

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 80 Week ending 17/10/2021

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. Firepool Vaccination Centre opens for business

On Monday 11 October the new [COVID-19 vaccination centre at Firepool in Taunton](#) opened its doors. The site, which replaces the Taunton Racecourse will be open seven days a week from 8.30am – 7.30pm

The site is located in the centre of Taunton, with good public transport links, ample parking and easy access and will operate from a number of specially designed portacabins on the site, enabling up to 800 people a day to have their COVID-19 vaccinations.

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 19 October – Special Full Council, 6.15pm in the JMR at the Deane House (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 14 October)

- Wednesday 20 October – Executive, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 15 October)
- Thursday 28 October – Community Scrutiny Committee, 6.15pm in the JMR at the Deane House (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 25 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.

3. By-Election Results

District Council election result: Wilton and Sherford Ward

The election result for the **Wilton & Sherford Ward** of Somerset West and Taunton Council, which took place on Thursday, 7 October 2021, is as follows:

DEAKIN, Thomas Jacob (Liberal Democrats) 489 – Elected

HARMON, Alberta Ruth (The Conservative Party Candidate) 314

HICKS, Frances Julia (Green Party) 57

County Council election result: Comeytrowe and Trull

The election result for the **Comeytrowe & Trull Electoral Division** of Somerset County Council, which took place on Thursday, 7 October 2021, is as follows:

HARMON, Alberta Ruth (The Conservative Party Candidate) 886

JOHNSON, Dawn Elaine (Liberal Democrats) 1677 - Elected

MCGUFFIE, Michael Charles (The Labour Party Candidate) 92

4. Boost for Business Revitalisation

Businesses in the SWT area that have borne the brunt of COVID-19 restrictions this year may be able to benefit from the Council's Business Revitalisation Grant which was launched this week.

Grants of up to £10,000 are available as a boost for key businesses that have been directly or indirectly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions throughout the

year. The fund is aimed at businesses that support 15 or more employees. Businesses from any sector can apply.

Full details of the scheme and the online application form can be found on the Council [website](#). All applicants will need to apply via the online form.

The application window opened on Wednesday 13 October and is expected to close at 5pm on **Monday 1 November 2021**.

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

5. SWT commits to ending rough sleeping by 2027

At a Full Council meeting on Tuesday, 5 October, SWT agreed to adopt an accommodation strategy and delivery plan to support single homeless people and end rough sleeping in the district by 2027.

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

6. Water Refill stations introduced to reduce single-use plastics

SWT is providing free tap water refilling stations in partnership with Wessex Water and Somerset County Council to help reduce plastic consumption.

Three refilling points are in the process of being installed on Warren Road, opposite the railway station in **Minehead** (w/c 4 October); in the High Street, outside Clarks shoe shop in **Taunton** (w/c 18 October); and in the High Street, outside the post office in **Wellington** (w/c 25 October).

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

7. SWT celebrates Green Flag Awards

Seven of SWT's parks and open spaces have been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme as some of the very best in the country thanks to the hard work of the Council's grounds team and local volunteers.

Blenheim Gardens in Minehead received a Green Flag Award for the second year.

Taunton's Vivary, Victoria and French Weir Parks have retained their Green Flags and Comeytrowe Park, managed jointly by the Council and the Friends of Comeytrowe Park, retained its Community Green Flag Award.

Swains Lane Nature Reserve in Wellington, which is managed by the Swains Lane Community Group, retained its Green Flag and Wellington Park also kept a Green Flag Heritage Award.

The seven SWT sites are among a record-breaking 2,127 parks and green spaces that have received prestigious Green Flag Awards as the scheme marks its Silver Jubilee, this year.

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

8. Deadline looms for National Tree Planting Week

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.

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

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

9. Reminder - SWT Housing Newsletter – Autumn 2021

SWT Housing latest tenants' newsletter is hitting doormats now. It is being distributed to all SWT tenants and leaseholders signposting readers to help and support. There has been a particular emphasis on post pandemic recovery such as debt management, employment and how tenants can access available services.

Please [click here](#) to read the Housing Newsletter on the SWT website.

