep them warm, safe and well.

Please [click here](#) for further information relating to the Surviving Winter Appeal.

REMINDER - Community Transport Schemes

Community Transport schemes can offer transport for individuals and groups, with some offering door-to-door services. Community Transport services are provided by a number of independent, non-profit making groups and organisations, all with the purpose of helping community members access essential services.

Somerset County Council is working with bus operators and [community transport providers](#) to make it as easy as possible for those people to get to appointments by:

- Suspending current concessionary bus pass rules so these can be used on all public services before 9.30am. This was effective from 1 February
- Working with Community Transport and Slinky Demand Responsive services across Somerset to allow free travel for bus pass holders when attending vaccination appointments. [Follow link](#) to see options.

If you are still experiencing a problem getting to your appointment call the Coronavirus Helpline on **0300 790 6275**. Lines are open seven days a week, 8am - 6pm.

REMINDER - Advice for people struggling to pay essential bills

The Government has updated the advice for those in difficulty with utility bills, or repayment commitments on credit cards, loans and mortgages, as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

The guidance sets out what people should do if they are struggling to pay bills and sets out the action the Government has taken with different utility providers, as well as loan, credit card, insurance and mortgage providers.

The Government has extended the deadline for applying for a mortgage payment holiday to **31 March 2021**. Please [click here](#) for more information and further advice.

Somerset Community Connect

REMINDER- Help to stay independent at home

Most of us want to remain independent for as long as we can.

www.somersetcommunityconnect.org.uk is a one stop website which can help you keep safe and independent in your home, advise on transport (such as bus passes and blue badges), home care support and much more.

If you need equipment to help you stay safe and independent at home (such as bathing equipment, walking support, bed grab handles etc.), complete a short survey by [clicking here](#).

Reminder- Somerset Carers Support

Anyone over 18 who looks after someone in an unpaid caring capacity can receive support from Somerset Carers for free. Caring could be for a loved one, friend, partner, parent or child on a regular or irregular basis. Call **0800 316 8600** or visit www.somersetcarers.org for more information.

Health and Welfare

Vaccinations open to next two priority groups

Thanks to the efforts of hundreds of GPs, nurses, vaccinators, administrators, marshals and volunteers, the Somerset COVID-19 vaccination programme has offered a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine to the most vulnerable residents across Somerset.

Vaccinations have now opened to people in the next two priority groups. They are those aged 65 to 69 (group 5) and those aged 16 to 65 who have specific underlying health conditions (group 6) as identified by the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#) that increases their risk of serious illness from COVID-19. At the same time, we are also inviting anyone from the first four priority groups who still wants to get their vaccination, to book an appointment.

In Somerset, the NHS is inviting those aged over 65 to book an appointment at a large vaccination centre (at Taunton Racecourse or the Bath and West Showground) or a pharmacy-led hub in the county, situated in Taunton, Yeovil or Bruton. GP practices will contact those who have been identified with a specific underlying health condition, to invite them to book at a GP-led hub.

For more information on the NHS vaccination in Somerset please [click here](#).

Hands, face, space advice still vital

The Coronavirus vaccine is designed to prevent serious illness and death from COVID-19. However, even if you have had the vaccine, you can still catch it and might still be able to pass it on, so the hands, face, space guidance must still be followed to protect yourselves and others.

Please remember – and share with others that if you haven't had a vaccine yet, if you have had one dose of the vaccine, if you have had two doses of the vaccine, the message is the same, we all need to stay at home where possible and keep following the hands, face, space guidance to keep ourselves and others safe.

Coronavirus home testing kits easier to order

The Government has announced that it has introduced improvements to the home testing programme to make it easier to get tested.

They include:

- People who do not have access to the internet can now order home testing kits over the phone by calling 119, without needing an email address or any other digital requirement.
- A new NHS Test and Trace partnership with Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) to improve the home testing service for people with visual impairments.
- A new video-call support service with specially trained NHS Test and Trace staff that will help people with vision impairments to test at home.

[Read more on GOV.UK](#)

REMINDER - Please don't drop your guard once vaccinated

While there are many things that we are still discovering about COVID-19, one thing that we know for certain is that it can be destroyed with simple soap and hot water. That's the reason that the 'hands' part of the 'Hands, Face, Space' message is such an important part of our 'toolkit' for tackling the virus and preventing its spread. The golden rules are: wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water; wear a face covering when required and keeping a social distance of at least two metres.

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

REMINDER - Latest Vaccination data for Somerset

You can now check Somerset's vaccination data on the Coronavirus dashboard. The information provided by the NHS will be added every Friday. Please [click here](#) to view the latest figures relating to doses that have been administered in Somerset.

The dashboard provides an overview of Coronavirus cases, a map, the R number and more detailed district-level information.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

In Somerset, the Councils have responded to over 12,200 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 including vaccinations
- 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 visit www.corona-helpers.co.uk

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>

[Public Health England](#)

[NHS – Help and Advice](#)

FAQS

Q. I'm really confused about the rules and regulations about coming out of the current national lockdown. Where can I find some simple guidance?

A. The COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021 summary sets out how the Government will continue to protect and support citizens across the UK. It provides a roadmap out of the current lockdown. The roadmap set out in chapter 3 outlines four steps for easing restrictions. Before proceeding to the next step, the Government will examine the data to assess the impact of the previous step. This assessment will be based on four tests:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

Please [click here](#) to view a copy of the COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021 summary.

