

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 71 Week ending 15/08/2021

SWT Council's priority strategic themes and outcomes

Somerset West and Taunton Council's four strategic themes are as follows:

- Our Environment and Economy
- A Transparent and Customer Focused Council
- Homes and Communities
- An Enterprising Council

[Click here](#) to view SWT's expected outcomes.

Key Messages this week

1. Self-isolation removed for double jabbed close contacts from 16 August

From Monday 16 August, people who are double jabbed or aged under 18 will no longer be legally required to self-isolate if they are identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case. The change was announced last month, as part of step 4 of the Government's COVID-19 roadmap. With 75% of people having received both doses of the vaccine, the majority of adults will no longer need to self-isolate if they are contacts.

These changes can be made next week as a result of the remarkable success of the UK's vaccine programme, with over three quarters of UK adults now double jabbed. The latest data from Public Health England and Cambridge University shows that around 60,000 deaths, 22 million infections and 66,900 hospitalisations have been prevented by the vaccines.

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

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 18 August – Executive, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 13 August)
- Thursday 26 August – Community Scrutiny Committee, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 23rd August)
- Wednesday 1st September – Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 26th August)

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.

3. Final Call- SWT design guides consultation to end

SWT is seeking the public's views on the latest additions to its draft design guides for Taunton and the wider district. Draft documents for a Districtwide Design Guide and a Public Realm Design Guide for Taunton Garden Town were previously produced in line with the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), to encourage a higher standard of design in the applications it receives from developers, the Highway Authority, utility companies and their agents and contractors.

The Council is now re-consulting on both documents following amendments made in response to feedback from earlier consultations, updated government guidance in relation to active travel and standards in conservation areas, and the Council's continued commitment to achieving a zero-carbon district by 2030.

New consultations for both design guides have been running concurrently for six weeks and are due to end on **16 August**. Responses can be made using the Council's online consultation portal available at yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

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

4. New grants to boost tourism

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 by the pandemic.

The new grant scheme is specifically designed to support small and medium-sized businesses 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 close on **10 September 2021**, or until all the funding has been allocated.

Any small business partnerships or networks looking to apply should visit SWT's [Hinkley tourism partnership](#) webpage.

5. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Driver bonus to boost recruitment

LGV drivers joining Somerset's waste collection contractor are being offered a £1,000 welcome bonus. The incentive is part of the package of recruitment and retention measures introduced to help tackle the driver shortage that has hit collections in recent months.

Collection performance has improved this week, with fewer missed or delayed collections, thanks in part to resources freed-up by the temporary suspension of garden waste collections. But it is still a long way from where SWP need to be so please bear with them.

If you know anyone who may be interested in a career with SUEZ (Somerset Waste Partnership's collections contractor) please sign-post them to www.suez.co.uk/join-our-team-in-somerset. Unlike many LGV driving jobs, working on waste collections in Somerset means no lone working – you will be part of a team working together to make more than 400,000 kerbside collections per week.

Starting early means a more family-friendly early finish, Monday to Friday, with no working away from home or overnight stays to contend with. SUEZ offers training and development opportunities and a generous benefits package.

For more information, or to apply via the website, please [click here](#).

SWP service update

SWP and its contractor SUEZ apologise for the recent waste collection disruption, due to the national LGV driver shortage and COVID-19, including self-isolations. From recruitment – [check all the jobs here](#) – to training new drivers, and using smaller vehicles to collect bulky cardboard, they are doing all they can to restore services. There is no quick fix. SWP ask you to bear with them; your crews are working very hard, as they have throughout the pandemic.

Please [click here](#) to read the latest service update in full.

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.

Recycle your old bras to help a charity

If you have an old, ill-fitting, or never-worn impulse purchase bra in the back of your underwear drawer, you can recycle them. SWP do not want to see them in your general waste bins, rather they will collect them at kerbside if they are tied in a bag to keep dry. You could also donate them to charity.

From charities such as Against Breast Cancer, M&S, Oxfam and Bravissimo, recycling your bra for good causes is easy to do. Visit the company website for further information.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highway Maintenance Update

A very disappointing week with showery conditions limiting progress on the carriageway surface dressing programme across the county. Both the small Combi Unit (working on the minor lanes) and the much larger Main Train (out on the main road network) are now scheduled to be in Somerset West and Taunton for the week commencing 16 August. The forecast is currently dry and calm, which will assist progress, and there is even rumour of a late summer heatwave!

