

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 56 Week ending 02/05/2021

#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air

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. COVID-19 Business Support Grants Update

To date, SWT has been able to issue [Restart Grants](#) totalling £4.6m to eligible businesses within the District. The Government requires the Council to undertake certain checks through 3rd Party companies in order to identify any potential fraud or irregularities before making payment. Staff are undertaking manual reviews on a large number of cases prior to approving payments hence the delay in some businesses receiving their grant.

SWT fully appreciate how important these grants are to businesses and are working to provide this much needed support. SWT is passing grants for payment several times a week and anticipate being able to issue all of the grants to eligible businesses by the end of April 2021. SWT will always provide a notification once the grant has been approved.

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

2. Local Government Reorganisation in Somerset – Local Residents Poll

On Friday 30 April, Somerset West and Taunton Council (along with the other 3 Districts) agreed to hold a Local Poll so that the public can give their view on the Unitary debate and whether they wish to have:

- a. **One council for Somerset** (“One Somerset” - the plan for a single council proposed by Somerset County Council)
- b. **Two councils for Somerset: Eastern Somerset and Western Somerset** (“Stronger Somerset” the plan for two councils for Somerset – an Eastern and a Western Somerset council –proposed by Somerset West and Taunton Council and the other district councils of Somerset)

Whilst the result of the Poll is non-binding, the information will be sent to the Secretary of State for him to consider when taking his report and recommendations through the parliamentary process.

3. Virtual Meetings – 7 May update

Councils will **not** be able to continue to meet virtually after 6 May 2021 after High Court judges dismissed a legal challenge from The Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and Hertfordshire County Council.

In a hearing last week, they argued councils could use existing powers to meet remotely. It would remove the need for primary legislation, which the Government claims is not possible.

However, judges have now ruled a ‘physical presence’ is needed for remote meetings under existing legislation. They claimed: ‘The decision whether to permit some or all local authority meetings to be conducted remotely... involves difficult policy choices on which there is likely to be a range of competing views.’ Those decisions, they concluded, ‘are for Parliament, not the courts’.

The Local Government Association are now advising Councils to prepare for a return to face to face meetings. They are also calling on the Government to ensure that amendments to the legislation are taken through the Parliamentary process as soon as possible. However, as the Government are currently consulting with Local Councils, and the closing date for feedback is the 17 June 2021, it is unlikely that a change of primary legislation would happen until Autumn 2021 at the earliest.

In the meantime, the Government guidance below should be used to hold face to face Committee meetings in a COVID-19 secure way

[COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of council buildings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings)

Town and Parish Councils are urged to respond to the consultation and can access the information via this link:

[Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

4. 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:

- Tuesday 4 May – **Annual Council Meeting**, 12 noon (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 28 April)

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.

5. Changes to the Executive

Following the Liberal Democrat Group annual meeting there are some changes to the make-up of the Executive, which are as follows:

- Leader of the Council and Communications – Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts
- Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Sports, Parks and Leisure – Cllr Derek Perry
- Portfolio Holder for Climate Change – Cllr Dixie Darch
- Portfolio Holder for Community – Cllr Christopher Booth
- Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources – Cllr Ross Henley
- Portfolio Holder for Culture – Cllr Caroline Ellis
- Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Asset Management – Cllr Marcus Kravis
- Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services – Cllr Andrew Sully

- Portfolio Holder for Housing – Cllr Fran Smith
- Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport – Cllr Mike Rigby

In order to ensure a smooth transition, there will be a short handover period for the new Portfolio Holders and they will officially step into the role from the date of the **Council AGM**, which is **12 noon on 4 May 2021**.

6. Voting and Coronavirus

Elections and referendums are going ahead during Coronavirus (COVID-19), though you may see changes to some processes. You can still vote in person at a polling station and safety measures will be put in place so you can vote safely.

You can obtain an emergency proxy vote at short notice if you need to self-isolate shortly before or on Election Day. Please [click here](#) for further information.

7. Purdah – Pre Election Period

The Pre-Election Period commenced on Monday 22 March and runs until the elections on 6 May.

From the start of the pre-election period, the council must comply with restrictions outlined in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. In addition a Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in 2011 makes clear that particular care should be taken in periods of heightened sensitivity, such as in the run up to an election. The Act defines publicity as “**any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public.**”

Generally, the Act says that we should “**not publish any material which, in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.**” The Code of Practice recommends that authorities should generally not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters and that publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute.

