

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 68 Week ending 25/07/2021

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. Somerset Unitary Result

Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick, MP, has decided to implement, subject to Parliamentary approval, the proposal for a single unitary council for the whole of the existing administrative county of Somerset.

The decision, announced in a ministerial statement to Parliament means that a single unitary council for Somerset will be formed on **1 April 2023** to replace the county's five existing county and district councils.

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

2. Think twice, do the right thing, and don't let your guard down

Most legal restrictions relating to COVID-19 have been lifted, but the risks of COVID-19 have not gone away. As cases rise here and across the country, please be cautious, not only for yourselves, but to protect our vulnerable residents and frontline workers.

Somerset County Council's Public Health team is advising people to think carefully about continuing to keep the all-important two metre distance where possible – the UK's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) estimates that the risk of transmitting COVID-19 at 1 metre could be up to ten times higher than at 2 metres. Please [click here](#) for further information.

As another measure to protect more vulnerable members of our local communities, as well as workers in key services such as shops and pubs, it is recommended to continue to wear a face covering in indoor spaces such as in shops, on public transport or in healthcare settings. Please also continue to wash hands thoroughly and regularly. Meet up outside rather than inside, and, if inside, make sure to let the fresh air in by opening windows and doors.

Finally, it's important to:

- make sure to get both doses of the vaccine,
- self-isolate when required to do so; and,
- use rapid tests twice a week.

The message is please 'think twice, do the right thing, and don't let your guard down'.

3. Democracy and Governance

Committee Meetings

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](#). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

A number of Committee meetings are scheduled to take place over the next couple of weeks, which are as follows:

- Monday 26 July – Special Audit and Governance Committee, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 21 July)
- Tuesday 27 July – Full Council, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 22 July)
- Thursday 29 July – Community Scrutiny Committee, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 26th July)
- Wednesday 4th August – Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 30th July)

From 7 May 2021, meetings can no longer be held virtually.

These meetings will take place in the Chamber at Deane House following the Government COVID-19 safety guidelines. As we are very limited to the number

of people we can safely get into the Chamber, we are asking people to register if they wish to attend in person.

Information on speaking at public meetings is available on the SWT website. This also gives alternatives to participating without attending in person.

The meetings will still 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.

Contact the Governance Team via governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.

Please [click here](#) to read the full press release and participate in the survey.

4. SWT pays tribute to Cllr Alan Wedderkopp

SWT is sad to report that on Friday 16 July, Councillor Alan Wedderkopp passed away at home surrounded by his family. Alan was a well-respected District and County Councillor and our thoughts are with Alan's family and friends at this time.

5. Important Changes to Homefinder Somerset

Some important changes are being made to Homefinder Somerset this summer. This includes improvements to the website and the online application form.

Because of this work:

- There will be no homes advertised in the week beginning **Monday 26 July**. Homes will be advertised as normal again from Wednesday 4 August
- It is currently not possible to make changes to your application. You will be able to make changes to your application again from Monday 2 August.
- New applications must be completed and submitted by **Wednesday 28 July**. New applications that are not completed and submitted by this date will be deleted.
- It will not be possible to start a new application between Wednesday 28 July and Monday 2 August. **You will then be able to start a new application again from Monday 2 August.**
- It may take longer to assess applications and respond to queries. Please allow extra time for your local housing team to respond to you.

Mutual Exchange on Homefinder Somerset is ending on **31 July 2021**.

Are you a council or housing association tenant? If so, please note that it will no longer be possible to register for mutual exchange or advertise your home for mutual exchange on Homefinder Somerset from 31 July. You will still be able to bid for homes that are being advertised by partner landlords.

You can use other websites to seek a mutual exchange such as [Homeswapper](#) or [House Exchange](#). Please contact your landlord for more information. SWT has agreed a new contract with Homeswapper which will be free to access for SWT tenants.