If all goes well with the weather, the week commencing 16 August should see surface dressing take place at:

- Neroche Road/Castle Main/Blackdown Hill Road (running along the top of the Blackdown Hills between the old Merry Harriers and Castle Neroche)
- Staple Fitzpaine Road (between Castle Neroche and Frost Street)
- Ash Road, Thornfalcon; B3224, Treborough (running along the top of the Brendon Hills between B3190 Beulah Chapel and Withiel Hill)
- B3224/B3223 Exford to Simonsbath

- A378 Langport Road, Fivehead
- Knotcroft Lane and Mill Lane, Thurloxtton
- Culver Street, Cross Elms Hill and Lilstock Road in the Kilton/Stringston area of Quantock Vale
- New Road between Wootton Courtenay and Tivington
- Ranscombe Road and Clouds Steep between Wootton Courtenay and Timberscombe
- Mill Cross to Woolcotts, Brompton Regis
- Andrews Hill Cross to Hinam Cross, Dulverton.

More information regarding the surface dressing programme, including a short YouTube film, can be found [here](#).

Drainage repairs and improvements continue at **Huish Cleeve Road, Huish Champflower** and **B3187 Burn Hill, Langford Budville**. The temporary road closures will be in place on these two sites until 20 and 27 August respectively.

Repairs to Bullen Ford, where Challick Lane crosses the River Tone, near Chipstable and drainage work at Back Lane, Bradford-on-Tone have both been completed.

The week of 16 to 20 August will see footway resurfacing on **Blackdown View, Norton Fitzwarren** (temporary traffic signals) and drainage work at **Blackwell Lane, Chipstable** and **Lipe Hill Lane, Trull** (both temporary road closures).

The rural highway verge cutting programme is now proceeding on the “A” and “B” Class roads for their second safety cut.

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)

Reminder- Temporary Road Closure: Tancred Street, Taunton

The order becomes effective on 5 August 2021 and will remain in force for eighteen months.

The works are expected to commence on **12 August 2021** and last for 5 days (8am-5pm), excluding the weekend, to enable Barden Network Engineering to clear a blockage in an existing duct on behalf of BT.

For any further information about this closure please contact Barden Network Engineering on **01454 281627**. 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

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

Reminder- 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](#).

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.](#)

Highways England

A358 Taunton to Southfields Community update

As Highways England continue to develop their plans for the A358 Taunton to Southfields project, they want to use their newsletter to keep you up-to-date, informed and aware of what they're working on.

These regular newsletters will include:

- updates from the project team
- updates on the preliminary design
- what's happening on site – such as surveys, road closures
- upcoming events and forums

You can keep up to date with the latest scheme news by using the following means:

- Webpage: www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields/
- Email: A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk
- Phone: **0300 123 5000**
- Twitter: @HighwaysSWEST
- Facebook: @HighwaysSWEST

Toneway - Creech Castle Junction Improvement Scheme A38 Bridgwater Road Closure

As previously advised, Alun Griffiths have been appointed as the Principal Contractor to deliver the Creech Castle and Toneway Junction Improvement Scheme on behalf of Somerset County Council. This is a major improvement scheme to reduce congestion and improve access to Taunton by increasing the capacity of the junction. As well as greatly improving this route for motorists, the upgrade includes much better access for pedestrians and cyclists and is an important part of ensuring the network can cope with the ongoing development at Monkton Heathfield, Taunton.

The A38 Bridgwater Road North is now closed to vehicles for approximately 12 months. There will be no vehicular access from the A358 Toneway, north of the junction onto the A38 Bridgwater Road except for the following:

- from the Toneway heading north ONLY to access the Creech Castle Business Park or residential property in this immediate area, then leave onto the Toneway heading east towards Hankridge Park Roundabout.
- from Bridgwater Road A38 heading south to access the small retail area containing a timber merchant and a garage and any residential properties in this immediate area, then leave north back along the A38.
- There shall be a third permanent barrier between these two small retail areas which shall prevent all vehicle movement.
- The footway / cycle path will remain open as usual. We will also need to close the right-turn from Toneway to Bridgwater Road South. Official diversion routes will be in place for the duration of the scheme and will be clearly signposted.

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

Reminder- Taunton Park and Ride – Travel Free

Taunton's park and ride service will be made free of charge as part of a special initiative to encourage use of the park and ride service and, minimise disruption during a major upgrade of the Creech Castle junction.

