

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 85 Week ending 21/11/2021

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. New CEO appointed

Andrew Pritchard has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer at Somerset West and Taunton Council.

Members approved the appointment at a special full council meeting on Tuesday 16 November.

Andrew joined the Council in January 2020 as Director of External Operations and Climate Change having worked across a wide range of public sector organisations in various senior roles.

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:

- **Monday 22 November** – Tenants Strategic Group at 6pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#)).
- **Wednesday 24 November** – Community Scrutiny Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#)).
- **Thursday 25 November** – Planning Committee at 1pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions is 4pm Monday 22 November).
- **Monday 29 November** – Special Meeting, SWT Licensing Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm Wednesday 24 November).
- **Wednesday 1 December** – Corporate Scrutiny Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm Friday 26 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. Have your say on future government arrangements for Taunton

SWT is seeking the public's views as part of a Community Governance Review (CGR) for the Taunton area.

Plans to consult on proposals for the possible creation of a new town or parish council(s) in the area, including the geographic scope of such a review, were agreed at a full council meeting on Tuesday, 19 October 2021, with Terms of Reference formally commencing the review published on 12 November 2021.

As a 'principal council', SWT is responsible for deciding whether to create, amend or abolish parish areas within its boundaries and whether to establish a council(s) to serve such areas.

Currently, Taunton remains the only area in Somerset unrepresented by a town or parish council following previous local government reorganisation in 1974.

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

4. SWT helping customers out of debt

SWT Council has set up a dedicated project team to help customers out of Council Tax and Business Rate debt.

The project will look at improving general housekeeping, building business intelligence on customers in debt and internal procedures for case resolution. It will also look to identify and engage with customers with large debts or multiple unpaid debts and those with vulnerabilities. Any additional income collected will be used to pay for essential services.

If you have outstanding Council Tax or Business Rate debts you can contact recovery@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

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

5. Taunton to host bumper celebrations in run-up to Christmas

SWT and its partners have been busy preparing Taunton town centre to bring some festive cheer to visitors in the lead up to Christmas.

Taunton's celebration of Christmas officially kicks off with Winterfest on Sunday, 21 November, offering a full line-up of attractions from 10am until 8pm.

The town's annual Christmas tree, which has once again been donated by [Langford Lakes Christmas Tree Farm](#) and delivered by [Wheelers of Bridgwater](#), takes pride of place in front of the Market House. Langford Lakes has also donated Christmas trees to Wellington and Wiveliscombe town centres.

Please [click here](#) to read the full programme of events.

6. Free Car Parking in run up to Christmas

To help with festive trading, the council is offering free car parking in its car parks on the Saturdays of 4, 11 and 18 of December in Dulverton, Dunster, Minehead, Porlock, Watchet, Wellington and Williton, and in Dulverton again on Sunday, 5 December for the annual [Dulverton by Starlight](#) event.

With the exception of Kilkenny car park, free parking will also be available after 3pm on the same Saturdays in SWT-owned car parks in Taunton.

7. SWT Children and Youth Initiative Fund

The Tenants' Action Group has allocated a proportion of their annual budget to provide grants to support organisations and projects which seek to improve the lives, health and wellbeing of people aged 0 - 25 years old, whose families are tenants of Somerset West and Taunton Council and to help such organisations

and projects to become sustainable and more self-sufficient. A grant application can be up to a maximum of £3,000 and there is no minimum financial limit.

All applications need to be completed online.

Please [click here](#) to find out more information about eligibility and essential criteria.

8. Reminder – Support for charities in SWT

The Somerset West and Taunton Small Grants Fund, managed by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) on behalf of Somerset West and Taunton Council, will consider applications for grants from charities, community groups, sports clubs, and social enterprises.

Grants of up to £1,000 are available now. Deadline for applications is 5pm **Friday 26 November 2021.**

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

9. Reminder - SWT Lottery Winter 2021/22 bolt-on prize draw

The Somerset West Lottery is taking part in 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 DECATHLON, a retail store that provides equipment for over 70 outdoor and sporting activities as well as nutrition and body care products. There really is something for everyone at DECATHLON. This prize is courtesy of Gatherwell the external lottery management company (ELM).

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 SWT.

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

10. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP) Reduce waste this Christmas

Get ahead for a low-waste high-fun family Christmas

Good planning cuts costs and waste while ensuring a beautiful home, better meals, great gifts and a happy family time. Top tips:

- Clear early. Three heaps: rubbish, recycle/repair/reuse, charity. Order recycle containers now.
- Audit the kitchen, make meal plan, eat into freezer and fridge to find space, shop with list, save those leftovers, recycle all food waste.
- Insist on wish lists; give less unwanted stuff by buying better, eco-friendly, experiences, digital, local, and regifting last year's unloved.

- Save boxes, packing materials, newspapers, magazines, brown paper, for wrapping gifts - no metallic or plastic wrap.
- Buy no icky sticky tape. Wrap with proper paper and use and reuse ribbon, cloth, string, yarn. Cut up old cards as gift tags.
- Buy no Christmas decorations - make your own with card at home, no plastic - and use foliage and found items for your door wreath.
- Cut cards for ecards and making time for a proper chat by phone.
- Find, check, fix, recycle Christmas lights and other electricals.
- Get a real Christmas tree - no fake fir.