10. Reminder - 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.

Work has also taken place to accommodate the new vaccination centre which relocated from Taunton Racecourse to Firepool this week as part of the Somerset COVID vaccination programme.

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

11. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Taunton Deane Recycle More – Facebook Live Q&A

Monday 18 October 2021, 7.00pm – 8.00pm

Recycle More's expanded collections are coming to the Taunton Deane area at the start of November and SWP is running an out-of-hours Facebook Q&A session about the new service. Whatever your question, post it as a comment during the live session and they will do their best to get back to you straight away.

Please [click here](#) to set a reminder for the event.

Heads up for the Bright Blue Bags

Bright Blue Bags will start appearing across Taunton Deane next week ahead of the launch of Recycle More next month.

The eye-catching new recycling containers are a pivotal part of the expanded service being introduced by Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) from **Monday 1 November**.

With a 60-litre capacity, they will hold some of the extra recycling collected every week. Tough, waterproof and washable the bag's key features include:

- A weighted base so they will not blow away in the wind
- A Velcro-fastened lid so contents will not blow away
- Easy to fold-down and store when not in use

The rubber base of the bag is made from recycled material and the whole bag will be 100% recyclable when they reach the end of their life. They are already working well in Mendip and South Somerset where they have helped recycling levels jump by more than 100 tonnes every week.

The bags will be delivered to homes across the area, including Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe, in the two weeks before the new service starts, from **Monday 18 October up until Friday 29 October**.

They will be left somewhere easy to find near front doors, usually in an empty recycling container. As they are delivered, stickers will be stuck on everyone's recycling boxes making it clear what needs to go where once Recycle More starts.

Residents across the area should this week receive their orange and blue 'Recycle More is coming soon' leaflet. It includes their all-important collection day calendar and a simple 'what goes where' guide for the new service.

It's important that everyone holds on to these for reference. The calendar will make it clear if your property is among those getting a one-off extra rubbish collection on Saturday 30 October or 6 November. These are happening for some households to make sure they do not go more than three weeks without a collection.

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

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.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highway Maintenance Update

A very calm and dry period of weather at the moment which is of great assistance with the major highway maintenance projects SCC Highways currently have on the road.

In **Carhampton**, the Somerset River Authority funded drainage improvement works are progressing well. The **A39 Williton Road**, heading eastwards out of the village has been closed between 9.30am and 3.30pm each day, Monday to Friday. The last day of this sequence will be on **Monday 18 October**. The remainder of the drainage works at this location will be undertaken under temporary traffic lights until complete.

From **Tuesday 19 October** the closure times will switch to evenings between 6.30pm and 11.30pm as the carriageway is resurfaced. There will still be access for emergency vehicles on emergency calls only unless laying of the new surface is taking place.

Temporary traffic signals will be in operation outside of these times:

A39 Williton Road, Carhampton

- Monday 18 October Closed 9.30am to 3.30pm
- Tuesday 19 October until Friday 22 October Closed 6.30pm to 11.30pm
- Monday 25 October until Thursday 28 October Closed 6.30pm to 11.30pm

B3191 Blue Anchor Road, Carhampton

- Tuesday 19 October - Friday 22 October Closed 6.30pm to 11.30pm
- Tuesday 26 October – Thursday 28 October Closed 6.30pm to 11.30pm

Hill Lane between **Carhampton** and **Withycombe** will also be closed as part of the works until **12 November**.

Nearby in **Minehead**, the upgrading of the **West Somerset Railway level crossing** on **Seaward Way** continues with temporary traffic signals covering the work site for most of the time. There is also a series of temporary road closures and the next pair will be from 11pm on **Monday 18 October** to 6am on **Tuesday 19 October**, with more to follow.

In **Taunton** the evening working continues 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 **week commencing 18 October**.

Drainage improvements have been carried out on the **A358 Minehead Road** at **Norton Fitzwarren**, near **Norton Manor Camp**.

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.

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.](#)

Highways England

Consultation launched on A358 Dualling Scheme

National Highways is holding a consultation on the proposed A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme.

The planned upgrade of the A358, a key route linking the South West and London and South East, will see a single lane stretch of carriageway between the M5 at Taunton and the Southfields roundabout, upgraded to dual carriageway.