The £8.3m project was deferred last year because of the pandemic, now work is about to begin on these much-needed improvements for one of Taunton's busiest junctions. The scheme, which started on Monday 9 August and is due for completion in summer 2022, requires the A38 Bridgwater Road on the north side of the junction to be closed to all traffic for the duration of the works and a diversion will be in place using the new Western Relief Road.

This will have an impact for everyone travelling around Taunton, so SCC has taken the decision to provide the park and ride service at both sites for free from **9 August** until further notice, subject to review.

This will include a Saturday service from **14 August**.

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

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)
Somerset Physical Activity and Sports Strategy 2021

The last 18 months has been a critical year for health and wellbeing. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on individual's health. Many people are now working in more agile and flexible ways, a shift that is likely to be permanent with less commuting. Restrictions have significantly impacted the network of individuals and organisations across Somerset providing physical activity and sport opportunities.

SASP would like your help in developing a new Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Somerset.

We can all play a role in making it easier and more appealing for people to be active. By doing this we can improve lives and enable people across Somerset to enjoy the physical and mental health benefits that activity, exercise and sport brings.

Please [click here](#) to find out more and participate in The Big Conversation.

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Reminder- Proposed Diversion: Public Bridleway in Parish of Oare

Exmoor National Park Authority is proposing to divert public bridleway WL17/3 which will include upgrading part of public footpath WL17/2 to public bridleway in the parish of Oare. Prior to making an Order ENP would like to hear your views on the proposal.

Please return any comments on the proposal by **27 August 2021** to cerirapsey@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or to Ceri Rapsey, Rights of Way Support Officer, Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, TA22 9HL.

If you would like to meet on site to discuss the proposal prior to making your comments, please do not hesitate to contact the Public Rights of Way and Access Officer, Sue Applegate on **01398 322292**.

The Woodland Trust

Love your woods

Our woods are home to amazing plants and animals - often harbouring endangered and fragile native wildlife - and they're all free for people to enjoy responsibly. Show them you care to help them thrive and keep them safe for tomorrow. Please [click here](#) to find out how you can protect the woods and nature next time you visit.

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS)

What would you do if your vehicle caught fire?

Each year DSFRS help around 650 people whose vehicle has caught fire, and the majority of these fires happen in the summer. Some simple vehicle checks, and maintenance can help reduce the risk. Have you thought about what you would do if your vehicle caught fire? Please [click here](#) to read about how to prepare your vehicle for a journey, and what to do if you have a vehicle fire.

Highways England

Check your vehicle

If you're travelling by car this summer, make sure you check your vehicle before setting off, including tyre pressure, tyre tread, fuel, oil, screen wash and lights. It takes around 10 minutes to check tyre pressure and tread before setting off on a long journey – don't risk ruining a long-awaited day trip or holiday with a breakdown or incident caused by poorly maintained tyres.

For top tips, see: <https://highwaysengland.co.uk/tyrechecks/>.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Stay well back

In recent days and months, Coastguard Rescue Teams have responded to numerous cliff slips and falls around our coast. The UK's coastline is continually eroding and it's impossible to predict when cracks in cliff tops might appear or when big rocks could fall from a considerable height. Remember, it can happen in a split second and often with no warning at all - especially after periods of bad weather followed by drier conditions.

Please stay safety aware and:

- Stay well back from cliff edges
- Keep your dog on a lead
- Wear sturdy and strong footwear
- Follow local warning signs
- Always check tides and weather
- Tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back
- Always take a fully charged mobile phone with you as a means of calling for help

If you get into trouble or see someone else in trouble, please call 999 and ask for the Coastguard immediately

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Spark Somerset

EU Settlement Scheme: information for community groups

Now that the deadline for the Scheme has passed, voluntary sector organisations may need to consider how they best advise any clients who do not hold status under the Scheme.

Over 6 million EU citizens applied to the scheme before the deadline of 30 June 2021, although it is expected that thousands more eligible people did not apply in time. Applications from Somerset are expected to top 30,000. The Scheme is part of broad changes to the immigration system, which now includes a point-based visa for anyone wanting to live or work in the UK after 30 December 2021.

Generally, anyone holding Settled or Pre-Settled status under the EUSS, or in most cases holding a Certificate of Application, will have retained their rights to live and work in the UK and use services. For those still resident who have not applied, the

picture is more complex. Some may be able to make a late application. Anyone employing an EU Citizen will need to carry out right to work checks in a new way by asking the employee for their share code.