Decision making - In relation to decision making within the council, the position remains that it is ‘business as usual’ unless there are very good reasons why this should not be the case. In the vast majority of cases, the pre-election period will have no impact on normal council business, including the approval of planning decisions.

What this means

The primary restriction is on proactive publicity by the council which particularly relates to candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election. The council can still issue media releases on factual matters provided that these do not identify individual councillors or groups of councillors. Councillors are still free to respond to enquiries received from the media in a personal capacity.

Individual councillors can issue their own statements, write letters to the local newspaper(s) for publication, contact the media directly or say what they like in a personal capacity, but must not use council resources to do so.

It is still possible for the council to issue statements on behalf of a councillor holding a key political or civic position provided it relates to important events which are outside the council's control and can be shown to justify a member response. These occasions are likely to be rare and to be the exception, rather than the rule.

8. SWT begins roll-out of electric vehicle charging points

The Council's Climate Change team is excited to announce a collaboration with [InstaVolt](#), an electric vehicle charge point supplier, to facilitate electric vehicle charging in its car parks. The team has been working with InstaVolt to negotiate leases for the planned installation of four electric vehicle charging stations located at **Deane House** and **Blackbrook Sports Centre in Taunton**; **Exmoor House in Dulverton**; and **Alexandra Road in Minehead**. The charging stations are scheduled to be completed and switched on later in the spring.

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

9. SWT encourages responsible dog ownership

SWT maintains 422 dog waste bins across the district which are emptied twice a week, but still receives an average of 41 complaints a year from residents experiencing dog fouling issues. There is no excuse for someone not picking up after a dog in their care. As a nation of animal lovers, it is in everyone's interest to ensure that owners look after their dogs properly, and that includes respecting the environment and the people that share it.

If a dog waste bin is found to be full or overflowing, it can be reported via the Council's online [bin report form](#). If there is no bin nearby, owners must bag the waste and dispose of it at home.

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

10. Somerset West Lottery – Summer 2021 bolt-on prize draw

Following on from the success of previous initiatives, the Somerset West Lottery is taking part in the first of two summer 2021 bolt-on prize draws. Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between **3 May and 26 June 2021**, will be in with the chance to win a year's supply of fresh fruit and vegetables delivered weekly to the doorstep of each of three lucky winners by Boxxfresh, a small family run UK business.

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

11. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP) Changes to collections due to Early May Bank Holiday

All collections in the week of the Early May Bank Holiday on **Monday 3 May** will be one day later than usual with no collections on Bank Holiday Monday.

Monday pick-ups will take place on Tuesday and all through to Friday's pick-up taking place on **Saturday 8 May**. This will also apply to weekly recycling, garden waste, clinical waste, assisted and bulky waste collections, and waste container deliveries.

Recycling sites are unchanged by the May Bank Holiday:

- On Friday 30 April, 10 sites will open 9am to 6pm: Bridgwater, Minehead, Taunton, Wellington
- All 16 sites will be open 9am to 4pm on Saturday and Sunday 1 and 2 May.
- 12 sites will be open 9am to 6pm on Bank Holiday Monday: Bridgwater, Minehead, Taunton, Williton.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, SWP is highlighting vital waste safety advice to keep residents and SWP operatives safe:

- Take care when handling waste, including washing hands before and after putting out recycling and rubbish for collection.
- Disinfect waste container handles.
- Don't put tissues, cleaning cloths, gloves or masks in the recycling.
- For people displaying Coronavirus symptoms or are in a household with someone showing symptoms, tissues should be double bagged together with gloves and disposable cleaning cloths. These bags should be kept separate from other waste for at least 72 hours in the home, and then put into the general waste bin for disposal.

And residents are urged to help SWP operatives work more efficiently to complete their rounds with simple steps:

- Sort and segregate materials without using carrier bags in recycling containers.
- Rinse containers and, if safe, flatten or squash everything except glass and aerosols, putting tops back on plastic bottles, glass bottles and jars.
- Put boxes and bins out for collection by 7am all week from Tuesday 4 May - and leave them out late so crews can reach as many homes as possible. **Collection times may be later than usual.**
- Please park carefully to ensure waste trucks, fire engines and ambulances can get through.

For more information on kerbside services, recycling sites, and on COVID-19 and waste, visit: somersetwaste.gov.uk, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter or follow @somersetwaste on Facebook or Twitter.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC) SCC Highway Maintenance Update

The winter does not seem to want to end! Generally cold conditions overnight, coupled with heavy rain on the previous day resulted in the need to carry out a salting action in the early hour of Thursday 29 April. Very late in the year but not a record!