The proposed scheme would considerably benefit road users, local communities and businesses.

The consultation started on 12 October and runs until **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.

A DCO is required for all nationally significant infrastructure projects and will allow for the Planning Inspectorate to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who will decide on whether development consent should be granted for the proposed scheme.

One of the best ways to find out more about our proposals and have your say is to visit the online exhibition. You can access this via www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields – there are dedicated times when you can chat with members of the project team who'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

There will also be nine online question and answer events, and three public consultation events in line with government guidance:

- Taunton Racecourse – Tuesday 19 October, 2pm - 8pm
- Monks Yard – Saturday 23 October, 11am - 6pm
- Holiday Inn Taunton – Wednesday 3 November, 11am - 6pm

If you do not have access to the internet, you can request a free copy of the consultation booklet, feedback questionnaire and non-technical summary of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report by calling 0300 123 5000 or emailing A358TauntontoSouthfields@highwaysengland.co.uk

Buses of Somerset

Quantock Line 28, Exmoor Coaster – A39 Carhampton

The A39 at Carhampton will be CLOSED Weekdays ONLY between 09:30 and 15:30. This is to allow Somerset County Council to carry out drainage and flood prevention work in Carhampton.

Services Quantock Line 28 and Exmoor Coaster will regrettably be disrupted.

Exmoor Coaster: this service will only operate between Minehead and Lynmouth. There will be no service between Minehead and Doniford.

Quantock Line 28: The 08:45 from Butlins will run through to Taunton as planned, from 09:15 until 14:45 the 28 from Minehead will run to and from Dunster Steep. Normal service will resume with the 15:15 from Butlins.

From Taunton the 08:00 departure will run through to Minehead from 08:30 the service will terminate at Watchet. Normal service will resume from Taunton at 14:30.

Hinkley Point Community Bus

As a result of the A39 road closure, the Community Bus Service will be restricted to operate between Watchet Railway Station and Bridgwater only. Minehead, Blue Anchor and Carhampton **will not be served**.

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Exmoor Day – 19 October

Exmoor National Park came into being on 19 October 1954 – making it the 8th National Park in the UK. www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/exmoor-day

Anyone can take part in the celebrations by using #ExmoorDay to share all that Exmoor means to them - its beauty, wildlife and history.

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

Exmoor Dark Skies Festival 2021

Exmoor National Park is celebrating ten years as Europe's first International Dark Sky Reserve and is inviting visitors to join them at one or more of the events during this year's Exmoor Dark Skies Festival.

A night-time adventure on board open top bus 'the Exmoor Coaster' with an expert astronomer is just one of the brand-new experiences on offer for those lucky enough to secure tickets at this year's [Exmoor Dark Skies Festival](#), running from **22 October to 7 November 2021**.

The full programme has just been announced, with printed copies available free from National Park Centres at Dunster, Dulverton and Lynmouth and online at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/darkskiesfestival.

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

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.

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

Section 119 Highways Act 1980

Public Footpath WL6/3 (Part) Parish of Cutcombe

On 8 October 2021, Exmoor National Park Authority confirmed the above order. The effect of the order as confirmed is to divert public footpath WL6/3 at Thorne from a line running between points A-B-C-D to a line running between points E-F-G-H-J-K-D as shown on the order plan.

A copy of the order is attached and or can be viewed on the Exmoor National Park Authority website. – [Changes to the Path Network](#).

Diversion of Public Footpath WL6/14 (Part) Parish of Exton

The above order, made on the 8 October 2021 under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, will divert part of public footpath WL6/14 from a line running between points A-B-C to a line running between points A-D-C as shown on the order plan.

A copy of the order is attached and or can be viewed on the Exmoor National Park Authority website. – [Changes to the Path Network](#).

Any representations about or objections to the order may be sent in writing to the Chief Executive, Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset TA22 9HL to be received no later than **5 November 2021**.

Community Employment Hubs

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 Iolanda either by ringing **01823 219578** or emailing employmentsupport@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

Somerset Business Education Partnership

Career Opportunities

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

Research has shown that young people who have contact with employers whilst at school are significantly less likely to become Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) - and can expect to earn more money once they are in full-time employment.

