

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 78 Week ending 03/10/2021

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. Town, City and Parish Conference

More than 100 representatives from grassroots councils across Somerset will attend a conference in Bridgwater next Thursday (**7 October**) to learn more about plans for the new unitary council for Somerset that will come into being in April 2023.

Parish, town, and city councils who have yet to register have until 5pm on **Tuesday 5 October** to do so.

The one-day conference at the J24 venue will give town, parish, and city councils the chance to hear first-hand from Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, and South Somerset District Council about the vision for the new unitary council and to contribute to planning how it will deliver local services.

There will be more detail on the proposed Local Community Networks (LCNs) – an explanation of what they are and how they would work as committees of the new council's cabinet – formal structures with real constitutional power.

Parish, town, and city councils that have yet to confirm attendance can sign up via this [link](#).

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

2. Joint committee proposed to help establish Unitary Council

A new Joint Committee to steer the move to a new single council for Somerset has been proposed by the leaders of the five existing Councils in the county.

In July of this year the former Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed that Somerset would move to a single unitary council from April 2023.

A number of democratic decisions and actions will need to be taken over the next few months before the new unitary council is established in 2023.

The Leaders of the existing five councils in Somerset are therefore proposing to set up a new Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Joint Committee to oversee the process and work collaboratively on their behalf.

Each individual council will need to discuss and take a formal decision before the Joint Committee is approved. In Somerset West and Taunton this meeting will take place on the **20 October 2021**.

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

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:

- Tuesday 5 October – Council (at **Oake Manor Golf Club**), 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 30 September)
- Wednesday 6 October – Corporate Scrutiny Committee - **CANCELLED**
- Wednesday 13 October – Licensing Sub-Committee – **CANCELLED**
- Thursday 14 October – Planning Committee, 1pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 11 October)

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 governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

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

4. Full Council temporarily located to Oake Manor

To ensure adequate venue capacity for safe social distancing, October's Full Council meeting on 5 October has temporarily been relocated to Oake Manor Golf Club, Taunton.

With the Coronavirus Regulations coming to an end in May preventing the continuation of virtual meetings, the spacious conference facilities at Oake Manor will ensure social distancing can be maintained whilst accommodating up to 58 Councillors plus members of the public, which is not presently achievable using the existing Council Chamber.

This change applies only to the Full Council meeting on **5 October**. All other committee meetings will take place as normal in the Council Chamber at Deane House, Taunton.

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

5. Consultation to begin on Firepool plans

SWT will begin a programme of consultation on detailed plans for the redevelopment of its flagship site at Firepool this autumn.

The Council previously consulted with the public in November 2019 on the draft master plan which will see individual blocks delivered incrementally and includes a landmark boulevard with water gardens, an amphitheatre and dedicated cycle and pedestrian access in a high-quality environment.

Since then a temporary cycle and pedestrian route has been opened from the redeveloped railway station through Firepool, and the old GWR goods office has been refurbished to become a construction office for the Digital Innovation Centre being delivered in partnership with Somerset County Council on Block 6.

Work is also taking place to accommodate the new vaccination centre relocating from Taunton Racecourse to Firepool in early October as part of the Somerset COVID vaccination programme.

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

6. Coal Orchard welcomes first residents

SWT is delighted to welcome the first residents to its flagship Coal Orchard development.

The Council is working with the University of Plymouth's Peninsula Medical School to provide accommodation for medical students who are training at Musgrove Park Hospital and working within a series of hospital and general practice-based community placements for the academic year 21-22.

It is leasing eleven units in the Coal Orchard development to the University giving, access to flexible, quality accommodation for their students near to the hospital whilst being in the heart of the town centre.

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

7. Reminder - By-election nominations published

By-elections are being held on **Thursday 7 October** between 7am and 10pm for vacant seats on SWT Council, and Somerset County Council.

The vacancies for the Wilton and Sherford ward at SWT, and the Comeytrowe and Trull division of SCC arose following the death of long-standing Councillor Alan Wedderkopp.

The Notice of Election is available to view in full on the SWT website: [Local Government elections \(somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](http://LocalGovernmentelections.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)

8. Reminder - Get prepared for National Tree Planting Week 2021

In the run-up to this year's winter planting season, SWT is once again offering free trees to town and parish councils, including unparished areas. The scheme, which was first introduced last autumn, supports the Council's commitment towards reaching a carbon-neutral district by 2030.

