

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 74 Week ending 05/09/2021

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. Infection rates in Somerset on the rise

Significant numbers of people who have holidayed on the Somerset coast in recent weeks have subsequently tested positive for COVID-19, most of whom are not of course Somerset residents. It is likely some tourists do arrive incubating COVID-19, and other tourists are contracting the virus while here on holiday. It is vitally important that visitors and residents alike keep up all important safety measures, wearing a mask in enclosed spaces, distancing where possible/or meeting outside, washing hands/using hand sanitiser, ventilating inside spaces and testing regularly.

Around two thirds of the cases are in young people (15-34). Most of the people in these groups will have had one vaccination, but under 18s and some older people will be unvaccinated.

Public Health know from contact-tracing and other intelligence that COVID-19 transmission is occurring through social contact in indoor locations such as entertainment and hospitality premises and other enclosed spaces such as cars - for example when car sharing.

Coronavirus is still very much in circulation. Download guidance and advice on how to stay safe and what to do if you have an outbreak of COVID-19 in your organisation: <https://digital.somerset.gov.uk/stay-safe/>

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:

- Tuesday 7 September – Full Council, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 2 September). **THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD AT OAKE MANOR GOLF CLUB AND WILL BE LIVE STREAMED ON FACEBOOK**
- Monday 13 September – Audit and Governance Committee, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 8 September)
- Wednesday 15 September – Executive, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 10 September)

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. Multi-agency effort secures longevity of Wellington Monument

Somerset West and Taunton Council has been working in partnership with the National Trust, Historic England and other stakeholders on a major restoration project to save Wellington's landmark memorial.

Located on the Blackdown Hills just south of Wellington, the striking Grade II* listed monument was originally constructed in the 1800s to commemorate the Duke of Wellington's victory at the Battle of Waterloo. At 175 feet (53.3m) high, it is the tallest three-sided obelisk in the world.

Due to a history of structural problems and lack of funding for repairs however, the monument's condition had deteriorated to the extent that it had to be closed to the public in 2005. A full restoration project and fundraising was needed to secure its future.

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

4. Food Works^{SW} – Put your food and drink business on the map

Somerset West and Taunton (SWT), and Sedgemoor District Councils are working with the Food and Drink Forum to launch a Food and Drink Mapping project.

Through the project, the local Food and Drink Forum team based at The Food Works^{SW}, will be contacting as many food and drink producers, suppliers and local retailers based within the SWT, and Sedgemoor District Council areas as possible, gathering feedback from businesses in the local area and their supply chain. From this, a publicly available map will be produced highlighting to businesses and the wider community the local supply chain and where to buy locally.

This work will provide important data and link into a wider food initiative the [South West Food Hub](#) – an innovative project targeting public procurement to increase local business access to public food and drink supply opportunities in the region.

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

5. Reminder – HTAP grants deadline looming

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 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 **Friday 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.

6. Reminder - SWT Quality Review Panel – New members wanted

SWT is inviting applications for membership of a Quality Review Panel, which is being formed to support high standards in new developments in the district in accordance with the emerging Design Guide SPD.

The closing date for applications is **Monday 13 September**.

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

7. Somerset West Lottery Autumn 2021

The Somerset West Lottery is taking part in the Autumn 2021 bolt-on prize draw. Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between 1 September and 30 October 2021 will be in with the chance to win a £1,000 John Lewis gift voucher, courtesy of Gatherwell the external lottery management company (ELM).

If you know of a good cause wishing to raise funds or would like to buy a ticket contact the Somerset West Lottery on 0300 30 20 666; support@somersetwestlottery.co.uk or visit www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk

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

8. How to report fly-tipping

Fly-tipping – dumping rubbish - is an environmental crime. If you fly-tip you can be fined or jailed. It's a blot on our landscape and a threat to wildlife. We can all fight fly-tipping by reporting dumped rubbish and, if possible, who dumped it.

Everyone, including businesses, must be responsible for how they get rid of rubbish, even when it's left your home or premises. If you pay someone to remove your rubbish - man-with-a-van, builders, gardeners, carpet-layers or others - ask to see their waste carrier's licence, and make sure you know where your rubbish will go. If you don't you could be fined.

To report fly-tipping use SWT's [report fly-tipping](#) online form or phone 0300 304 8000.