6. Water saving initiative rolled-out to WCs

SWT is working with industry leaders in waterless urinal technologies, [WhiffAway](#), to save water at public and private conveniences. A number of gents' urinals are being converted to waterless systems, located at: West Somerset Railway Station in Bishops Lydeard; Canon Street, Paul Street, Victoria and Vivary Parks in Taunton; and North Street, Wellington Park and Deane Depot, Westpark in Wellington.

The work will involve installing special plumbing outlets, housing chemically impregnated filters onto the existing urinals. The filters rapidly neutralise any odours without the need for flushing.

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

7. SWT adopts new beach safety App

SWT has adopted a new innovative App to safeguard visitors and residents to Minehead and other beaches around the UK. The UK Beach Check App allows beachgoers to stay Covid-safe by checking congestion levels at popular coastal areas before visiting, and either choosing less populated zones or beaches with lesser crowding to help maintain social distancing.

The App is based on a simple traffic light system displaying congestion levels for individually listed beaches or via an interactive map as either red (crowded), amber (less congested) or green (uncongested).

Congestion updates are provided throughout the day using a mix of sources. The App predicts how busy areas are likely to become based on historic data, weather and footfall counter data.

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

8. Love Parks Week (23 July – 1 August)

Love Parks Week 2021 will run from the 23 July until the 1 August. This year, following the extra pressure that our beloved parks and green spaces have seen during the pandemic, SWT will use Love Parks Week to send a rallying cry to the great British public to 'Love, Respect and Protect' our parks throughout the summer of 2021 and beyond.

The SWT Open Spaces team have worked tirelessly over the past 18 months ensuring we have somewhere nice to walk our dogs, play with our children and meet for a socially distanced catch up!

9. Seaward Way Minehead

The Council's development of 54 zero carbon homes at Seaward Way Minehead was recently approved by the Planning Committee and contractors, Classic Builders and have since been appointed. Classic Builders were the contractors who built eight council homes on Laxton Road, Taunton which were completed in January 2021. Following a refinement of low carbon works the Seaward Way development is due to start on site this year.

10. Reminder- SWT Community Governance Review

Councillors are being asked to approve formal arrangements for undertaking a Community Governance Review (CGR) of the Unparished Area of Taunton. A cross party Member Working Group was set up following a decision by full council in March to carry out the review with a view to creating a new town or parish council(s) in central Taunton.

The Taunton Charter Trustees are the 16 Somerset West and Taunton councillors elected to represent wards in the unparished area of Taunton which has no town or parish council of its own. They are being asked to support the proposals which will then go before Full Council at its meeting on **27 July 2021**.

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

11. Reminder- New grants to boost tourism in West Somerset and Sedgemoor

The Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership (HTAP) is offering grants to help fund business projects aimed at boosting tourism in the West Somerset and Sedgemoor area. Led by SWT, the Tourism Innovation Grant Scheme has been set up by the HTAP partners in response to the impact on tourism from COVID-19.

The new grant scheme is specifically designed to support SMEs in offering a greater range of visitor products and experiences. Grants between £5,000 and £10,000 will be made available to businesses and organisations operating in the tourism, hospitality and events sector. Applications for the Tourism Innovation Grant Scheme will open week commencing 12 July 2021 until **10 September 2021**, or until all the funding has been allocated.

Please [click here](#) for further information, eligibility and for details on how to apply.

12. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

If your collection is missed...

SWP would like to send you their apologies. You can report any missed collection after 7pm on the due day via [My Waste Services](#). If you report that

your rubbish or garden waste has not been collected, SWP will be back within the next two working days. You can find more information on extra materials, space, storage and waste [here](#).

Why missed collections?

Due to a national shortage of LGV drivers; an issue which has been particularly acute in Somerset, SWP are still experiencing a shortage of the minimum required. The situation changes daily subject to COVID Test and Trace isolation alerts. For example, on Monday 19 July, 24 SWP staff were 'pinged' and advised to self-isolate.