Similarly, this year's tree giveaway provides a unique opportunity to support the Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) project. Local councils or charter trustees wishing to take part in any of these initiatives can order bare root trees completely free of charge, up to the value of £50 as per the listed guide on the Council's [Free trees](#) webpage. This is equivalent to seven or eight trees depending on the combination of species chosen, which include Beech, Hawthorn, Lime or Oak.

The closing date for requests is **Friday 22 October 2021**.

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

9. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Recycling sites switch to winter hours on 1 October

Every one of Somerset's 16 recycling sites have gone over to their winter timetables from (Friday 1 October), with weekday opening hours of 9am to 5pm while weekends remain 9am to 4pm.

Summer hours - 9am to 6pm when sites are open weekdays, 9am to 4pm weekends will resume on Friday 1 April 2022. Somerset's recycling sites are open every day of the year except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Recycle More Roadshows

There is an opportunity for town and parish councils in the former Taunton Deane area to go to a SWP briefing via Zoom on **Thursday 7 October**. The invites were sent to the relevant parish clerks a few weeks ago. The briefing will be hosted by officers from the waste team and will be a chance to ask questions about the roll out.

SWP staff are also hitting the street to share information and answer questions about the expanded collections that come to the Taunton Deane area at the start of November.

- Priorswood Community Centre: Friday, 8 October: 11am-2pm
- Taunton Fore Street: Thursday 14 October 9am-2pm (outside Accessorize opposite Lloyds)

Samples of the new Bright Blue Bag recycling containers will be available to get to grips with, as well as information on the new materials crews will be collecting every week.

Recently 'Get ready for Recycle More' leaflets landed on doormats. A second leaflet delivered three weeks before launch will give further detail, including a 'What goes where?' recycling guide and an individual collection day calendar.

Extra support is available for anyone with Recycle More concerns. Check the leaflets or visit www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more for more information.

Recruitment

The nationwide driver shortage remains a big issue, hitting authorities and businesses up and down the country. There are no quick fixes. Intensive recruitment and retention work continues and SWP are monitoring the COVID situation closely.

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

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

It now looks like autumn is well and truly with us and the weather is now in its traditional wet and windy pattern for the season. SCC Highways is also entering a very busy period for maintenance with several major schemes coming up over the next few weeks.

In **Minehead**, the upgrading of the **West Somerset Railway** level crossing on Seaward Way is approaching a conclusion and there will be a series of temporary road closures to allow this work to take place. The first pair will be from **11pm on Monday 4 October to 6am on Tuesday 5 October**; and from **11pm on Monday 11 October to 6am on Tuesday 12 October**; with more to follow.

Nearby at **Carhampton**, the Somerset River Authority funded drainage improvement works will start on **11 October**. This will be in a series of phases, with the first commencing on that date. The **A39 Williton Road**, heading eastwards out of the village will be closed between 9.30am and 3.30pm each day, Monday to Friday, for the weeks commencing **11, 18 and 25 October**.

On **Tuesday 5 October the A39 Williton Road** heading westwards out of **Kilve** will be temporarily closed for road marking and “cats-eye” work on this very narrow section of main road.

In Taunton there will be three weeks of evening works on the **A3027 Bridge Street** for carriageway resurfacing. The road will be closed between 6.30pm and 11.30pm each evening, Monday to Friday, for the weeks commencing **4, 11 and 18 October**.

Near Wellington, the road between **East Nynehead and Poole** is closed until **28 October** whilst repairs to the bridge crossing the River Tone are carried out.

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

Highways England

Consultation launched on A358 Dualling Scheme

National Highways is holding a consultation on the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme. This improvement scheme will help to improve the route between the South West and London and the South East, while also delivering benefits for local people.

The consultation runs from **Tuesday 12 October to Monday 22 November 2021** with feedback helping National Highways develop its application for a Development Consent Order (DCO), the type of planning permission needed for the scheme.

From 12 October you will be able to find out more about the proposals and have your say, by visiting National Highways' online exhibition at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields/.