It is important to remember that anyone who has not made an application will not have rights to live and work in the country, or use some service including NHS secondary care.

Somerset charity, [DIVERSITY VOICE](#), is registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner to deliver advice on the EU Settlement Scheme and can support voluntary sector organisations in Somerset to navigate the rules.

Diversity Voice has a dedicated page with updates on the new regulations at WWW.DIVERSITYVOICE.ORG.UK/EUSS. You can contact their EUSS team by emailing EUSS@DIVERSITYVOICE.ORG.UK.

The new government information for community groups, which provides an overview of the current position can be found [here](#).

Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Support the CCS next time you shop in Tesco

The CCS are very proud to be in the customer vote for a Tesco Community Grant. They are doubly thrilled that Tesco wanted them in all of their stores across the county, to support a charity that could work on supporting food resilience across a wide area which is one of the many things they have worked hard on over the pandemic, supplying food to Community groups, schools and individuals / families in need.

Tesco customers can now vote in any Tesco store in Somerset during July, August and September, so the CCS are asking you to support them next time you shop and pop your blue token in their collection box.

The token box will have the following details:
Community Council for Somerset
Somerset Food Resilience - Village Agents
Providing food security for people in Somerset.

For more information, please visit www.tesco.com/communitygrants.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) Growth in green projects as £50k awarded in grants to community groups

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) has recently awarded £50,000 in grants to 22 groups to create or develop green community spaces across Somerset. These grants were made possible thanks to Somerset County Council and with the support of Somerset Community Food.

Green social prescribing, nature-based therapy, growing and nature all featured prominently in the applications for grants from the Growing Grants funding

programme, many in relation to recovery from the pandemic. The pandemic has had a huge impact on people's health and wellbeing and has further increased awareness of the value of spending time outdoors and the benefits of engaging with green spaces.

Any community group or charitable organisation wishing to apply for funding should visit the SCF website where they can find guidance on how to make an application: www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply.

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

Grants available for grassroots sports clubs and organisations

Made By Sport has partnered with community foundations across the UK to distribute £4.4m of funding to organisations and sports clubs who deliver sports development programmes for young people up to the age of 25. Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) is managing the applications for Somerset and grants of up to £2,021 will be awarded to eligible organisations from the #ClubsInCrisis Fund.

The fund is looking for applications from clubs and community organisations that use sport to improve young people's lives through one or more of the following means:

- Developing life skills
- Building strong communities
- Improving mental health
- Developing employability skills
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

Recent research indicates that 25% of community clubs may never reopen due to the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic. In an attempt to prevent this becoming a reality, Made By Sport is offering grants to groups who use sport as a vehicle for social good.

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.

Any community group or charitable organisation wishing to apply for funding should visit the SCF website where they can find guidance on how to make an application: www.somersetcf.org.uk/apply

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

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

New type of lateral flow test

New lateral flow kits are now in circulation from 9 August. Please use up any NHS Innova kits you may have before moving onto the new Acon or Orient Gene kits. The advantage of the new kits is that they only require both nostrils to be swabbed, and a result will be available within 15 minutes. However, the process is slightly different so please do read the instructions provided with the kit that you receive.

If you'd like to know more, a video which shows you how to use the new kit can be viewed [here](#). By testing yourself regularly you are helping to reduce the spread of the infection.

[Click here](#) to order lateral flow tests online to be delivered to your home, call 119 to have a kit home delivered through the post, or collect a kit at a local pharmacy. If you have symptoms of the infection you need to take a PCR test, which can be done by phoning 119 or by clicking [here](#).

Think 111 says ambulance service

People in Somerset are being urged to use NHS 111 online for medical advice with demand for 999 calls increasing and ambulance staff helping more patients. The 111 online service offers patients quick advice on the best option for them to get the care they need, including getting a call back from a trained clinician or nurse, booking them an appointment in A&E, or providing advice on how to help them recover.

The call comes from local ambulance leaders as demand for 999 calls rises. SWASFT received 24,049 incidents last week – 28% higher than in the same week in 2019 before the pandemic.

While call handlers have reported some 999 calls in recent days have been for non-emergency issues such as sunburn, minor cuts, and sprains. Patients are also being urged to only call 999 back if their condition worsens – not to check what time their ambulance will arrive. Please [click here](#) to find out more.

All COVID-19 Restrictions in England now lifted

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>
- [NHS – Help and Advice](#)

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.