Works to install a new pedestrian crossing on the **A39 Bircham Road, Minehead**, outside West Somerset College, will start on Tuesday 4 May. This will be a “puffin” where the pedestrian indicator lights are on the same side of the road as the pedestrian about to cross. The traffic management required to undertake the construction work safely will include temporary two-way traffic signals, which will be manually controlled at peak periods to minimise disruption as far as possible, although some delays may still be experienced. The contractors have confirmed that a safe route for pedestrians will be maintained through the works on at least one side of the carriageway, for the full duration of the construction period. The works are expected to last for up to five weeks.

The resurfacing of the carriageway of the A3065 Silk Mills Road in Taunton, at its junction with Mountway Road and Bishops Hull Hill has now been completed. Also completed is the jetting and CCTV surveying of the highway drainage system on the A39 Bratton Straight, to the west of Minehead.

The Somerset Rivers Authority / SCC Highways joint venture to reduce the risk and impacts of flooding in **Kingston St Mary** continues with **Lodes Lane** remaining closed until 7 May. The kerb repair and carriageway resurfacing scheme at **Irnhem Road, Minehead** also continues with the section of road between **Irnhem Mews** and **Friday Street** remaining closed until 13 May.

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

Reminder- A38 Junction Improvement works in Taunton

Important works started in Taunton this month around the **A38 Mary Street, Billetfield and Paul Street junctions**, to support a residential development. The developer has helped Somerset County Council draft a set of Q&As which hopefully explains what is happening, why and how this might affect pedestrians and road-users.

Please see the attached Word document for more information.

Reminder- Temporary Road Closure: Yallands Hill, Cheddon Fitzpaine

The order becomes effective on 29 April 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **5 May 2021** and last for 11 weeks (24hrs) to enable CJL Construction Ltd to carry out all construction and associated works in connection with the Western Relief Road.

For any further information about this closure please contact CJL Construction Ltd on **(01934) 853227**, quoting reference: ttro431060TD - S50 - Yallands Hill, Cheddon FP.

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.

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.](#)

SCC Community Renewal Fund

Applications are now being invited for the Community Renewal Fund – Somerset. This is a new funding opportunity, launched by the Government in the Budget in March. The funding runs for one year and is intended to pave the way to the Shared Prosperity Fund due to be launched in 2022.

Somerset has the chance to bid for up to £12m of funding. The County Council is the lead authority for Somerset and will be responsible for inviting, assessing, prioritising and submitting bids to government.

Applications are invited from partners (including, but not limited to, businesses, voluntary and community groups, education and training providers, and district councils) for bids which must be submitted to government by 18 June 2021.

Project proposals must be submitted to Somerset County Council by **10am on 10 May 2021**.

Please [click here](#) for further information about the SCC Community Renewal Fund – Somerset.

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

Active Halls Funding

SASP have received funding from Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) to encourage physical activity providers for mid / older aged people to reopen in village and community halls.

SASP will offer grants (of up to £500) to support the reduced income providers make through COVID-19 restrictions such as reduced class numbers due to social distancing and/or confidence issues of their participants. Priority will be given to classes in areas within the top 30% Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) in Somerset. You can check your village and community hall postcode [here](#).

Who can apply?

SASP are seeking applications from instructors who are looking to resume or launch new activity within village halls across Somerset. They hope this funding will support groups or instructors to restart activity post COVID-19 which may not otherwise be viable.

If your project does not predominantly attract over 50's or is in an area outside the top 30%, SASP would still welcome an application but it will be given lower priority if the fund is oversubscribed.

Please [click here](#) for full details and to make an application.

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Double Gold For ENP Centre as New Online Store Launched

Lynmouth Pavilion Exmoor National Park Centre is celebrating having scooped a prestigious Gold award in the [South West Tourism Awards](#), just weeks after winning Gold in the Devon Tourism Awards as Visitor information Service of the Year.

Feedback from the judges highlighted the diverse information service provided in a central location, highlighting the use of visitor feedback to improve services. The passion of the team was acknowledged along with the understanding of the difference team members can make to a high quality service.

Whilst the Centres had to close their doors for much of last year due to the Covid pandemic, all three [National Park Centres](#) at Lynmouth, **Dunster** and **Dulverton** are now open again from 10am until 5pm, 7 days a week. They offer expert advice alongside a range of displays, exhibits, resources and merchandise, to bring the story of Exmoor to life and inspire and inform people about the National Park.