For more information check the 'How we can all fight fly-tipping' section on the [Somerset Waste Partnership](#) website.

9. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Just back from camping, glamping, or al fresco cooking with gas?

Stay safe: do not add any gas canisters or cylinders to your weekly recycling - use up the contents and drop all empty gas canisters off at any recycle site. There is no charge for small gas canisters.

Larger gas cylinders used for home heating, caravans, garden grills etc, do incur charges - see: somersetwaste.gov.uk/on-site-charges - though empty gas cylinders can usually be returned to the original supplier or manufacturer.

Empty household aerosols - for deodorant, air fresheners, whipped cream, paint, fly-spray etc - should still be added to weekly recycling. Gas canisters have caused fires at depots when aerosols and cans are sorted and crushed into bales for sending on to reprocessing companies.

If you know anyone who may be interested in a career with SUEZ (Somerset Waste Partnership's collections contractor) as a driver, supervisor or loader, please sign-post them to www.suez.co.uk/join-our-team-in-somerset

The resumption of garden waste is still scheduled for **Monday 13 September**.

SWP would like to thank you for your patience and understanding through what has been a really tough time for crews who have been collecting heavier loads for well over a year % staying in Somerset itself
www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycling-tracker.

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

A bit of a chill in the air as autumn has well and truly set in. In the world of highways, thoughts now start to turn to the winter service; the commencement of which is only a few weeks away. All of SCC's gritters have had their summer annual service and a delivery of salt has just been delivered to the Minehead Depot. The storage barn there is now fully stocked so it's all ready to go when the time comes.

The following works have all been completed:

- Carriageway resurfacing at Trull Road, Taunton (Broadlands Road to Manor Road)
- Park Lane Close, Carhampton;
- drainage work at Stawley Road, Stawley
- and footway resurfacing at Crufts Meadow, Creech St Michael

The **A396 Wheddon Cross to Bridgetown Road**, between Thorne Lane and Quarme Lane, will be closed from 6 to 17 September to allow for structural repairs to the damaged verge and embankment supporting the road.

Another closure is on **Preston Bowyer Village Road, Milverton** between 6 and 8 September for drainage work.

More drainage work, this time using temporary traffic signals, will be on the **A358 Minehead Road** between Norton Manor Camp and Fitzroy Lane between 8 and 10 September.

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)

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.](#)

Rural Renaissance Rural Services Grants

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on many rural communities in Somerset. To help businesses build back to their pre-Covid levels, SCC are launching a Rural Services Grant Fund as part of an Economic Recovery package.

Grants of up to £5,000 (80% of project costs) are now available to assist service businesses in rural areas to help them move forward and become more sustainable. A business will need to provide 20% of their own match funding.

The grant can be used for items that will help a business provide further services or enhance their trading – for example an online sales platform or to increase trading space. You will need to demonstrate how your business has been affected by the pandemic and how this grant will help.

The application process is open to:

- Sole Traders providing rural services
- Businesses providing rural services
- Town and Parish Councils
- Local Community led organisations operating on a not-for-profit basis and are legally constituted

The fund was launched on 26 August 2021 and will close at 5pm on **10 September 2021**. Initial applications will be treated on a first come, first served basis but SCC will need time to check eligibility and respond.

Please [click here](#) to visit the Somerset Recovery Fund website.

Grants available to tackle child minder shortage

Somerset County Council (SCC) is renewing its campaign to tackle a shortage of child minders across the county through a ['Golden Hello' grant worth £250.00](#).

The number of child minders in Somerset has fallen year upon year, in line with what is a national picture. The number of registered child minders in the county has decreased by over 31% since September 2015. In response, SCC has been working hard to boost numbers and is extending an initiative aimed at encouraging more people to start their own childcare business.

The grant is available to new child minding businesses offering early years funded places who apply before **28 February 2022**. The Council also offers guidance and training to newly registered child minders and supports them through Ofsted registration and beyond.

Please [click here](#) to read the full press release and find out more information.

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.