There will also be dedicated times when you can chat with members of their project team who will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

If you do not have access to the internet or experience problems downloading the consultation materials, National Highways can send, free of charge, one printed copy of documents including the consultation booklet, feedback questionnaire, and non-technical summary of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, to your home.

You can also book a call back from a member of the project team who will answer your questions on the proposed changes.

Call backs will be made Monday to Friday, 12pm to 7pm, between 12 October and 22 November. You can request printed copies or a call back by emailing A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk or calling **0300 183 5000**.

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](#)

[Report noxious weeds here](#)

[Street light not working](#)

[Blocked surface water drain on the highway.](#)

First Bus Somerset

Driver Shortages

The U.K. bus sector is currently suffering from a significant driver shortage. This is principally caused by staff isolating due to COVID-19 at short notice, combined with delays in securing medical examinations required for new starters to secure their provisional licences, and then long-standing delays in receiving those provisional licences from the DVLA.

In Somerset First Bus has found it necessary to curtail a very small proportion of journeys. They understand that while it may be a very small proportion of journeys, this is a very significant disruption for the customers affected.

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

To keep up to date with the latest timetable changes and current service issues please visit the website [here](#).

Homefinder Somerset

Register to be eligible for rural housing

In August, Rupert Warren ([Homefinder](#) Somerset) and Nicola Kemp (SWT Rural Housing Enabler) gave a joint interview via the online Dulverton Talking Café, hosted by Village Agent Jane Lillis, to promote the upgrade of [Homefinder](#) Somerset.

Rupert gave a detailed demonstration of the new system, the changes and improvements made, and took questions from the live audience over particular circumstances. Nicola then explained how essential it is for any residents who may

be in housing need to ensure they are registered on the system, as this is the access route to social housing within the district. The reason for stressing this point is due to a perceived reluctance to register in some areas.

Nicola further explained that certain properties within Exmoor National Park have an occupancy restriction requiring 10 years' local connection, with the intention of making them only available to locals. However, as these properties are allocated through Homefinder, ultimately, they are only available to locals who are registered, thus re-enforcing the importance for everyone who is eligible, to sign up.

Please [click here](#) to watch a replay of the Live Session.

LiveWest Housing Association

New Builds – Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton.

LiveWest's development of ground, first and second floor flats in Norton Fitzwarren are due for completion in **December 2021**. The properties will be advertised on [Homefinder](#) Somerset in October 2021 and all interested applicants will need to register in order to be considered.

All flats will have a central heating system, family bathroom with shower over the bath and allocated parking. Properties will be let on a Social Rent Assured Tenancy and pets are allowed in the property with permission granted at the landlord's discretion. All allocations will be made subject to applicants' meeting conditions within a Local Lettings Plan.

If you are unsure whether you meet the local lettings plan or have any questions – please contact Sophie at [LiveWest](#) by email on Sophie.Holdaway@livewest.co.uk

Falcon Rural Housing Association Ltd.

New development at Huish Mews, Washford

The development of five social rented units of accommodation on the old allotment site in Washford are well under-way and Falcon are now thinking about finding local people who may be interested in their new homes. They have two 2-bedroom homes and three 3-bedroom homes available. Applicants must have a local connection to Old Cleeve/Washford or adjoining parishes.

Please contact Falcon Rural Housing Association for an application. The properties will also be advertised on [Homefinder](#) Somerset in November.

If you are interested in being a new tenant for a Falcon new home, or you would like any information, please contact Falcon Rural HA for more information on **01823 667343** or info@falconhousing.co.uk.

Somerset Prepared

Reminder - Free Emergency Preparedness Training

Somerset's residents are invited to sign up to free, interactive online training with emergency responders and volunteer organisations throughout October, organised by the Somerset Prepared partnership.

The fourth annual Resilience event starts with live talks on **Monday 4 October** and aims to help communities become better prepared for emergencies as well as looking at wider preparedness measures that anyone can take.

To attend this free event, people can register their interest and book training sessions on the [Somerset Prepared](#) website. Please [click here](#) to find out more.

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Dedicate a tree on Exmoor to show you “CareMoor”

It is now possible to dedicate a tree on Exmoor towards the creation of a major new woodland in the National Park at Bye Hill near Winsford – the largest of its kind for 15 years.