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

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)

Top Tips for Cold Water Dips

With many reported health benefits, cold water dipping is increasingly being tried out for the first time by intrepid swimmers. In this [video](#), Liam and Nick from the

RNLI water safety team explain how to enjoy cold water swimming safely, from what to take with you to how to avoid cold water shock.

Here's what else you can do to stay safe:

- Wear a suitable personal floatation device,
- Keep a means of calling for help attached to you.

If you spot someone in trouble in the water, call 999 and ask for the coastguard.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA)

Giveaway – Waterproof Phone Cases

The [RNLI](#), together with [MCA](#) are giving away 8000 FREE recycled waterproof phone pouches, so you can always take a way of calling for help out on the water.

For the chance to win, please [click here](#).

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Candle Safety

Candles and tea lights can be a lovely way to give a warm glow to a room or fill it with an aroma, but they can also lead to fires. DSFRS attend **over 20 fires** every year caused by candles.

If you're using candles this winter, DSFRS recommend using battery-operated ones over candles with real flames. But if you do decide to use them, please follow their [safety advice](#).

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Spark Somerset

Reflect, Recover and Renew – Visioning Session

Online: 10am – 11.30am on Wednesday 20 October 2021

Over the past few months, Spark has been gathering evidence from many VCSE partners about how the sector has responded to COVID-19 and what support is needed to enable everyone to move forward collaboratively. Thank you to everyone who has taken part so far.

In the next phase of the project, Spark need your help to think creatively about a shared vision for the VCSE in Somerset. What does future success look like and how can we work together to achieve it?

Spark want to identify some of the key priorities and longer-term ambitions that will enable voluntary sector organisations in Somerset to face future challenges with confidence, build closer relationships and grow stronger together.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Somerset Community Connect Event

Reminder - Tuesday 19 October 10am – 12pm

The CCS are thrilled to be able to host another Community Connect Event at the Canalside Conference Centre in Bridgwater. This is a chance for the public and professionals to meet health, social care, charities and organisations that can help people in Somerset, all under one roof.

This year's focus is on unpaid carers - if you are a carer - or you or the organisation you work for support carers - come along and have a chat. The event is open to the public, professionals and exhibitors who want to book a stand.

In order to be COVID safe, pre-booking is essential to manage numbers. Please [click here](#) to find out more.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Reminder - Festive Fund to combat loneliness

Christmas can be a difficult time for some of our neighbours, and this year will be a tough Christmas again for many in the wake of the coronavirus. SCF want to support groups that can help to reduce loneliness and spread warmth and cheer through food and activities around the festive period.

The money can be used towards the cost of providing food and/or festive activities for isolated people between December and January. The grant is supported by Somerset businesses and the SCF Surviving Winter Fund.

Applications must be submitted by **20 October 2021**.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about eligibility and make an application.

Young Somerset

Bold and Brave opens in Taunton

The Bold and Brave Shop has opened in Taunton's Independent quarter and is a collaboration between [Special Educational Needs Somerset Expertise](#) (Sen.se) and Young Somerset. It is selling items made by Somerset youngsters and has come together following a partnership between schools and education providers to offer opportunities and teach new skills.

Please [click here](#) to watch a video of the opening and find out more about the project.

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

COVID-19

Somerset COVID Cases

In the week up to 2 October approximately 84,827 tests were carried out across the county with 2,210 new confirmed cases. The rates have increased to 393.1 per 100,000, which is above the South West and national average

Hospitalisation data for Somerset continues to show improvement on previous weeks with just over 20 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 Somerset Foundation Trust manage the childhood immunisation programme with SAINT (School Age Immunisation Nursing Team, part of the NHS). SAINT

deliver the nasal flu vaccination to all schools in Somerset between October and December every year.

This year, the COVID-19 and flu vaccines are being rolled out together for 12-15-year-olds through the schools' immunisation programme. The role of schools is to facilitate access for those who wish to receive the vaccine.

The vaccine is not mandatory; the decision to have the vaccine is a personal decision. No vaccine will be given to any child without parental consent being sought.