Reminder - Student Bus Tickets

Due to the on-going uncertainty with the COVID-19 pandemic, Somerset County Council will not be offering the County Ticket scheme for the 2021/22 academic year. The potential for the re-introduction of additional restrictions/ lockdowns, or the continuation of social distancing measures and possible changes to the level of College attendance required from September 2021, mean an annual pre-paid ticket is not the most viable option

Buses of Somerset offer various ticket options including ticket bundles, a weekly ticket and an mticket (which can be purchased through the mobile phone [mticket App](#)). Please visit the [Buses of Somerset](#) website for more information on ticket options and fares or contact the operator.

To explore the options available and find out more information about school transport please [click here](#).

EDF – Hinkley Point C

Site activity – Summer Update

The project has featured in a BBC documentary [BBC Two - Building Britain's Biggest Nuclear Power Station](#). The HPC Website also has many images and films showing progress, alongside the site's community newsletter ([Plugged In](#)) with the most recent copy being Summer 2021.

West Coast 360

Training Opportunities for West Somerset Businesses

To support local businesses after COVID restrictions are lifted, SWT, West Coast 360 and Skill Up West Somerset are pleased to offer free training to employers, their staff and anyone interested in working in the hospitality and leisure industry.

These courses are for West Somerset residents who are returning to work after furlough, wishing to gain more skills or looking to start a career in this sector.

To find out more and register for the available courses please [click here](#).

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

Reminder - Addressing Health Inequalities Workshop

Wednesday 8 September 9.30am via zoom

This workshop aims to explore how the new Physical Activity and Sports strategy could go further in supporting efforts to reduce health inequalities across Somerset. It will consider the role that sport and physical activity could play in improving individual's mental health and wellbeing. It will explore how we could address inactivity amongst those people with health conditions, who have a disability, or are aged 55 plus. It will then seek to identify the range of localised interventions that could reduce levels of inactivity and enhance recovery, pre-habilitation and rehabilitation. It will be particularly relevant to those working across the health and social care sectors

Please [click here](#) to find out more and book your place.

Quantock AONB

Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme Webinar

The Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme that was launched by DEFRA in July are offering a one-hour Webinar on **Tuesday 7 September between 12:00 - 1:00pm** for farmers and land managers to find out more about the programme.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks can apply for funding for projects that:

- Support nature recovery
- Mitigate the impacts of climate change
- Provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- Support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses.

Please [click here](#) to find out more and book your place.

The Woodland Trust

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC)

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022. Everyone across the UK is being invited to plant trees from October 2021, when the tree planting season begins, through to the end of the Jubilee year in 2022. The [Queen's Green Canopy](#) will create a network of individual trees, avenues, copses and whole woodlands in honour of The Queen's service and the legacy she has built.

This will create a green legacy of its own, with every tree planted bringing benefits for people, wildlife and climate, now and for the future.

Every tree makes a difference. Any trees planted from **October 2021** to the end of the jubilee year in 2022 can be part of the QGC. Tree planting season is October to March – this is when roots are dormant and new trees will have the best chance of flourishing.

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

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Bye Wood Project

Bye Wood is part of the biggest woodland creation project to have taken place in the National Park in the past 15 years and forms part of ENP commitment to increase tree cover on Exmoor from around 13.5% to at least 17% by 2050 - the amount recommended by the UK government's independent Climate Change Committee.

At Bye Wood, the vision is to create a unique and sustainable woodland in 2021/2 using only the best environmentally friendly practices. Whether new trees are planted from seedlings, or natural colonisation (NC) is used – the natural spread of trees into an area from the seed of local trees – is an important choice. Both methods have their benefits and drawbacks.

The benefits of natural colonisation/ regeneration are that the trees can be more vigorous and will grow where they're more likely to succeed, and they're making sure that the genetics of local trees are being carried on into the future. The structure of the resulting woodland will also be more diverse and natural, with trees of different ages and sizes.

The main drawback is that some areas may not be close enough to seed sources, so NC on its own can take a very long time. It's also not as simple as leaving an area and letting nature take its course – competing vegetation such as bracken can stop seedlings from establishing for decades by forming a dense mass of leaves and stems, blocking out light and crushing young trees when the stems collapse at the end of the season. Deer will also nibble off the tops of unprotected seedlings. This is what's happened at Bye Hill – hence the decision to use planting.