People can pay £15 to dedicate a tree and send a personalised card of a painting by local artist Leo Davey depicting what ‘Bye Wood’ might look like in the future. A two-day tree planting event is also being held on site this November so the local community and anyone keen to help with the planting can come along. Although to keep the environment as natural as possible there will be no ownership of individual trees or commemorative plaques in this wood.

Each tree dedication will count towards [the National Park’s new CareMoor Woods and Trees appeal](#) as part of a drive to increase tree cover across Exmoor from around 13.5% to at least 17% by 2050 – the amount recommended by the government’s independent Climate Change Committee.

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

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Handling and storing fuel safely

DSFRS know fuel station forecourts are extremely busy. They advise you not to stockpile fuel and only buy what you need.

If you store petrol or diesel at home or in your car, you must take care. These substances are extremely flammable, and if not stored correctly could start a fire.

If you are storing fuel at home, please do so safely and follow [DSFRS safety advice](#).

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Stay safe at the Coast

As the lighter evenings start to fade, don’t let the sun go down on safety by taking note of changing dangers at the coast. From choppy and chillier seas to tide changes and unstable cliff top edges – please take care in the colder months ahead and follow these top tips:

- Check tides and conditions before you go
- Stay back from stormy seas and cliff edges
- Get back before dark

Take a phone, make it home: Emergency at the coast? Call 999 Coastguard.

Please [click here](#) to read more Coastguard safety information.

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

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Loneliness Engagement Fund

The Loneliness Engagement Fund provides small grants between £15,000 and £50,000 to organisations who can engage with target groups at high risk of loneliness. The fund will give out up to £260,000 of grants in total.

The objective of the Loneliness Engagement Fund is to reach the groups in England most affected by loneliness during COVID-19 with communications and engagement activity that will help reduce feelings of stigma and encourage people to take steps to help themselves and others.

This funding is for organisations to continue, adapt or expand existing activity that reaches groups at a higher risk of loneliness and supports the Government's loneliness objectives. All project activities must have concluded, and funds must be spent by 31 March 2022.

The deadline for applications is **Wednesday 13 October 2021**.

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

Somerset Activity and Sport Partnership (SASP) Ambassadors Wanted...

The [Get Outside in Somerset](#) project is a joint initiative from Somerset Activity and Sport Partnership (SASP), The Community Council for Somerset (CCS), Spark Somerset, and Somerset Wildlife Trust, funded by Somerset County Council Public Health.

Get Outside in Somerset are looking for ambassadors to share their stories and be advocates for the [#GetOutside](#) campaign and promote the message of being outdoors and moving more in ways that suit you.

[Click here](#) to check out the amazing Ambassadors that have already signed up!

If you would like to share your passion for the outdoors - from looking after your allotment, to paddle boarding on the Parrett - please get in touch with [Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership - SASP](#) on **01823 653990** or email enquiries@sasp.co.uk

Active Autumn Challenge

The Get Outside in Somerset project has unveiled its October 2021 challenge: Active Autumn.

The nights are drawing in and temperatures are cooling off, but the outdoors is still open and our daily dose of fresh air during autumn is more important than ever. Mix up your local daily exercise with these ideas from the free Get Outside in Somerset Active Autumn Challenge calendar.

Please [click here](#) to download an activity pack and view the daily challenges.

Spark Somerset

Reminder - Reflect, Recover, Renew Focus Group Meeting

Tuesday 5 October, 3pm – 4pm

Spark Somerset is working in partnership with Public, Community and Voluntary Sector (VCSE) organisations throughout Somerset to deliver an important new research project called Reflect, Recover and Renew. Together they want to look back over the last 18 months and understand what the sector needs to thrive in the future.

This workshop for volunteers and group leaders from COVID-19 support groups is one of a series of online focus groups and events during September/ October to give you the opportunity to share your thoughts, ideas and opinions.

Please [click here](#) to register for this event.

Community Employment Hubs

Reminder - Volunteers needed as hubs reopen

The Community Employment Hubs are about to re-open, and the SWT Employment Support team need your help.

If you have a couple of hours a week to spare to help people in your local community access work and training whilst having a cup of tea, then they want to hear from you. All training will be given, you just have to love chatting and meeting new people.