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

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Think Bike Week 2021 motorcycle safety campaign

DSFRS - along with other fire and rescue services across the country - are spearheading a motorcycle safety campaign.

Think Bike Week (23 April – 3 May) is a national campaign aimed at motorcyclists. It highlights the importance of bike maintenance and the wearing of proper riding kit. Riders are also being encouraged to 'brush up' their riding skills at a time when many may be returning to riding after a significant break.

- Motorcycles make up just 1% of all vehicle traffic however, their risk of death is 57% times higher than in cars.
- Motorcyclists make up 19% of all road fatalities.
- There are a higher number of collisions on urban roads, but in Devon and Somerset there tends to be more serious collisions on rural roads.

Think Bike Week is a time to raise awareness of safety for bikers. In springtime DSFRS see a lot of bikers out and about, and their work will help riders to be more visible on the road, and to ride more safely.

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

Maritime and Coastguard Agency Drowning Prevention Week

Half of those who drown at the coast didn't even plan to enter the water. What would you do if you fell in?

Remember these simple steps [#FloatToLive](#):

- Fight your instinct to thrash around
- Lean back
- Gently move your arms and legs to help you float
- Catch your breath - float until you can control your breathing
- Swim to safety if you can. Or raise a hand and call for help

If you see someone in trouble in the water at the coast, call and ask for the Coastguard. Inland? Ask for the Fire Service. [#999Family](#).

Please [click here](#) to watch the 'Be Water Aware Don't be a drowning statistic' video. Spread the message. Share the post. Potentially save a life.

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

Skill Up Somerset

Business Apprenticeship Scheme

Government Incentive - £3,000 for Businesses offering Apprenticeship Opportunities

The UK Government announced in the recent budget that they are extending and increasing the payments made to employers who hire new apprentices. Employers in England who hire a new apprentice between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021 will receive £3,000 per new hire, compared with £1,500 per new apprentice hire (or £2,000 for those aged 24 and under) under the previous scheme. This is in addition to the existing £1,000 payment the Government provides for all new 16 to 18 year old apprentices and those aged under 25 with an Education, Health and Care Plan, where that applies.

To find out more about Apprenticeships and the incentives available please refer to the [Skill Up Somerset website](#).

Somerset Business Education Partnership

Somerset Education Business Partnership connects employers with education providers so that young people are aware of local career opportunities and develop the skills needed to thrive at work.

Research has shown that young people who have contact with employers whilst at school are significantly less likely to become NEET - not in education, employment

or training - and can expect to earn more money once they are in full-time employment.

To read the latest online newsletter please [click here](#).

To find out more please visit the [Somerset Business Education Partnership website](#).

Spark Somerset Covid Confident Communities Forum

Are you involved in running a community group that is looking to re-start face-to-face meetings? Join Spark Somerset for a short session on how to get your group running again and find out how Spark Somerset can help you navigate these coming months.

Covid Confident in the Community, will cover when and how groups can meet again, along with guidance on funding, recruiting volunteers and other issues. Spark Somerset will be introducing their Covid Confident Communities booklet that can be given to members and talking about how they can support people with worries about life after the pandemic. There will be chance for everyone to share ideas and ask questions.

It will include:

- When groups can meet up
- What safety measures need to be put in place funding and training support
- Recruiting volunteers to increase capacity Covid Confident Communities booklet Covid Champions
- How to get further support from Spark Somerset.

The first forum takes place on **Wednesday 5 May 11am to 12.30pm**.

Tickets are freely available to Somerset-based VCSEs and volunteers.

Please [click here](#) find out more, book a space and see what other forums are coming up.

Multiple Agency Webinar Clubs in Crisis Grant Aid: Information Evening

A great and easy opportunity for sports clubs and community organisations to apply for £2,021 to help clubs or community groups in Somerset reopen and provide positive sporting activities to young people.

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) and Wesport are hosting a webinar to take you through this easy process and answer any questions on **Thursday 6 May at 6.30pm** with Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) on Zoom.

Made by Sport #ClubsinCrisis fund is a new fund supported by Cash4Clubs, and will provide over £4million worth of funding to grassroots clubs and organisations. The fund is open now!

Please [click here](#) for further information on the fund and to check you are eligible.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) Somerset West Lottery Community Fund

You can apply for money if your group supports people in Somerset West and Taunton. This money is from the Somerset West Lottery.

You can apply for money from here if:

- you work or volunteer for a charity or community group based in Somerset West and Taunton
- your charity or community group usually has an annual income under £250,000.