With planting, ENP can get a canopy to form much more quickly, and also bring in some species which may not otherwise arrive for decades, or even centuries. They are looking to the future when they choose their species as some are currently growing south of the English Channel in climates which are set to be here in 100 years. These would otherwise naturally migrate northwards.

ENP have mapped where NC is more likely to occur and used this framework approach in these areas; whilst planting more densely in areas less likely to be colonised due to a lack of nearby seed trees and denser bracken.

Please [click here](#) to find out more information on the Bye Wood project.

Heritage Open Day Festival – Saturday 11 September

'White Rock Cottage', formerly Simonsbath School buildings, will open its doors to the public for the first time for a Heritage Open Day Festival event on Saturday 11 September (10am - 4pm). It will be a chance to tour the recently restored buildings and learn about progress to uncover the history of the place and its significance to the Exmoor landscape.

A project led by the Exmoor National Park Authority, and further funded by the Western Somerset LEADER Programme and CareMoor for Exmoor, has seen the buildings saved from dereliction.

For more information about the project visit www.whiterocksimonsbath.org

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS) Chimney Safety

Although the weather is still warm, it's getting to the time of year time to sweep your chimney. You should always have it swept before your first fire. It is advisable to book your chimney sweep early as they get busy at this time of year.

Please [click here](#) to read more about chimney safety.

Learn 2 Live (L2L)

Reminder - Driving safely – Parents Event

This year's event is free to attend and takes place on **Monday 13 September at 7pm-8pm**. The event will be live streamed online via the [Learn2Live](#) website and social media platforms due to COVID-19 and in the hope of attracting a national audience helping to educate and save more lives.

The hour-long panel event is targeted at parents of young adults who are newly qualified drivers, those learning to drive or passengers of new drivers. The speakers and stories will highlight the risks of inexperience and common factors that affect the safety of young people on the roads; guidance will be provided on best practices; technology will be discussed and its availability to aid young adults with their driving, such as telematics and apps; which driving instructors to choose; as well as opportunities to hear from families and emergency service workers about their personal experiences.

Please [click here](#) to read more about Learn 2 Live.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Don't get caught by the Tide!

Tides never stop coming in or going out and it's not always in a straight line either. They are often very fast moving and they can 'sneak in' behind you, alongside you and all around you, leaving you and your loved ones cut off and in danger.

Tides can be surprising when you know the area well and perhaps even more so if you're visiting a coastal location for the first time. Some parts of the country are especially prone to very fast-moving tides and in the UK and Ireland, we have some of the biggest tidal ranges in the world. According to the [National Tidal and Sea Level Facility](#), the geographical location and weather has a profound effect on the tide.

All year round, people get caught out in situations which could possibly have been avoided.

Please stay 'tide wise' and don't take unnecessary risks that could put you and others in danger. The Coastguard are on call and ready to help anyone in difficulties around the coasts 24/7 but they would rather it didn't happen to you.

HM Coastguard Minehead

HM Coastguard Minehead was tasked alongside Minehead RNLI Lifeboat Station to 2 persons cut off at Selworthy sands. The walkers left Minehead along the beach aiming for Porlock but didn't manage to make it before getting cut off by the incoming tide. Minehead RNLI Lifeboat Station launched both boats and recovered both people back to Minehead, where one of the Lifeboats DLA (Deputy Launching Authority) kindly offered to take them to their destination in Porlock.

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

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Universal Credit

Personal Allowance Uplift to End

In April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Universal Credit increased all Personal Allowances by £20 per week. **This will end on the 30 September!**

As the monthly bills such as rent and council tax will be unchanged, now is the time to plan and readjust household budgets and expenses before the winter bills start to arrive.

It may also be a good time to review other bills like Energy, Broadband and Mobile phone contracts. Checkout www.uswitch.com for up to date offers and deals.

Don't forget about "The Warm Home Discount "

This is a government scheme which helps with a one-off payment of up to £140 discount towards electricity bills that energy suppliers provide between October and March.

There are 2 ways to qualify:

1. You are already in receipt of the Guarantee element of Pension Credit
2. You are on a low income and meet your energy suppliers' criteria for the scheme.

Contact the helpline on 0800 731 0214 or go to the website: www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme.

Spark Somerset First Aid Training

If your workplace environment has been identified as low-risk and you need your staff or volunteers to receive the Emergency First Aid at Work qualification, then this one-day course is perfect for you.

