

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 82 Week ending 31/10/2021

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. Government Announces Support for New Train Stations

The plan to develop railway stations in Wellington and Cullompton has come a step closer to reality with the announcement of funding in the Government's autumn budget.

This latest funding announcement of £5 million will enable the projects to advance to the next stage of their development and follows the submission of a business case to the Department for Transport earlier in the year.

Both stations closed in 1964. However, both towns have grown in population since then and are the largest settlements unserved by a rail station between Exeter and Taunton.

The funding announcement follows months of hard work, research and partnership building to develop the case for the proposed new train stations at Cullompton and Wellington by the Steering Group and WSP Consulting.

The reopening of the stations would form part of wider enhancements to the rail service in the area. These include the potential for an hourly service through an extension of the current Cardiff to Taunton service and for a new Exeter to Taunton shuttle service.

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

2. Democracy and Governance

Committee Meetings

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

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

- Wednesday 3 November – Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 6.15pm in the JMR at the Deane House (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 29 October)
- Thursday 4 November – Planning Committee, 1pm in the JMR at the Deane House (deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 1 November)

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. Tone Works gets £400k boost from Culture Recovery Fund

Tone Works in Wellington is among 142 historic sites across England to receive a boost thanks to the Government's Culture Recovery Fund.

A grant worth £400,000 has been awarded by Historic England in a second round of the Heritage Stimulus Fund.

Administered by Historic England, the Heritage Stimulus Fund forms part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund, designed to safeguard cultural and heritage assets from the economic impact of COVID-19.

The grant will be used to employ specialist conservation contractors, engineers, ecologists and joiners to undertake much needed structural repairs in the next phase to bring Tone Works back to life, giving it a new role in the community.

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

4. Somerset West Lottery Winter 2021/22 bolt on prize draw

The Somerset West Lottery is now running the Winter 2021/22 bolt-on prize draw.

Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between 1 November 2021 and 1 January 2022, will be in with the chance to win £1,000 to spend at international sports retailer, [Decathlon](#).

This prize is courtesy of [Gatherwell](#), the external lottery management company. All tickets bought during this timeframe will automatically be entered into the bonus prize draw, as well as being in with a chance to win up to £25,000 in the weekly lottery run by Somerset West and Taunton Council.

The Somerset West Lottery offers registered good causes the opportunity to raise income for their organisation by selling tickets to members of the public.

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

5. Volunteers needed for Community Employment Hubs service

SWT's community-led employment support service is calling for volunteers to help reopen its walk-in centres located throughout the district.

The employment hubs are scheduled to reopen over the coming weeks in **Dulverton, Minehead, Stogursey, Watchet and Williton**, as well as five new hubs based in **Wellington**, an additional hub in Minehead and three hubs in **Taunton**.

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

6. Reminder - 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 last week.

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.

7. Reminder - Town / Parish Council Precepts for 2022/23

SWT has emailed all parish councils enclosing Parish/Town Precept Forms for the 2022/23 Financial Year. The completed forms and any queries should be emailed to parishprecepts@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

If Parish Councils decide to return their precept demand forms using the post, then extra time should be allowed for processing in the digital mailroom. All submissions should be received by **Friday 7 January 2022**.

If you have not received your email or foresee any difficulties in returning the forms before the deadline, please inform SWT at the earliest opportunity.

8. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Recycle More

Recycle More is an important change – the biggest thing to happen to Somerset recycling in more than a decade. Everyone needs to do things a bit differently and change on this scale is always a challenge.

Remember, the service is already collecting around 100 extra tonnes of recycling a week on both in Mendip and South Somerset. All the signs are that Taunton Deane will respond to it just as positively, and in the process, help protect our environment and contribute to the efforts to tackle climate change.

The expanded Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) collections start on **1 November** across the area, including Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe. This means more recycling collected every week and a move to three-weekly rubbish collections.

More than half of residents will have a new collection day as rounds are rerouted to be more efficient. **Please make sure you know yours.**

Several thousand homes will also get a one-off extra rubbish collection this Saturday (30 October) or next Saturday (6 November). This is to make sure no-one has more than three weeks between rubbish collections as the area moves over to the new service.