Ask for money by **7 May 2021** and SCF will let you know if they can help you in the first week of June 2021. Please [click here](#) for further detail.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Free Workshop 'A Long Road Back From Lockdown'

This workshop is due to be held on **Tuesday, 11 May at 10am – 12pm** and will be an interactive meeting, part presentation, part discussion. The CCS ask all attendees to participate fully by using both sound and camera so that everyone can see who is speaking. The discussion will focus on the implications of the 4 step roadmap out of lockdown for community buildings, and how to ensure that all buildings are COVID secure. It is an opportunity for hall trustees to ask questions and share experiences or concerns around reopening their halls.

Please [click here](#) to read full details and to book your place.

Change to Live Talking Cafés

With effect from the 1 May the CCS will change the frequency of the Live Talking Cafes on Facebook to three times a week, and change the start time to 1pm. This is in preparation for Talking Cafes slowly starting taking place back in venues across Somerset in line with COVID-19 restrictions easing and the Village and Community Agents resuming 'normal' duties in their communities.

The CCS plan to continue the Facebook Live sessions for the foreseeable future, as they have proven to be a fantastic way of reaching people all over the county, and raising awareness not only of the Somerset Village Agent service but of all their fabulous guest speakers.

Please see below the details for next week's Talking Cafe Live Sessions:

Tuesday 4 May at 1pm

[Volunteer Opportunities with Spark Somerset](#)

Wednesday 5 May at 1pm

[deafPLUS - help and support if you have a hearing impairment](#)

Thursday 6 May at 1pm

[Somerset Nature Connections with Somerset Wildlife Trust and their plans for Mental Health Weeks \(10 May\) theme being 'Nature'](#).

If you would like to take part in a future Talking Cafe Live, please contact Brigitte Kuipers on brigitte@somersetccc.org.uk

Somerset Independence Plus (SIP)

Hoarding Disorder

Somerset Independence Plus, works with a variety of Partners, so often a referral to the service happens when there is a concern over a person's living conditions, including disrepair and heating. However, many of these clients are also suffering from Hoarding Disorder and this is often the biggest reason for not addressing the repairs.

SIP soon realised that there was a huge gap in services to support people with a Hoarding disorder, and understand that this vital and much needed missing provision was a great opportunity for them to support the friends, families and Services/Agencies coping with Hoarding around Somerset. Not only do SIP support people on an individual basis, but endeavour to highlight the clinical recognitions of a Hoarding disorder, dispelling the myths and removing stigma surrounding it. The Independent Living Officers will look at the personal circumstances the clients find themselves in and work at the client's pace to create and agree an independent living plan. There are no set time limits within which to work. SIP will look to do weekly visits or phone calls, using goal setting techniques to achieve the desired outcome.

Please [click here](#) for further information or call SIP on **0300 303 7794**.

Somerset Community Food

Growing Grant

Somerset Community Food is a grass-roots charity which supports a network of community food projects. Their [new website](#) is now live and contains both a map of known community growing projects and a section for additional resources. In addition, there is news, events and [funding](#) sections as well as the option of a regular email newsletter.

A new funding stream is due to be launched this month. The grant is open to support community-led food projects in Somerset, which focus on growing food as a community effort but may also include related activities such as training, cooking sessions, and community meals. Projects must be volunteer-based, with the aim of growing food for the immediate community. Watch the [website](#) for details.

Health and Welfare

More than 1 million in South West get second vaccine dose

More than one million people in the South West have now received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The milestone comes as the number of people in the region who have received their first dose tops three million.

The [National Booking Service](#) has opened to those aged **40 or over**. Bookings at the large vaccination sites in Somerset (Taunton Racecourse and the Bath and West Showground) and at pharmacy sites are available on the National Booking Service in line with each centre's current supply of vaccine, alongside pre-existing bookings for second doses.

Additional booking slots will become available in line with new vaccine deliveries. Community-led GP sites are also contacting people aged between 40 or over directly to come for their vaccinations. To book or to manage your vaccination, please [click here](#).

Free rapid lateral flow tests available

Everyone in Somerset is encouraged to access free, regular, rapid Coronavirus testing. As restrictions ease and we start to enjoy the new freedoms, it's vital that we keep the virus at bay.

People are encouraged to take regular tests (twice a week) to help prevent outbreaks and continue on the path to a more normal way of life. One in three people with COVID-19 do not experience any symptoms and may be spreading the virus unwittingly. Rapid testing detects cases quickly, meaning positive cases can isolate immediately.