What are SWP doing?

SWP are currently recruiting LGV drivers and loaders. [Click here](#) to apply. In addition, SWP are training loaders to become drivers, and sending out vans to collect extra cardboard daily. This enables the recycle trucks to work for longer before unloading.

What can you do to help?

If your collection has been missed, SWP have asked you to hold back your waste until the following week; however, if you need to get rid of your refuse sooner, all materials are being taken at Somerset's 16 recycle sites, which are open on their usual summer schedules. Please [click here](#) to view the recycling centre opening hours.

There is no quick fix and SWP would like to take this opportunity to apologise and thank you for your patience and support.

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

That was certainly a hot week! The hottest of the year for us so far. Several consecutive days of high road surface temperatures resulted in the surface itself melting at various locations across the county. In Somerset West and Taunton, this occurred at: A396 Dunster to Timberscombe; A396 south of Wheddon Cross; B3224 between Luckwell Bridge and Exford; and B3223 Comers Cross, near Withypool. SCC Highways spread granite grit at these locations and reports indicate that this seems to have stabilised the situation and prevented further damage. The much cooler and wetter conditions forecast for the next few days will also assist.

The extreme conditions have also meant that the start of the carriageway surface dressing programme in Somerset has now been postponed until 26 July. The first

phase includes: **Ritherdons Farm Lane; Rumwell Park Lane; Wheaton Lane; Barr Lane; Frethey Lane (all Bishops Hull); and Ruggin Road (West Buckland).** Carriageway resurfacing on the **B3187 Station Road, Wellington** has now been completed.

Work is continuing under the cover of a temporary road closure at **Hartford Road, Brompton Regis** (until 30 July) where SCC Highways are repairing the verge and embankment which support the road. Another temporary road closure will be starting on 26 July at **B3187 Burn Hill** which is between **Langford Budville** and **Milverton**. This is to allow the team to repair and improve the highway drainage along this section of road. The closure will be in place for 5 weeks until 27 August. Regular users of this road will be aware of regular flooding incidents here, especially in the winter months.

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

Harmful or poisonous weeds

SCC are responsible for controlling certain noxious weeds, including ragwort. You can [report noxious weeds here](#).

When you contact SCC, please give them the following information:

- Your name, address and phone number in case we need to contact you
- The location of the weeds. including the road name and parish
- The type of weed (if you know)

Emergency Road Closures: Honiton Road & Staple Fitzpaine Road

Please be aware that SCC have received notification of emergency road closures at **Honiton Road, Otterford**, and **Staple Fitzpaine Road, Taunton** which commenced on 19 July 2021 and are expected to last until **20 August 2021** (the closures are between the hours of 00:00 - 23:59).

These works are for **Richard Cole Contracting to fell and clear diseased Ash Trees on behalf of Forestry England.**

For any further information about these closures please contact Richard Cole Contracting on **(01803) 865098**, quoting reference: ttro458739.

Maps of the affected areas (in red), together with the recommended diversion routes (in purple) are shown [here](#).

Date Change for Temporary Road Closure: Honiton Road, Trull

Please be aware that SCC have received notification of a date change to a temporary road closure at Honiton Road, Trull for approximately 40 metres.

The new date for the works to commence is **26 July 2021** and is expected to last until **6 August 2021** between the hours of 00:00 - 23:59.

These works are for Wales & West Utilities to carry out works to the gas main, their works reference is XY275003001563404_01. Please [click here](#) to view the new Notice.

For any further information about this closure please contact Wales & West Utilities on **0800 9122 999** quoting the above works reference number.

A map of the affected area (in red), together with the recommended diversion route (in purple) is shown [here](#), along with the link to One.Network.

Reminder- Temporary Road Closure: Coal Orchard, Taunton

The order becomes effective on 8 July 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **12 July 2021** and last for 33 days to enable Wales & West Utilities to carry out works to upgrade gas main.