The hubs will be opening in **Taunton, Watchet, Minehead, Williton, Dulverton, Wellington** and **Stogursey**. The employment support team work with all ages from 16 until retirement and help people get into work, change careers, set up a new business or go for a promotion. The community employment hubs support many different people and are a brilliant place to meet and chat.

If you would like more information or want to apply, please contact Georgie or lolanda either by ringing **01823 219578** or emailing employmentsupport@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Reminder- Meal and food boxes

Meal and food boxes are available in your community. Anyone can request a meal or food box, regardless of your financial situation. You can access these free meals by contacting your local Village Agent call – **01823 331222**. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Reminder- Do you need an emergency delivery of fuel?

The CCS Oil Scheme partners AF Affinity have a great scheme where they can deliver a fast, emergency parcel of fuel to tide you over until you can get a full delivery! Call them on **01603 881888** between 9am – 4.30pm to order or email somersetbuying@af-affinity.co.uk. For more information, [click here](#).

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Grants and support for budding young business people

Funding is available from Somerset Community Foundation for young people, from two grants programmes:

- [Enterprise Grants](#)
- [Training and Employment Support Grants](#)

Both programmes are open to young people who live in Somerset.

Enterprise Grants are for young people not in employment, education or training, aged 18-30 to launch their business idea or to support their business in its early stages. This money could be used to pay for things like equipment, materials, stock and services to help get their business up and running. Grants for up to £1,000 are available from this programme.

Training and Employment Support Grants could help a young person aged 16-30 with the cost of essential items for training or apprenticeships, or to start a new job. This could include the cost of a course, a laptop, tools or clothing, or transport costs. Grants for up to £500 are available from this programme.

The deadline for applications is **Friday 19 November 2021**. For more information visit: www.somersetcf.org.uk/grants-individuals or if you have any questions, please contact Kirsty Campbell by emailing info@somersetcf.org.uk or by calling 01749 344949.

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 18 September approximately 84322 tests were carried out across the county with 1233 new confirmed cases. The rates have decreased to 219.3 per 100,000, and Somerset remains below the national average of 264.1 per 100,000.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset is showing an improvement on previous weeks with just over 30 COVID-19 in patients in Somerset hospitals.

Have you had your jabs? Update on COVID-19 Booster Programme

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

The NHS are now rolling out the [COVID-19 Booster Vaccination Programme](#) across Somerset to those who are eligible. You do not need to contact the NHS to arrange your booster vaccine. Once you have received the national invitation you will be able to go on the **National Booking site**: nhs.uk/CovidVaccination or call 119.

It is important to note that even if you fall within one of the early cohorts (due to your age or existing health conditions) you will only be eligible for your COVID-19 booster **vaccine at least 6 months after your second vaccine dose.**

The booster programme will be delivered through existing and additional vaccination sites including pharmacies, hospital hubs, some GP practices and vaccine centres. Care home residents and staff will be prioritised ensuring they are offered a vaccine by the beginning of November.

Vaccination Programme for 12–15-year-olds

The UK's Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) all agree that while COVID-19 is typically mild or asymptomatic in most young people, 1 dose of the vaccine will provide good protection against severe illness and hospitalisation and help reduce disruption to education and minimise the risk of spread of COVID-19 within schools.

Invitations for the jabs have begun and parental, guardian or carer consent will be sought by vaccination healthcare staff prior to vaccination. This is a well-established process used for all school vaccination programmes.

The School Age Immunisation Service (SAIS) will manage the roll out and administration of the COVID-19 vaccines in schools, including special schools.

The Government has outlined three primary roles for schools, as per existing vaccination programmes:

- to provide information to SAIS on which children on their roll are eligible for the vaccine
- to share the information leaflet, consent form and invitation letter supplied by the SAIS team with parents and children
- to provide the space within school, and the time away from the timetable, to enable vaccinations to take place

What this means is that the role of schools is about facilitating access for those who wish to receive the vaccine.

These two videos from the Department of Health and Social Care help explain how Public Health know the vaccine is safe in more detail: [video 1](#) and [video 2](#). The UK has also benefited from having data from the US, Canada and Israel, countries already offering the COVID-19 vaccine universally to young people aged 12 to 15 years. You might also like to watch actor Jason Forbes tackle some common myths about the vaccine in this brilliant [short video](#).