Clinton's COVID Catch Up

In the latest Covid Catch Up film, Clinton Rogers discusses the national vaccination programme for 12-15 year olds and the importance it plays in protecting young people and keeping their education moving forwards. Watch the film [here](#).

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](#).

NHS Test and Trace Investigation underway

Following reports of people receiving negative PCR test results after they have tested positive on a Lateral Flow Device (LFD), NHS Test and Trace (TT) has investigated and testing has been suspended at a private laboratory.

While investigations are underway into the precise cause, NHS TT estimate that around 400,000 samples have been processed through the lab, the vast majority of which will have been negative results, but an estimated 43,000 people may have been given incorrect negative PCR test results between 8 September and 12 October, mostly in the South West of England.

This is an isolated incident attributed to one laboratory but all samples are now being redirected to other laboratories. The number of tests carried out at the Immensa laboratory are small in the context of the wider network and testing availability is unaffected around the country.

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

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.

This week in Somerset, there has been a high rate of negative PCR tests following a positive lateral flow result. The advice is that if you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, then you should continue to self-isolate from the date of the lateral flow test. Be aware you might be infectious with other illnesses such as colds and therefore it may be worth considering staying at home to stop any potential spreading of these illnesses.

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.

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

FAQ

Q. How will I know when I can get my booster jab?

A. The roll out of the booster in Somerset commenced at the start of October. Please do not contact your GP about this, as you will be contacted when you become eligible for the jab, which is six months after your second dose

You will get a call, text or letter from your local GP led site to get the jab or will be invited by the National Booking Service.

Q. What are the rules on self-isolation now?

A. The self-isolation rules have changed. You will not need to self-isolate in certain situations. It's a legal requirement however to self-isolate if you are told to by NHS Test and Trace. You could be fined if you do not self-isolate.

Please [click here](#) to read the latest guidance on self-isolation in England.

Crime / Safeguarding

Action Fraud

Fake Emails Scam

Action Fraud received 2,206 reports in 48 hours about fake emails purporting to be from antivirus software providers such as McAfee and Norton. The emails state that the recipient is "at risk" from viruses and provides links to purchase antivirus software. The links in the emails lead to phishing websites that are designed to steal your personal and financial information.

Your bank, or any other official organisation, won't ask you to share personal information over email or text. If you need to check that it's a genuine message, call them directly.

You can help us to remove malicious emails and websites like these by forwarding suspicious emails to: report@phishing.gov.uk.

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Hate Crime Awareness Week

This National Hate Crime Awareness Week ASP will be supporting local partners and engaging with communities to encourage reporting of [#hatecrime](#).

A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because of who you are, or who someone perceives you to be because of your race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and/or gender identity. Everyone needs to work together to put an end to this type of behaviour.

Hate crime doesn't have to be physical. If you, or someone you know, is being harassed, or abusive language is being shouted at them, this could also be a hate crime.

The police encourage anyone who may be witnessing a hate crime to report this by calling 101. Always dial 999 in an emergency. You can also report via the ASP website here: www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/hate-crime/

If you don't feel comfortable reporting to the police, you can report a hate crime to Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI) via their website here: www.sariweb.org.uk/

You can also report 100% anonymously to **Crimestoppers** on **0800 555 111**.

Reminder - Firearms licensing consultation underway

There has been heightened public concern following the recent shooting of five people in Plymouth. The Home Office is currently reviewing arrangements for the licensing of guns and will shortly be introducing new statutory guidance to be followed by all police forces.

Elected Police and Crime Commissioners are inviting the public to have their say on potential changes to the licensing of firearms and shotguns in England and Wales.

Click the link to find out more about [The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners](#) survey which can be [completed online](#). It takes just a few minutes and will remain open for responses until **Wednesday 20 October**.

Reminder - Mounted Police Unit looking to recruit a new horse

A&SP mounted section are once again looking to recruit a new police horse to the team. After the success of the last Facebook post and the arrival of PH Alan, they are asking the public to get in contact with any horses that would be a good fit.

All horses will be required to undergo a 4-week trial where their suitability to the role will be assessed and a 5-stage vetting process.

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

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.

Attachment:

Public Path Diversion Order WL6/14 x 2 documents

Public Path Confirmation Notice x 2 documents