Please follow the [link](#) to view the above road closure and the [Notice 2](#). For any further information about this closure please contact Wales & West Utilities on **0800 9122 999**, quoting reference: ttr0446242.

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

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.](#)

Somerset Libraries

Ipad Loaning Scheme

Somerset Libraries, now offers an iPad loaning scheme in specific libraries, aimed specifically at job seekers and/or anyone wanting to develop new skills. The scheme is designed for anyone – including people who may have little or no experience in using IT.

The tablets are pre-loaded with links, information and support for anyone in Somerset currently looking for employment, or if you think you may need to be looking soon. These are 'data-enabled' iPads which means you don't even need to have internet access at home to use them. There's a simple step-by-step ['How to Use' video](#) which shows you how to use the iPad and what sort of information you will be able to access, including how to develop an effective CV, tips for successful interviews, how to search for local jobs and a some useful health and wellbeing information and links.

Additional free 'wrap-around' support is available from the Positive People Programme, including a 24/7 helpline, one-to-one digital support, virtual job clubs and workshops.

Anyone who is a member of Somerset Libraries can borrow an iPad FREE OF CHARGE for a period of up to six weeks from Minehead, Taunton or Bridgwater libraries.

Becoming a member of Somerset Libraries is free and easy to do – see [here](#) for more information. You can join online but in order to borrow an iPad you will need to become a full member which you can do by visiting your local library. Borrowers will need to sign an iPad borrower request form and agree to the Terms and Conditions of use.

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

Beat the Street – The results and end of game survey

Taunton, you have walked, run, cycled, scooted and rolled an amazing 62,645 miles as part of Beat the Street. Congratulations to the leaderboard winners and thank you to everyone who took part! Please [click here](#) to view the leaderboard winners. Beat the Street invite you to complete their end of game survey. Please [click here](#) to take part in the short survey.

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Be wildfire aware

Many of you saw the severity of the Australian wildfire disaster in 2019. Did you know that we also have wildfires in the UK? DSFRS want to keep you and our countryside safe from the dangers of wildfires and fires in the open.

What to do if you see a wild fire:

If you are outside...

- Stay calm
- Ensure you are in a safe location (away from vegetation and smoke). If you are in your car, close all windows and vents
- Call 999 and inform us of your location – you can use the [What3Words app](#).

If you are at home...

- Stay calm
- Put yourself in a place of safety. Do not try to put out the fire yourself
- Keep doors and windows closed, but unlocked
- Call 999 and inform us of your location.

Please [click here](#) for further information on how you can prevent wild fires.

Barbecues

Barbecues (BBQs) are best used in your garden, away from your home, and anything that could catch fire (sheds, trees, bushes, compost bins etc). It's not safe to have a BBQ on your balcony. These spaces are often enclosed, meaning a fire could easily spread to your home or houses around you.

When using a disposable BBQ, make sure they are placed on a flat surface that won't catch alight (e.g. stone or paving slabs) as the bottom of the BBQ can get very hot and easily burn what's underneath it. If you're using a disposable BBQ away

from your home, please be careful. They have been the cause of a large number of wildfires in recent years.

Please [click here](#) to read DSFRS advice on how to have a safe BBQ; from where to use them, how to use them and what to do when you've finished using them.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Safety at the beach

Inflatables are popular products which come in all shapes and sizes like Unicorns or flamingos and are often used in swimming pools. They are becoming increasingly popular on social media and have a high appeal.

What is the issue?

Many inflatables are being used at beaches in the UK. Unfortunately, these inflatables are not well suited to the coast and can cause a serious risk to your safety. This is because:

- Strong currents can rapidly sweep inflatables and people out to sea
- Strong winds can also blow out the inflatable to sea in less than minutes
- There have been cases of people panicking and abandoning the inflatable which leads to the sudden immersion of them into cold water
- The shock of cold water can make it difficult to swim

What can you do?