Led by Emerald First Aid, it will equip delegates with the basic life-saving skills they need to become an appointed first aider.

Tuesday 14 September, 9:30am to 4:30pm in North Petherton. £55 per person, including a certificate and manual.

You can find out more about the course and book a space [here](#):

Reminder - Short online survey deadline looms

This study asks people how they've been affected by waiting for surgery in Somerset. As the number of patients waiting for surgery continues to grow, nationally and in the South West of England, [Healthwatch Somerset](#) are asking people about their experiences of being referred for surgery in Somerset and how they have been affected by waiting times.

If you or someone you know is on a waiting list for surgery in Somerset, or you recently had to wait for surgery, Healthwatch Somerset would like to hear about your experiences. It's easy to share your feedback and your comments can remain anonymous.

You can complete a [short online survey](#) by **6 September 2021**. You can contact Healthwatch Somerset to arrange a convenient time to feedback over the phone - call Freephone **0800 999 1286** or email info@healthwatchsomerset.co.uk

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Facebook Live every Wednesday

Due to the reopening of so many Talking Cafes venues across the county, the Village Agents are reducing the Live Facebook sessions to once a week.

These will now take place on Wednesdays at 1:00pm.

You can also watch all past Talking Cafes on The Talking Cafe YouTube channel [here](#).

Talking Café in-person events are currently at limited venues, and it is advisable to book an appointment before attending. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Somerset Community Foundation

HPC Community Fund Small Grants Programme

The HPC Community Fund Small Grants Programme supports projects and work that will help mitigate the impacts and increase the opportunities of the Hinkley Point C project in your community.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available for organisations or community groups with an annual income of less than £100,000.

If you run a local community project in Somerset and would like to find out more about funding opportunities from the HPC Community Fund, please contact Peter on **01749 344949** or email peter.stolze@somersetcf.org.uk

Young Somerset

BBC news report about the challenges facing rural youth.

Last week, Young Somerset featured live on BBC News talking about youth work, mental health and wellbeing, funding and the challenges faced by young people living in a rural county.

The interview featured CEO (Nik Harwood), Volunteer and Young Person (Elissa) and a group of young people who took part in the Summer Activities Programme. Please [click here](#) to watch the video.

International Association of Suicide Prevention

10 September is Suicide Prevention Day

One in every 100 deaths worldwide is the result of suicide. It can affect every one of us. Each and every suicide is devastating and has a profound impact on those around them. However, by raising awareness, reducing the stigma around suicide and encouraging well-informed action, we can reduce instances of suicide around the world

World Suicide Prevention Day is an opportunity to raise awareness of suicide and to promote action through proven means that will reduce the number of suicides and suicide attempts globally.

For more information on events and how to get involved, [click here](#).

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

Somerset COVID cases

In the week up to 28 August approximately 70732 tests were carried out across the county with 2149 new confirmed cases. The rates have decreased to 382.2 per 100,000. South-West rates are the highest in the country and Somerset is just above the regional South-West rate and national rate. Somerset hospitals remain very busy and have a number of inpatients with COVID-19 in their care. The hospitals are requesting that patients who test positive for COVID-19 in the community phone 111 before attending the hospital, to ensure the NHS can deliver care safely and prevent transmission where possible.

Stay Safe and help prevent the spread of COVID-19

Coronavirus remains a serious health risk. You should stay cautious to help protect yourself and others.

- Meet outside, or open windows and doors for indoor visitors
- If you think you have symptoms stay at home and [take a PCR test](#)
- Wear face coverings in crowded places and on public transport
- Check in to venues when you go out
- Wash your hands with soap regularly, and for at least 20 seconds
- [Get vaccinated](#).

Department of Health and Social Care

Infection Control - Every Action Counts toolkit

Keeping infection prevention and control measures in social care settings helps reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading. Social care workers share what they're doing to protect themselves and others, and why in a selection of videos found [here](#). Care providers – please [click here](#) to find out more and get the Every Action Counts toolkit.

Have you had your jabs? Book now for first and second doses

Vaccines are the best way to protect people from COVID-19 and have already saved thousands of lives.