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
- Somerset Domestic Abuse helpline - 0800 69 49 999

FAQS

Q. My child has been offered the COVID-19 vaccination. Where can I find out more information to provide some reassurance?

A. The NHS is offering the COVID-19 vaccine to all eligible children. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has advised that all 16 and 17-year-olds will receive their first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The updated advice means that young people will be afforded around 80% protection against hospitalisation, following their first dose. It is expected that protection will probably be even higher as younger people respond better to vaccines and some will have already had the COVID-19 infection, meaning this first dose should act as a 'booster' to their immunity.

The second dose will extend protection for an even longer period, for example when those young people start work or go to university, or if we begin to get another wave of cases in winter. It is likely that, when the second dose is offered, this will be from 12 weeks after the first dose.

Please [click here](#) to stay up to date with the most recent Government announcements and information.

Q. I've been putting off having my second COVID-19 vaccine because I'm pregnant. What advice is out there?

A. Extensive real-world data shows vaccines are safe and highly effective for pregnant women. Following 130,000 pregnant women being vaccinated in the US and no safety concerns being raised, the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines were recommended by the independent experts at the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) for pregnant women in the UK. Almost 52,000 pregnant women in England have now been vaccinated – similarly, with no safety concerns reported.

Data published last week by NHS England and the University of Oxford also shows no pregnant women who have had both doses of a vaccine have been admitted to hospital with COVID-19. Only 3 have been admitted after having their first dose, meaning 98% of those admitted to hospital have not received a jab.

The national media are also reporting the news we are unfortunately seeing a rise in the number of pregnant women with COVID-19, and nationally some pregnant women are being hospitalised. In part this is because vaccination rates in pregnancy remain low. In the vaccination section of the update we have included important information for pregnant women, and those breastfeeding or looking to become pregnant.

Any pregnant women who have questions or concerns about the vaccine can speak to their GP, midwife or obstetrician to get more information and advice. Locally, you can talk to [Spark Somerset's Vaccine Buddies](#). Even if you have previously declined the vaccine, you can change your mind and book an appointment to get it on the NHS National Booking Service website or call 119 between 7am and 11pm.

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

Crime / Safeguarding

Age UK

Beware of Doorstep Scammers

Doorstep scammers commonly target older people believing them to be the most vulnerable. Doorstep scams take place when someone comes to your door and tries to scam you out of your money or tries to gain access to your home.

Doorstep scammers aren't always pushy and persuasive, they may seem polite or friendly. If you're not expecting someone it's important to be vigilant when you answer the door, especially if you live on your own.

There are many different types of doorstep scams, some of the most common ones include:

- **Rogue traders:** A cold-caller may offer you a service you don't really need. They may claim to have noticed something about your property that needs work or improvement, such as the roof, and offer to fix it for cash or an inflated price.
- **Bogus officials:** People claim to be from your utility company as a way of gaining access to your home. Always check the ID of any official, and if they're genuine they won't mind waiting while you check.
- **Fake charity collections:** A fraudster may pretend they're from a charity and ask you to donate money, clothes or household goods. Legitimate charities will all have a charity number that can be checked on the [Charity Commission website](#).
- **Made-up consumer surveys:** Some scammers ask you to complete a survey so they can get hold of your personal details, or use it as a cover for persuading you to buy something you don't want or need.
- **Hard luck stories:** Someone may come to your door and ask you to help them out with cash, ask to use your telephone or claim they're feeling unwell. The story is made up and intended to con you out of your money or gain access to your home.

If someone does come to the door, it's important to remember the following:

- **Only let someone in if you're expecting them** or they're a trusted friend, family member or professional. Don't feel embarrassed about turning someone away.
- **Don't feel pressured.** Don't agree to sign a contract or hand over money at the door. Think about it and talk to someone you trust.
- **Check their credentials.** You should always check someone's credentials - a genuine person won't mind. You can phone the company they represent or check online, but never use contact details they give you.
- **Don't share your PIN.** Never disclose your PIN number or let anyone persuade you to hand over your bank card or withdraw cash.
- **Call the police.** Call the police non-emergency number 101 if you're not in immediate danger but want to report an incident. But call 999 if you feel threatened or in danger.