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](#).

Twice weekly testing

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 \(COVID-19\)](#)

Lateral flow test

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 Lateral Flow 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.

Cancer Research UK Breast Cancer Awareness

Breast cancer it's a scary thought and all too many women assume that it won't happen to them. Fact is though, every ten minutes a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the UK. So, don't be ignorant, during October (breast cancer awareness month 2021) go for a medical check-up, it might save your life. For more information about breast cancer, please [click 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 can't seem to book an appointment at a local vaccination centre – what can I do?

A. Vaccinations centres are incredibly busy, and slots are being booked as soon as they become available. If you have tried to book a slot at a local centre and are finding that you are only given slots for locations much further away, please keep refreshing. Slots and availability will flex based on current vaccine supply and to take into account second dose vaccinations. This means slots and availability will vary daily to account for these factors. Please be aware it may not always be possible to get a slot at a vaccination centre closest to you, but there are plenty of opportunities through the National Booking Centre for you to get vaccinated.

Q. I am recovering from COVID-19 but still struggling day to day. Where can I access help?

A. As you find yourself recovering from COVID-19 you may still be coming to terms with the impact the virus has had on both your body and mind.

This can be a very stressful time so please [click here](#) to visit the NHS website which will give you reassurance and support during your recovery.

Crime / Safeguarding

Stop Scams UK Ltd / Global Cyber Alliance

Launch of the 159-telephone service

Consumers wanting to avoid financial fraud now have a secure and easy-to-remember phone number to contact their banks on to avoid painful scams. It could prove to be the safest way for many to contact their provider if they have suspicions and concerns about their accounts, or even if they're struggling to find a customer services number.

Stop Scams UK and Global Cyber Alliance launched this week, the UK-wide 159 call service, which is designed to guarantee consumers a safe route to contacting their banks.

The scheme is urging people to "stop, hang up and call 159" to check calls are for real. The idea is to help those who believe they have been contacted by scammers claiming to be their bank, or by fraudsters who encourage them to transfer money. 159 works in the same way as 101 for the police or 111 for the NHS. It's the number you can trust to get you through to your bank, every time

Please [click here](#) to find out more about "159".

Action Fraud

Fake HMRC emails

Watch out for these FAKE HMRC emails claiming that you are owed a tax refund! Action Fraud received 326 reports about them last week.

HMRC urges people to be alert if they are contacted out of the blue by someone asking for money or personal information. Action Fraud see high numbers of fraudsters emailing, calling or texting people claiming to be from HMRC.

If in doubt, they advise people not to reply directly to anything suspicious but to contact HMRC straight away and to search <https://www.gov.uk/> for '[HMRC scams](#)'.

Forward suspicious emails claiming to be from HMRC to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and texts to 60599.

HM Courts and Tribunals Service

Warning about Bailiff Email Scam

Scammers posing as County Court bailiffs are sending emails trying to force companies and householders to make immediate payments.

The scammers claim that the person owes money, often using the name 'John Hutchinson' as well as others. They follow up the email with a telephone call appearing to come from an official phone line. They demand immediate payment to avoid having goods seized. **These emails are not genuine.**

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

If you have paid money, [report the scam to Action Fraud](#).

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

Fraud and Cyber Protect Officers

Did you know that fraud and cybercrime are two of the fastest growing crime types in the country, almost doubling year on year?

Hard hitting statistics show that £190 billion is lost nationwide to scams every year, and fraud is the UK's biggest crime type accounting for a massive 1/3 of all crime recorded.

A&SP Fraud and Cyber Protect Officers are offering to deliver fraud and cyber awareness talks to local community groups. If you know of a group that would benefit from a session, please contact: FraudProtect@avonandsomerset.police.uk.

This crime prevention initiative was set up to encourage individuals to identify different types of fraud, educate them on the current threat of fraud and cyber-crime and how best to protect themselves. The team will cover the most common type of scams which include romance fraud, transfer to safe account scams and courier fraud.

Lots of great advice will be given on how to keep safe online, such as creating a unique and strong password for accounts using 3 random words, how to save them to your browser and turning on two-factor authentication (2FA). This is a great learning opportunity to strengthen and protect local communities.

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](#)
- [Sedgemoor and Hinkley Point 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.