All adults aged 18 or over, can now book a COVID-19 vaccine and some walk-in clinics are now also vaccinating those aged 16 and over. 16 and 17-year-olds are now able to go online to book their vaccinations. Alternatively, use the link below to find out more about where the local 'Grab a Jab' clinics are taking place this week. [Covid-19 vaccinations in Somerset - Somerset CCG](#)

There are a wide range of locations where you can get your COVID job across Somerset, by using the National Booking Service to book both your first and second doses online: nhs.uk/covid-vaccination or by phoning 119, there's no need to contact your GP practice.

For the latest information about the Somerset vaccination programme, vaccination centres and walk-in centres follow this [link](#).

Testing

Secondary schools and colleges are offering two tests on-site at the start of term, followed by continued regular testing at home.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/back-to-school-campaign-launches>

For people who do not have symptoms of COVID-19, it remains very important to participate in twice weekly asymptomatic testing if you are out and about and meeting up with people. Please make sure that you take a test **before** you travel anywhere and if it is positive, stay at home and arrange a PCR test.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 it is important that you take a PCR test, which can be done by phoning 119 or ordering a test here: [Get a free PCR test to check if you have coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

New type of lateral flow test

A few weeks ago, Public Health stated that there would be two different lateral flow device kits in circulation - the Orient Gene kit and the Acon Flowflex kit – both nasal only kits that provide a result in 15 minutes. Due to stock availability issues, the Innova nose and throat kits will be returning until at least mid-September. This kit requires swabbing of both the tonsils and nostrils and the result takes 30 minutes. Please be aware of this change, and make sure that you always read the kit instructions before you do your test, as they will differ slightly.

In light of children returning to school next week, you are reminded that if you have previously received a positive Covid PCR test result, you should not re-test yourself by either using a rapid lateral flow kit or by having another PCR test within 90 days of the first positive result **unless** you develop any new symptoms of COVID-19.

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.

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.

Clinton's COVID Catch Up Socialising

In the latest COVID Catch Up, Clinton Rogers discusses how we are all living with COVID-19 now most restrictions have been lifted, including how this may have led to the recent increase in cases – with the Sedgemoor area having the highest national figures last week.

Clinton also talks to Professor Trudi Grant (Director of Public Health in Somerset) to discuss why we all still need to be careful and follow some simple guidance for meeting up more safely. You can watch the film [here](#):

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. I have been self-isolating for five days because I had been in close contact with a confirmed COVID case, although I have no symptoms. My PCR test has come back as positive. What happens now?

A. Advice and information on self-isolation is regularly updated on the NHS website. Please [click here](#) to see the latest guidance.

Q. My children are very anxious about returning to College next week. Where can I find coping strategies to help me and them?

A. The [Every Mind Matters](#) website has lots of expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

Find a credible source you can trust – such as [GOV.UK](#) or the [NHS website](#) – and fact-check information you get from newsfeeds, social media or other people.

You might also want to consider limiting the time you spend watching, reading or listening to news and information about COVID-19, including on social media.

Crime / Safeguarding

Action Fraud

Asda Gift Card Scam

Action Fraud received 159 reports within 48 hours about fake emails purporting to be from Asda. The emails state that the recipient can win a “£100 promo reward gift card” by completing a marketing survey. The links provided in the emails lead to phishing websites that are designed to steal your personal information.

Report suspicious emails by forwarding them to report@phishing.gov.uk

Beware of Holiday Fraud as restrictions ease

Action Fraud are warning people to remain vigilant against holiday fraud after the latest round of travel traffic light changes.

Don't be tempted by too good to be true deals. If something sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

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

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP) Community SpeedWatch

Community SpeedWatch is a partnership between the Community, the Police and Local Authorities. It gives local people the ability to actively get involved in road safety.

The aim of Community SpeedWatch is to make motorists who speed through residential neighbourhoods aware of the impact their actions have on local residents, or the danger they pose to other road users and pedestrians. This is something the police are working with communities to address.

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

Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes enable you and your neighbours to come together to have a say in the issues which matter to you in your community.

A&SP have been committed to supporting Neighbourhood Watch throughout the force since its introduction in 1982.

There are benefits to joining a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme:

- It shows that members of a community are looking out for each other
- It keeps you up-to-date with what is going on in your area
- It can help to prevent and tackle crime in your community
- It may save you money on your home insurance

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

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.