There are things you can do to feel safer when answering the door such as:

- **Putting up a deterrent sign.** You could put a 'no cold callers' sign up on your door or window, which should deter any cold callers from knocking on your door.
- **Setting up passwords for utilities.** You can set up a password with your utility companies to be used by anyone they send round to your home. Phone your utility company to find out how to do this.
- **Nominating a neighbour.** Find out if you have a nominated neighbour scheme where a neighbour can help to make sure if callers are safe.

Age UK have produced a useful SCAMS video which can be viewed [here](#).

Action Fraud

Reminder- Digital COVID-19 passport scam

People in Somerset should beware of the latest Coronavirus scam, which asks people for payment in exchange for a 'Coronavirus digital passport'. The email claims to come from the NHS and says it will "allow you to travel safely and freely around the world without having to self-isolate" if you've had a COVID-19 vaccine or have recently recovered from the virus. It asks people to click a button to access their "digital passport" which then takes you to a fake NHS website asking for personal information and payment details.

If you receive this email, please forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk If you have disclosed bank account details you should contact your bank immediately and [notify Action Fraud](#).

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Rural Crime Unit acquires crime prevention drone

Avon and Somerset Police Rural Affairs Unit has invested in dedicated drone to assist officers in preventing and detecting rural crime, including wildlife crime such as hare coursing.

The unit has recently undergone training to operate the drone, which will utilise thermal imaging to track offenders in isolated areas after dark. Hare coursing, which involves setting dogs to chase hares, often takes place on land that has been entered illegally and can cause considerable harm to property, crops and livestock. The practice was banned in the UK by the Hunting Act 2004 but illegal activity remains prevalent, particularly following the August harvest and during the autumn months.

The new drone will also play a key role in crime prevention, allowing the unit to offer surveys to repeat victims of rural crime to identify potential areas of weakness on their land which may make them a target for criminals.

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

Powered Transporters including e-scooters

"Powered transporters" is a term used to cover a variety of novel and emerging personal transport devices which are powered by a motor, including e-scooters.

Given how powered transporters are motorised and designed, they fall within the legal definition of a “motor vehicle”. Therefore the laws that apply to motor vehicles apply to powered transporters.

It is illegal to use a powered transporter:

- on a public road without complying with a number of legal requirements (such as getting them insured), which potential users will find very difficult.
- in spaces that are set aside for use by pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders; this includes on the pavement and in cycle lanes.

Any person who uses a powered transporter on a public road or other prohibited space in breach of the law is committing a criminal offence and can be prosecuted.

It is only legal to use a powered transporter:

- on private land with the permission of the land owner

For the full information, and to educate yourselves please have a look here:

<https://www.gov.uk/gov.../publications/powerd-transporters/>

The Police have been giving warnings to people using private e-scooters on the public highway. These should not be used anywhere in public. Warnings are being recorded on a database, and anybody who is stopped for a second time will have their scooter seized. These will not be returned.

Help Prevent Bike Theft

As people across the UK joined in National Cycle to Work Day (Thursday 5 August), Avon and Somerset Police urged bike owners to cycle to one of their many free bike marking events to get their bikes registered with the nationally approved bike registration scheme – [BikeRegister](#). Cyclists are also being advised to double lock their bikes when unattended, to help prevent theft.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, many people have started cycling and enjoying the benefits of doing so. However, growing cycle theft is a barrier to growing cycle use, with more than 300,000 cycles stolen each year – about three times the number of cars taken. Many who lose their bikes in this way never return to cycling. In the last 12 months, 2531 bikes, totalling over £1 million have been reported stolen to Avon and Somerset Police.

Statistics show that you are 83 per cent more likely to have your bike stolen if it doesn't have a visible registration sticker. Your local neighbourhood policing teams have been running many regular free bike-marking events, security-marking cycles with tamper-proof stickers and adding them to the national BikeRegister database. In the last 10 days three stolen bikes from Bath and Bristol have been recovered back to their lawful owners because they were registered.

The events have proved so popular that over the last 2 years Avon and Somerset Police have REGISTERED over 10,000 bikes with the new style QR stickers making it the most proactive police service in the country to be using the scheme. The BikeRegister database is a national bike registration scheme used by every UK Police force, enabling officers to easily identify the original owner of any stolen or recovered bicycles. Would-be thieves can also be deterred by marked cycles,

recognising them as being more easily traced and identifiable. However with Police now receiving increasing daily reports of bike theft, the public are being asked to take all precautions possible to protect their property.

Dates of future bike marking events can be found on the local neighbourhood policing Facebook pages.

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

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.