- Leave inflatables at home
- If you need to use an inflatable – use it at the swimming pool
- Always consider the risks of water to yourself and others
- If heading to the beach, visit a lifeguarded beach.

Please [click here](#) for further information and to download the Inflatables campaign report.

Hidden danger - getting stuck in mud and quicksand!

You'd be surprised how often our coastguard rescue teams carry out complex mud and soft sand rescues at the coast. Parts of the UK coastline – including beaches – can be categorised as soft ground (mud or quicksand) which means areas of low-lying water are open to the elements causing soft ground to form – particularly in bad weather conditions.

If you become stuck in mud, the Coastguard's advice is always the same 'Stay calm, try and spread your weight as much as possible and avoid moving. Call 999 and ask for the Coastguard'.

Anybody trapped should also discourage other well-meaning members of the public from attempting to rescue others because, without the proper equipment and expertise, they could become stuck too.

Please always check your local conditions, tide times and carry a fully-charged mobile phone when venturing out to a coastal area so that you are easily contactable.

Most importantly: Don't get caught out by the tide

Just last weekend, [Weston-Super-Mare Coastguard Rescue Team](#) and [Clevedon Coastguard Rescue Team](#) were sent to help a woman struggling in the mud. They managed to free her quickly and provide first aid at the scene.

Entering into the mud or water to rescue others is not something the Coastguard would encourage. The potential to become a casualty yourself is high. Please stay back. Stay safe. Dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

The Woodland Trust

State of the UK's Woods and Trees 2021 Report

The State of the UK's Woods and Trees 2021 report has identified four significant findings:

- Woodland cover is increasing, but woodland wildlife is decreasing.
- Woods and trees are vital for a healthy, happy society.
- Woods and trees are subject to a barrage of coinciding threats.
- Not nearly enough is being done.

The report provides clear evidence that there is an urgent need to act. We must work together to enable native woods and trees to become a source of widespread nature recovery and improve people's lives. Please [click here](#) to download a copy of the report.

Free trees for schools and communities

The Woodland Trust want to make sure everybody in the UK has the chance to plant a tree. So they are giving away hundreds of thousands of trees to schools and communities. Together, we'll get millions more trees in the ground.

The Woodland Trust have two delivery periods per year, one in March and the other in November and they are currently taking applications for trees to be delivered in November 2021. If you can't wait until then, or your application is unsuccessful, you can [buy packs in their shop](#) all year round.

Please [click here](#) to choose your pack(s) from the list and fill out the application form.

Exmoor National Park

#LoveYourLitter Campaign launched

Exmoor will be joining other UK National Parks in backing the #LoveYourLitter campaign this summer, urging people to share pictures on social media of the bags of litter that never became litter because they took them home.

[ONS figures](#)* reflect how the lockdowns have resulted in more and new visitors to National Parks. Somerset saw 122% more visits and time spent in parks and public open spaces last summer, and that figure rose to 317% in North Devon – the two counties straddled by Exmoor. More than 40% of people surveyed by Natural England after the first lockdown said access to nature had become more important to their wellbeing since the pandemic.

The targeted campaign is specifically geared towards these inexperienced and often younger groups and is the first of its kind among all 15 National Parks. At the heart of the campaign is the message to #PlanAhead, to follow the advice at www.nationalparks.uk/love and to #LoveYourLitter.

Throughout summer, Exmoor rangers will also be putting on extra patrols and have litter picking kits available to loan out to local volunteers wanting to help keep on top of the problem. They are trialling #2MinuteLitterPick boards at busier sites and will be hosting a series of pop-up events with partners, where rangers will be on hand to offer advice and encourage safer more enjoyable days out.

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

Get prepared for National Tree Planting Week 2021

SWT is once again offering Parish and Town Councils across the district **free trees** as part of its commitment to work towards carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030. With Tree Planting Season now over SWT is looking ahead to September when the new Season begins.