All the detail about your collection days is in your orange and blue “Coming soon!” leaflet which contains an individual collection day calendar. These key leaflets should all have arrived in the post. If you live in Taunton Deane and haven’t received yours, please request a replacement using the form on the Somerset West and Taunton website www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk (see popular tasks on the homepage) or call 0300 3048000.

Remember, you can look up your new dates online using the My Collection Day feature on the SWP website homepage. Calendars can also be downloaded for printing, or directly into laptop or mobile device’s calendar.

As they deliver the bags, teams will also be applying stickers to your green and black recycling boxes to show what should go in them under the new system.

Anyone with questions or concerns about Recycle More can find more information online somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more

Extra support is available. Please make contact using an online form – see popular tasks on our homepage www.somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk or call 0300 3048000.

Seasonal Changes

As you change the clocks, check your alarms.

Clocks go back one hour at 2am on Sunday 31 October. It is a great time to check smoke detectors and alarms, batteries, bulbs, plugs, CCTV, gadgets, everything else electrical and even - go on, get ahead - the Christmas lights.

Find anything not working? If they cannot be repaired, all electrical items can be dropped off at any recycle site, as can smoke alarms, batteries, wiring, bulbs with unbroken glass and those Christmas lights.

From 1 November the expanded Recycle More Collection in Taunton Deane will mean all small electricals (no televisions, monitors, or bulbs) and wiring can go in bags (not black rubbish sacks) on top of your kerbside recycling. Keep rechargeable batteries in laptops, phones and more, but remove single-use batteries and put them in a separate small bag.

Halloween Waste

Never waste a pumpkin - food for you, compost for your garden, fuel for Somerset. Carve it with care and check the great tasty ideas from campaigners Hubbub at hubbub.org.uk/how-to-eat-pumpkin.

For trick-or-treat, save money and make healthier alternatives, such as cakes and biscuits, instead of costly shop-bought sweets. Find free recipes by the national Love Food Hate Waste campaign at lovefoodhatewaste.com.

Not keen on pumpkin soup or pie? Make your "pumpkin" from a marrow, melon, pineapple to eat and compost it all.

Any pumpkin flesh, seeds or guts not used - and the grinning gourd ghoul itself when it starts to sag (do remove candles and any decoration) - can be added to your garden compost bin to feed your garden next year.

Or add it to all your other food waste - every scrap - in your food waste bin to be transformed by the Somerset anaerobic digestion plant into electricity for the county's homes and businesses.

Recruitment

Amid national LGV driver shortage's acute effect in Somerset and COVID's impact, SWP are training their own drivers, recruiting hard - including £1,000 welcome bonus - and using no-LGV vans to collect card so main truck LGV drivers keep collecting other materials for longer.

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

We are now in a wet and windy spell of weather. However, SCC Highways have still managed to complete several schemes. Bridge repairs have been completed at Ash Bridge, East Nynehead, crossing the River Tone, and in the Oare Valley, on Exmoor, at the famous Robbers Bridge and the less famous Chalk Water bridge.

Footway resurfacing has been completed at Alcombe Road, **Minehead** and the team will now move onto, first, the nearby **Staunton Road**, followed by **Tristram Drive in Creech St Michael** for the week commencing **1 November**.

In Carhampton, the Somerset River Authority funded drainage improvement works are progressing well. All work on the A39 is now completed. SCC Highways would like to take this opportunity to thank local residents and the road using public for their patience whilst we carried out these essential works on this very busy road. The drainage work in Hill Lane is also complete.

The team will now move on to the **B3191 Blue Anchor Road**, where a new culvert will be constructed under a **temporary road closure for the 1 to 3 November**, then reverting to temporary traffic signals.

Temporary road closures for the week commencing **1 November** are at:

- **Brompton Regis** (drainage work between the church and Mill Cross);
- Exford Road, **Winsford** (drainage);
- Oaken Ground, **Wellington** (footway repairs); and
- Hammet Street, **Taunton** (carriageway repairs).

The A358 at Cedar Falls, Bishops Lydeard is currently under temporary traffic lights due to a fallen tree damaging a roadside wall. This may cause some delays at peak times.

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 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 the 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 the next public consultation event in line with government guidance is to be held at:

- 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.