Q. When my children return to school, will they need to be tested for COVID-19?

A. All students will begin to return to face-to-face education on 8 March with the following testing measures in place:

- All primary school children will return on Monday 8 March. Primary school staff will continue to take 2 rapid COVID-19 tests each week at home.
- All secondary school and college students will take three COVID-19 tests as they return to the classroom from the 8 March at existing school testing facilities. Schools and colleges will have discretion on how to test students over that week to enable their return to the classroom. After the initial programme of three tests in school or college, students will be provided with 2 rapid tests to use each week at home.
- Secondary school and college staff will also be provided with 2 tests to use each week at home
- University students on practical courses who need to access specialist facilities and equipment can return to in-person teaching and learning from Monday 8 March. Twice weekly testing will continue to be available for all on campus.

For further information please [click here](#).

Crime / Safeguarding

The Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

Admit supports vulnerable young people at Musgrove Park Hospital

In Somerset, the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) identified that hospital admissions for alcohol related conditions in under 18 year olds is significantly higher than the national average. The staff in A&E do an amazing job focusing on their patients' physical wellbeing, but understandably they do not have capacity to provide additional interventions for young people.

In response, the VRU has commissioned the Admit project being delivered by Turning Point (who run Somerset Drug and Alcohol Services) at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton.

Admit is a brief intervention and engagement programme for young people who attend A&E with alcohol, drug or violence related injuries. Admit give them help and support to reduce their risk of experiencing harm. Their two dedicated youth workers have been able to build good partnerships with A&E, and have engaged, supported and sign-posted over 33 young people to appropriate partnership agencies.

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

Crime Prevention through Sport Fund

Avon and Somerset Police have launched a new Crime Prevention Through Sport fund, in partnership with Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP) and The West of England Sport Trust (Wesport).

The Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund aims to support projects that use sport and physical activity to reduce violence, crime and anti-social behaviour. This fund is for projects that focus on using activity as a tool to engage and support young people up to the age of 25. Applications that use sport in its widest sense including traditional, informal sports and activities will be considered and encouraged to apply.

Together the partners are invested in supporting projects that thoroughly consider all the aims of the fund and those who are future-proofing their work to leave a lasting impact & support for the communities they work with.

Funding information:

- The first phase will remain open until **Monday 22 March**
- The second phase opens on **Monday 5 April** and closes **Monday 17 May**.

Please [click here](#) to review the relevant documents and to submit an application.

For further details on the Crime Prevention through Sport Fund please [click here](#).

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) increases Council Tax to improve local policing

An increase in the policing part of the council tax means PCC Sue Mountstevens can recruit 70 additional officers and enhance investigations capacity to improve outcomes for victims. This week, PCC Sue Mountstevens confirmed an increase in

the policing part of the Council Tax – known as the precept – of 5.88% for local residents, equivalent to £13.39 per year for the average Band D household.

The PCC initially proposed the full increase of 6.60% but this was vetoed by the area's [Police and Crime Panel](#) – the first time a PCC's budget proposal has been vetoed in Avon and Somerset – and the Panel then wrote to the PCC with their concerns.

Following review of the Panel's recommendations, attending an extraordinary Police and Crime Panel meeting and amending the budget to reduce the additional funds allocated for the incoming PCC's initiatives, Sue Mountstevens announced her revised precept increase of 5.88%.

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

Dementia Safeguarding Scheme: 2000 new tech wristbands available thanks to charitable funding

Two thousand new wearable tech wristbands have been made available by Avon and Somerset Police to help safeguard people living with dementia. The initiative was first launched on BBC Crimewatch last September in collaboration with the Senior Citizen Liaison Team (charity) and Avon Fire & Rescue Service.

Using Near Field Communication (NFC) technology, the wristband stores essential information about the wearer, including their name and details of next of kin. This information can be used by emergency services, health professionals or community members to get the wearer back to safety should they be found whilst lost or confused.

The new wristbands, which have been provided thanks to funding from Bristol Dementia Action Alliance Charity, Senior Citizen Liaison Team Charity, Wessex Water, Bristol Water and Western Power Distribution, are free of charge and can be obtained by applying on A&SP website to the [Dementia Safeguarding Scheme](#) (also known as the Herbert Protocol).

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

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Dog Theft Survey

The Association of Police Crime and Commissioners want your views on dog theft. Demand for dogs as pets has increased during the Coronavirus pandemic. The cost of some puppies, on Pets4Homes, is currently as high as £3,000, making them a valuable commodity to criminals.

[Click here](#) to take the Association of Police Crime and Commissioners' short survey to help A&SP understand the extent of this awful crime. Your responses will help inform the discussions that PCCs will have on this issue nationally and allow police forces to better understand local people's views on this crime and how they might improve their response to these concerns.

Latest Facebook Live

Please [click here](#) to watch a replay of the latest Facebook Live whereby Police Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens and Chief Constable Andy Marsh answer your questions on policing.

#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".

[#COVID-19](#) [#stayhomesavelives](#) [#yourcommunity](#)

Finally

The below link may be useful to you, should there be a requirement to convert files to jpg format: <https://www.adobe.com/uk/acrobat/online/pdf-to-jpg.html>

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