Last year SWT provided over 200 free trees to Parish and Town Councils for planting, this year the hope is to plant even more; local councils can order trees, stakes, ties and guards which will be ready for collection in time for National Tree Week from 27 November to 5 December.

Councils can choose from Oak, Beech, Lime and Hawthorn bare root trees to the value of £50 to be collected from one of three locations across the district:
Taunton Deane Nurseries, Wellington Depot or Minehead Depot.

Please look out for future updates when the scheme opens and you are invited to place your request ready for National Tree Planting Week.

If you have any queries or questions please do not hesitate to contact Barry Hawkins, Project Manager on b.hawkins@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

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

Spark Somerset

Free Community Food Forum Online Event

Wednesday, 28 July 2021 at 2pm – 3.30pm

Are you involved with a local food bank or community fridge? Would you like to know how to set one up, or find out what support is available? Then sign up to attend the Community Food Forum. It's an opportunity celebrate the valuable work taking place across Somerset and share ideas and information.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Get Outside in Somerset Campaign

What do you enjoy doing to #GetOutsideInSomerset? Or are you stuck for ideas - especially with the summer holidays looming for many. The CCS are delighted to be part of the Get Outside campaign - let their Village Agents know if you are struggling to access activities and they will try to help you. [Click here](#) to find details of your village agent.

Get Inspired!

Or Get Challenged!

Or Get Volunteering!

Or Get Support to help you outside more.

Check out the [Get Outside in Somerset website](#) and search for activities.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Reminder- Funding available for Somerset grassroots sports clubs and organisations

Grassroots sports clubs and organisations in Somerset who have been affected by the pandemic - whether financially or operationally - can apply for grants to help them continue invaluable community work through Made By Sport's *Clubs in Crisis* fund.

Made By Sport, a charity which champions the power of sport to tackle social issues, is distributing over £4 million of grants to support the important role that grassroots sports clubs and organisations play in communities. Applications for the grants are being managed by SCF.

In order to be eligible, clubs must provide clear evidence of how they use sport to help young people develop life skills, employment opportunities, reduce crime and anti-social behaviour or tackle mental health issues.

To apply for funding for your club, visit www.madebysport.com/clubsinacrisis

Young Somerset

Reminder- Looking for something to do this summer?

If you're looking for something to do over the summer why not join Young Somerset for a summer full of free activity days. Please [click here](#) to find out more and to sign up.

Help and support for businesses affected by COVID-19

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has made available webinars and videos about the support available to businesses to help them deal with the economic impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak.

HMRC cover the following government schemes:

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Job Retention Scheme
- Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)
- Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Rebate Scheme

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

Health and Welfare

All COVID-19 Restrictions in England now lifted

England has now moved to Step 4 of the roadmap. Everyone should be cautious while managing the risks as cases of COVID-19 remain high. Feelings of post-lockdown anxiety are likely to pass with time as we get used to the "new normal" but it's important to do what we can to take care of ourselves. Please refer to the links below for the latest Coronavirus-related advice, help and guidance, should you need any help in the future.

- [Order your lateral flow tests online](#)
- [How to do a COVID-19 lateral flow test](#)
- [Log your lateral flow results here](#)
- [Book or request a PCR test online](#)
- [List of local pharmacies offering lateral flow testing](#)
- [Somerset COVID-19 Local Outbreak Management Plan Dashboard](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- [Public Health England](#)
- [NHS – Help and Advice](#)

Frontline health and care staff can work rather than self-isolate

Double vaccinated frontline NHS and social care staff in England who have been told to self-isolate will now be allowed to attend work in exceptional circumstances. This includes staff who have been contacted as a close contact of a case of COVID-19 by NHS Test and Trace, or advised to self-isolate by the NHS COVID-19 app.

The measure is being introduced to ease pressure on NHS and social care services. But staff can only work after having a negative PCR test and taking daily negative lateral flow tests for a minimum of seven days, and up to 10 days or completion of the identified self-isolation period.