Deadline looms for 2022 school places

Somerset parents and carers are being urged to apply for school places online and on time. Whether the child is starting school for the first time, or transferring to their next school, applications need to be made through Somerset County Council's website: www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions.

For secondary school places, applications opened on Monday 13 September 2021 and must be submitted before **Sunday 31 October 2021**. This applies to all children moving from primary to secondary school, or middle to upper school, in September 2022.

Deadline reminder emails and/or letters will be sent to parents on the Council's database who have not yet applied but the responsibility for getting applications in on time lies with parents and guardians.

Somerset Libraries

Minehead Library Temporary Closure

Following the start of works to refurbish Minehead Library in March 2021, SCC temporarily relocated the library and registration services to the Old Hospital building in the Minehead town centre.

The Library service is very grateful to the Minehead Connect CIC for all their efforts in supporting them over the summer months, but the temporary accommodation is not suitable for continued operation over the winter period. Therefore, SCC closed the library and registration service at this location on 30 October 2021.

SCC is now working on plans to re-open the library and registration service at a new temporary location in the New Year. Details will be shared as soon as possible.

Library loans will be renewed until the library reopens and no charges will be applied. Visit the [Minehead Library Facebook page](#) for future updates.

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Plant a Tree for COP26

Exmoor National Park are calling for green-fingered volunteers to help with planting and growing young trees this Autumn. As the UK prepares to welcome world leaders to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow at the end of the month, they are keen to send out the message that Exmoor is doing its bit and remind people that no single person's actions are too small.

Here are three ways you can support tree planting on Exmoor this Autumn:

- Sign up to collect and grow tree seeds on Exmoor towards the new tree nursery.
- **Come to the tree planting weekend at Bye Wood on 6 and 7 November.**
- Dedicate a tree through the CareMoor Woods & Trees Appeal.

Find out how to support the appeal and sign up to tree planting events at: www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/caremoor.

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

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.

YMCA Dulverton Group Tenant Ready Scheme

SWT receives funding from EDF to help with the impact that workers at the Hinkley Point C power station have on the housing and rental markets in the district.

A new housing strategy and plan were signed off by Full Council in September 2020, which included proposals to both create new housing initiatives and boost existing schemes in the regions most affected by Hinkley, to help people acquire and sustain accommodation in the areas local to them.

One of the most successful and long-running of these projects is the Tenant Ready Scheme (TRS), which was launched jointly in 2015 between the YMCA and the Council. This initiative teaches prospective tenants information about living independently through tailored learning and support and is available to anyone looking to obtain independent accommodation, or who may be finding it difficult to manage where they're currently living.

YMCA Dulverton Group has assisted many individuals over the last six years through the delivery of this modular training course, which helps people with obtaining ID, setting up bank accounts and signposting to other essential services, alongside providing comprehensive information on key tenancy issues - such as what to expect from a landlord, health and safety at home, where to look for accommodation, budgeting and the general legal detail around tenancies.

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

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.

The fire service recommends using battery-powered candles over candles with real flames. But if you do decide to use them, please follow this [safety advice](#) to keep yourself and others safe.

Bonfire Safety

DSFRS can give you advice on how to have a bonfire safely, what you shouldn't burn on a bonfire and how to report someone who's having bonfires regularly.

Tell the fire brigade when you're having a bonfire by calling on 0333 399 0014. This is so they can check in with you if they receive any 999 calls reporting a fire in the same area and stops them from sending firefighters out to bonfires when they're not needed.

Please [click here](#) for other bonfire safety information.

Firework Safety

It's always safer to attend a professionally run firework display, instead of one at somebody else's or your own home. Most firework-related injuries happen when people are using fireworks in their gardens. DSFRS [guidance](#) will help keep you safe if you're using fireworks and sparklers at home.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency Be aware of Coastal dangers as autumn sets in

Autumn is a perfect time to explore the coastal areas around the UK, the summer crowds have gone, and the weather is ideal for a walk. However, the sunshine can quickly vanish making the temperature much colder and there are fewer people on the beaches to be alerted in the event of danger.

It is vital at this time of year to be prepared before you head to the coast.