The expanded regular testing offer for people without symptoms is delivered through:

- test sites across Somerset between set times. To find your nearest Somerset test collection site, please click trace.nhs.uk/ and enter your postcode.
- workplace testing programmes, on-site or at home
- testing on-site at schools and colleges
- a home ordering service, which allows people to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to their home. A pack of tests contains 7 tests. You can order one pack per household each day. [Please click here to order your rapid lateral flow tests](#).

Please remember hands, face, space, fresh air

Now that we are on the second step on the roadmap out of lockdown it is crucial that we continue to stick to the rules. It's a time to enjoy the sunny weather and meet up with friends and family outside as long as there are no more than six people, or two households.

Please do not mix indoors with anyone who is not in your household or support bubble. Transmission risk is highest indoors or in a closed space such as a car. If there is no alternative way of travelling, the advice is to keep the car windows open, wear a face covering, touch as few surfaces as possible and use hand sanitiser.

The virus is still here and so we must continue to follow the Government guidance and remember: hands, face, space and fresh air. Please [click here](#) to find out what you can and cannot do.

Latest Vaccination data for Somerset

You can 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.

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 and Fresh Air' 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.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

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've had my first COVID-19 vaccination, however, I am yet to receive the date of my second dose. Do I need to do anything to expedite this process?

A. The NHS will contact you in the same way they did for your first jab. Do not ring your doctor's surgery.

Q. Is it illegal to move my friends inside when they get cold sitting outside in my garden or if it starts to rain?

A. You can meet in a group of 6 or a larger group of any size from up to 2 households (including their support bubbles) **outdoors only**. This includes private outdoor spaces, such as gardens, and other outdoor public places and venues that are open. **You would be breaking the law if you moved your friends indoors.**

If you break the rules the police can take action against you. This includes breaking up illegal gatherings and issuing fines (fixed penalty notices). You can be given a fixed penalty notice of £200 for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400.

You can be fined £800 if you go to a private indoor gathering such as a house party of over 15 people from outside your household, which will double for each repeat offence to a maximum level of £6,400.

If you hold, or are involved in holding, an illegal gathering of over 30 people, the police can fine you £10,000.

For more information about what you can and cannot do, please [click here](#).

Crime / Safeguarding

SWT Scam Alert

Callers targeting areas in the SWT District claiming to be working for the Council are falsely promising loft insulation grants on agreement of a home visit. Neither SWT nor any nominated contractors are making calls of this nature. If in doubt, check with SWT by calling **0330 304 8000**.

The Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund – Phase 2 now open

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. More information can be found [here](#).

Deadline for applications is **17 May 2021**.

Let's Fight Refund Overpayment Scams

One type of impersonation scam is where criminals will impersonate a trusted organisation to carry out a 'refund overpayment scam'. You may get an unexpected call from someone claiming to be from your internet provider. They tell you there's an issue with your PC and will request remote access to fix it. They'll say you're due compensation for the inconvenience, and will ask you to log on to your internet bank. Then they claim they made a mistake: they've paid you too much. What they'll actually have done is transferred money from your savings account to make it look like a refund has credited your current account. You won't know this, though, and they'll then ask you to transfer the overpayment of the 'refund' back to them. Next thing you know, you're using your own security details to send your own money to them. And just like that, a large sum of your money is gone.

Hints and tips:

Don't allow yourself to be rushed into allowing remote access. Be sure who you are dealing with - and never log on to your internet bank account while allowing someone remote access to your device.

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Report a breach of COVID-19 restrictions

New public health regulations have granted police additional powers to enforce restrictions in line with the Government's COVID-19 advice. This includes the requirement to close businesses and premises, and enforce restrictions on movement and gatherings. Read the [Government's guidance on what you can and cannot do](#).

If you are concerned that an individual or business has **significantly** breached the restrictions, complete the [online form](#). If you are unable to use the online form, or the breach is happening now, call 101.

Your report will help A&SP build a picture of where people appear to be or are breaching the Government's advice on physical social distancing. This information will help to inform their policing patrols.

REMINDER- A&SP Elections for Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

The election for the next PCC for Avon and Somerset takes place on **6 May 2021**. The role of the PCCs is to be the voice of the people and hold the police to account. They are responsible for the totality of policing. PCCs aim to cut crime and deliver an effective and efficient police service within their force area.

To find out more about the election and the prospective candidates please [click here](#).

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.

#Hands #Face #Space and Fresh Air

Attachment:

A38 Junction Improvement works in Taunton Word document