The Government is clear the change applies only to frontline NHS and social care staff where their absence may lead to a significant risk of harm. The decision to allow NHS and social care staff to attend work after being told to self-isolate should be made on a case-by-case basis, and only after a risk assessment by the organisation's management. Please [click here](#) for further 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?

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:

- 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

FAQS

Q. I've been "pinged" by the COVID-19 App. What does this mean for me?

A. The app alert is advisory but should be taken seriously. It indicates your phone has been close to the phone of a COVID-19 case for long enough for you to be at risk of catching it, so you should isolate. Any decision to disregard the advisory alert by employers or individuals should only be taken where it is clear that the 'ping' has occurred in a situation where there is a high degree of confidence that the source is known and that close contact has not occurred, in or out of work. An example would be where phones have been placed in lockers, and all ping at the same time, AND all relevant staff are known not to have been in close contact. With cases increasing in the community it becomes increasingly difficult to be sure why a person has been pinged, so Government advice is to err on the side of caution.

Q. I am self-employed and cannot work from home. I have been in close contact with someone who has contracted COVID-19 and have been told to self-isolate for 10 days. Is there any financial support available to me?

A. You may be able to claim a grant if you have lost income. Please [click here](#) to visit the GOV.uk website and review your options.

You may also be eligible to claim a Test and Trace Support payment. The £500 Test and Trace Support Payment is for people on low incomes who have to self-isolate due to coronavirus (COVID-19). You may be eligible if you are employed or self-employed, cannot work from home, and will lose income

as a result. You can only apply if you've been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, notified to self-isolate by the NHS COVID-19 app, or you're the parent or guardian of a child who has been told to self-isolate.

If you've been notified by the NHS COVID-19 app to self-isolate and you apply for the Test and Trace Support Payment, you are legally required to self-isolate.

Please [click here](#) to visit the SWT website and check eligibility requirements. At the present time the scheme is due to close on the **30 September 2021**.

Crime / Safeguarding

National Business Crime Centre

Offensive Weapons Act

On the **14 July 2021**, the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 brought in tough new measures that strengthen law enforcement's response to violent crime. The act makes it illegal to possess dangerous weapons in private, including knuckledusters, zombie knives and death star knives, and you will soon have to verify you are over 18 to buy bladed items from the internet. This [video](#) will tell you more about the changes to the law, and how it may affect you.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the work of the National Business Crime Centre.

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP)

Dedicated safeguarding website launched

Somerset County Council is using social media to advise young people against getting drawn into terrorism. The aim of the Facebook and Twitter campaign is to promote the launch of the new safeguarding webpage (www.actearly.uk) by Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) and provide support to parents, friends and families of those who are at risk of being radicalized by terrorist or extremist content.

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Police and Crime Plan Priorities 2021-2025 Consultation Survey

Complete this [survey](#) to let A&SP know your views on the proposed objectives for PCC Mark Shelford's Police and Crime Plan. The survey consists of 25 objectives on which they are seeking public opinion. A&SP are also asking questions about equality, so it is important that they receive the views of people across all communities in the county.

Anti-social driving in West Somerset

Police are patrolling on North Hill, Minehead and the Sea Front following reports of anti-social driving in the area. They have seen evidence over the last few weeks that some individuals have been driving both recklessly and in a way that would be a nuisance or dangerous. Anyone found to be driving this way are putting not only themselves at risk but will be issued with a Section 59 notice and their vehicle could

be seized. If you see people driving in this manner please report it via 101 or 999 if there is an immediate threat to safety.

For further Neighbourhood Policing Updates...

For regular updates on events/campaigns and what is happening in your area, please keep an eye on the relevant policing Facebook pages detailed below:

- [Minehead and West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing](#)
- [Wellington Neighbourhood Policing](#)
- [Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](#)

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.