- Make sure you check the weather and tides before heading out, wear appropriate footwear and clothing for your activity, know the sea conditions and stick to coastal paths. Also, carry a mobile phone so that you have a way of making contact in an emergency and make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.
- Cliffs can be more unstable than they look, and cliff falls, or landslides can happen without warning. Take note and adhere to local warning signs. The cliffs along the UK coastline are continuously eroding, stay away from the edge which could be crumbly or slippery and do not climb cliffs as a short cut

to the top. Periods of intense rainfall will often make cliff edges more vulnerable.

- Don't ever be tempted to stand near the edge to take a "selfie" as it may be the last photo you ever take.
- If you take your dog out with you keep it on a lead at the coast especially near cliff edges. If they get stuck on a ledge, in mud or swept out to sea, don't go after them. Most dogs make it back safely, but you might not.
- If you do fall into the water unexpectedly, FLOAT to Live. Fight your instinct to thrash around, lean back and relax, extending your arms and legs

Please take note of safety advice and don't take risks. If you see anybody in trouble, don't enter the water yourself to try and rescue them, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

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

Spark Somerset

Trustee Training

Online Tuesday 2 November 2021, 10am – 1pm

This online session is aimed at anyone who is a trustee or is thinking about becoming one and wants to understand the role and responsibilities that come with it. Taking place during Trustees' Week, this session will cover key roles and responsibilities, the Charity Code of Governance, collaborative working, board development, and much more. Tickets are £20 per person.

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

Free Forum for Organisations working with Older People

Online Tuesday 2 November 2021, 1pm – 2.30pm

This forum will bring together organisations working with and supporting older people in Somerset. Come along to network, share best practice and get information and advice.

This forum will focus on transport provision as this was identified as a key topic when the forum last met in July.

This meeting will be held online via Zoom and you will be sent joining instructions upon registration. Tickets are freely available to Somerset-based VCSE organisations and volunteers. Please [click here](#) to find out more.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Celebrating 95 years working in the Community

The CCS has released a film bringing together their 95th birthday celebrations and a summary of their work undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. From March

2020 to the present day, the [video](#) demonstrates the CCS collaboration with funders, partners and community groups across Somerset.

Somerset pulled together to look after those in need during the lockdowns and beyond, and the CCS are pleased to present their part in the relief effort, supporting people, places and enterprises across the county.

Somerset Activities Sports Partnership (SASP) Tackling Inequalities Fund

The Tackling Inequalities Fund was launched in April 2020 by Sport England in response to COVID-19, providing £20m of National Lottery funding from Sport England to support community groups across the country. The purpose of the fund is to help these local groups continue to exist and engage with people throughout the pandemic, and during the early recovery stages, with a view to keeping them active and connected. The fund has focused on the communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, to try and prevent the inequalities gap from widening and to minimise the impact on activity levels.

As part of Phase 3, SASP has been awarded £50,000 to distribute to community groups and organisations across Somerset. Phase 3 will run from July 2021 with projects needing to be complete by **March 2022**. If you are interested in applying for Phase 3 funding, find out more information and please complete the form [here](#).

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) Deadline looms on Equine Therapy Grants

The Horseshoes and Handprints Fund was created using money held by the Horseshoes and Handprints Trust. That money was transferred to Somerset Community Foundation when the Trust closed. The Trust originally supported families with children or young people with a variety of additional needs by helping contribute to the cost of horse therapy, and this will continue through this Horseshoes and Handprints Fund. Please [click here](#) to find out more.

Deadline for applications is **5 November 2021**.

The National Lottery Community Fund Together for our Planet

Grants from £1,000 to £10,000 of National Lottery funding are being offered to support communities across the UK to take action on climate change. In November 2021, the UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow. The UK Government's Together for Our Planet initiative has been created to engage people with COP26 and inspire positive climate action.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the fund and the application process.

The deadline for applications is **18 November 2021**.

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 16 October approximately 99,215 tests were carried out across the county with 4,468 new confirmed cases. The rates have more than doubled in the last reporting week to 794.7 per 100,000 which is above the South-West and national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset has increased with just over 60 COVID-19 in patients in Somerset hospitals.

Additionally, within each District in Somerset there were many cases of COVID-19 who received false negative PCR test results as a result of the recent lab testing issue. This means cases wouldn't have been isolating as they should have been and will have continued to spread COVID-19 within schools and communities through no fault of their own.

The majority of cases are among school and college age children and staff within education settings. Somerset has the highest rates of cases among 10-14 year olds in the region and therefore public health are focusing activity on secondary schools.

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 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.

Clinton's COVID Catch Up

In the latest film, Director of Public Health Trudi Grant emphasises the importance regular LFD testing and confirmatory PCR testing play in protecting young people and keeping their education moving forward. Watch the film [here](#).

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.

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.

Anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms, should book a PCR and not attend school or work. Do not take a LFD if symptomatic. PHE advise all parents, staff and pupils to take the supervised PCR testing route where available. Ask for this when you arrive at the test centre and someone will take the swab for you to maximise the quality of the test.

Please continue to use LFD and PCR tests as you normally would, the SCC PH advice remains, if you are showing any symptoms of COVID-19, or have a positive LFD test get a PCR test and if this is positive stay at home and self-isolate for ten days to avoid infecting others.

SCC PH advice remains consistent with national guidance:

- Only use twice weekly LFD testing for asymptomatic cases
- Make sure you do an LFD according to the instructions and at least 30 minutes after eating or drinking
- If you get a positive LFD or have symptoms, self-isolate and get a PCR and **use the supervised PCR testing route at test centre to get the best quality 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.

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. My school age child has tested positive for COVID-19, and I need to take time off work to look after them. I can't work from home and will lose income. What can I do?

A. In some circumstances, if you are required by law to self-isolate you may be entitled to a Test and Trace Support Payment. Please [click here](#) to find out more information. The scheme closes on the **31 March 2022**.

Q. I have had COVID-19 previously, but I have symptoms again. What does this mean?

A. Self-isolate even if you've had a positive test result for COVID-19 before and the symptoms are mild. Get a PCR test (that is sent to a lab) to confirm the diagnosis. You probably have some immunity to the virus but it's not clear how long it lasts.

Please [click here](#) for the latest information and advice from the NHS.

Crime / Safeguarding

Action Fraud

Cryptocurrency Fraud

Data from Action Fraud, [the national reporting centre for fraud and cyber crime](#), reveals a staggering £146,222,332 has been lost to cryptocurrency fraud since the start of this year – which is almost a third more (30 per cent) than was lost throughout the whole of 2020.

Criminals will try to lure you in with adverts or via social media offering easy money quickly. Stop and think. It could protect you and your money.

Be suspicious if you are contacted out the blue about an investment opportunity. Consider getting independent professional advice before making a significant financial decision.

Certain cryptocurrencies are not regulated in the UK meaning you are unlikely to have access to the Financial Ombudsman Service or the Financial Services Compensation Scheme if something goes wrong.

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

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Remembering Sir David Amess MP

Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) Mark Shelford has issued a statement following the death of Sir David Amess MP. Please [click here](#) to read the press release.

Campaign to dismantle County Lines continues

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs out of bigger cities into smaller UK towns often using dedicated mobile phone lines or other 'deal lines'.

In recent weeks ASP visited 380 addresses where occupants are believed to be at risk from, or involved in, county lines. This activity marks the latest stage in an ongoing campaign against criminal gangs running drugs into local towns and villages. In the last year ASP have dismantled 21 county lines with the subsequent arrests of 45 people, the majority having already been charged with offences.

Using The Children's Society's [#LookCloser](#) campaign, which explains how to spot and report signs of county lines exploitation, police officers also engaged with thousands of young people in schools and colleges, and visited hotels, bed and breakfasts, shops and takeaways, which are often used by county lines gangs to recruit or groom victims into criminality.

High visibility patrols took place around public transport and in public spaces such as parks, supermarkets and banks, where those involved in county lines may often be visible.

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

Feedback invited for the Draft Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025

One of the [PCC's statutory duties](#) is to issue a Police and Crime Plan for the force area. This plan will include various aspects about policing of the area, how the Chief Constable will be held to account and how the PCC will use the money to deliver an effective and efficient police service and support other services such as victim support.

The PCC's priorities and objectives are the cornerstone of a Police and Crime Plan. As the PCC is the bridge between local people and the police, it is essential that they consult with the public, including victims of crime, about their proposed Police and Crime Plan and direction for policing in the area.

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

Clocks go back one hour at 2am on Sunday 31 October.

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 – Recycle More Final Reminder