PS: Want your Christmas and New Year recycling and rubbish taken? Please "park smart" so your collection crews and their trucks can get through.

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.

New Council for Somerset

Help shape the new unitary council for Somerset

Organisations from across the county are joining together to deliver a new unitary council for Somerset – and local people are encouraged to be part of the conversation.

A public meeting is planned at Donyatt Village Hall, near Ilminster, on 25 November, 3pm until 5pm. It's the third in a series of monthly events where residents and communities are invited to learn about, and feed into, the new council process.

Members of the recently established Joint Advisory Board will be on-hand to answer any queries. They include representatives from Somerset County Council, the four District Councils, Somerset Association of Local Councils, City, Town and Parish Councils, health, police, education, and the voluntary and community sector.

The Board is also developing links with the Somerset Youth Parliament and is particularly keen to engage young people in the sessions.

The role of the Board is advisory, but its proposals, ideas and recommendations will feed into the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Joint Committee – the decision-making body.

On the agenda at the Board this month will be the operating and governance principles of the new council, communications, an update on Local Community Networks (LCNs) and emerging plans for the next Town and Parish Council Conference.

Covid safety measures will be in place and mask-wearing is encouraged by attendees.

On 1 April 2023, [Somerset will become a unitary authority](#), replacing the current County Council and four District Councils with a single council governing the whole area. Find out more [here](#).

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highway Maintenance Update

The very quiet spell of weather carries on for the moment but there is a hit of snow towards the end of the week. Follow the team on Twitter [@TravelSomerset](#) [#somersegrit](#) for daily updates on SCC's winter highways actions.

In Carhampton, the Somerset River Authority funded drainage improvement works are progressing well. The team are now working on the Orchard Road phase of this major project.

Drainage works at Exford Road, Winsford, utilising a temporary road closure, will continue until 26 November.

On 21 November there will be temporary traffic signals on the A38 Wellington Relief Road, at the Bagley Lane junction for the installation of a new winter weather station. Bagley Lane itself will be closed temporarily to permit the works.

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

Consultation deadline approaches for A358 Dualling Scheme

The National Highways consultation on the A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling Scheme is due to end soon. 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 ends on **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.

To find out more about the proposals and have your say, please visit the National Highways' online exhibition at www.highwaysengland.co.uk/a358-taunton-to-southfields/.

£8.3m Toneway project moves up a gear

Taunton's Toneway Creech Castle junction improvement project is entering the next phase as work gets underway on major bridge-widening works and a massive surface water drainage system.

The multi-million-pound project, designed to increase the junction's capacity and improve cycling and pedestrian connections, started in August and is progressing well. Work includes additional lanes on the approach to the junction, as well as new crossings for those on foot and bike. The junction is due to be completed next summer.

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

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.](#)

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

Annual Dark Skies Festival Closes

Around 2000 people attended Exmoor's 5th annual Dark Skies Festival, which drew to a close on Sunday 7 November. The programme included over 50 events celebrating Exmoor's dark skies, with those centred on nocturnal wildlife, health and wellbeing proving just as popular as the most traditional astronomy and stargazing events.

Sell out events included a night-time adventure on board the open top Exmoor Coaster Bus and a dark sky and bushcraft family adventure aided by the National Park's first ever group of young rangers.

Further information on stargazing and dark skies events on Exmoor can be found at [Exmoor - Stargazing & Dark Skies \(exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk\)](http://exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk).

Exmoor Rights of Way maintained in Peak Condition

98 per cent of public paths on Exmoor were judged through a nationally recognised methodology to be 'open and easy to use' this year, according to [the National Park Authority's latest annual rights of way report](#).

The top result comes despite increased use in and out of the lockdowns and the warmer wetter summers contributing to an increased growing season. It is 8 per cent higher than the previous year's score, making it the highest on record.

Ranger and Field Services teams together cut back a record 215km of vegetation (compared to 159km the previous year), cleared 187 fallen trees, and made and installed 507 signs, 213 signposts, 134 gates and 6 footbridges. They successfully resolved 950 faults and surveyed 34 per cent of Exmoor's 1000km rights of way

network. Volunteers generously donated 348 hours of their time to support rangers with path surveys.

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

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022-27 (draft)

Each fire and rescue authority has a statutory duty to produce a [Community Risk Management Plan](#) (CRMP). DSFRS draft CRMP sets out the key challenges and risks facing local communities and how they intend to meet and reduce them. It demonstrates how protection, prevention and response activities have and will be used collectively to prevent and/or mitigate fires and other incidents.

This integrated approach will keep you safe and reduce the impact of emergencies on people, businesses and the local economy. DSFRS protect over 1.8m people and will always seek to prevent incidents from occurring; but when you need them, DSFRS will respond quickly to minimise harm and economic loss.

DSFRS are asking you to take part in their consultation and share your views on the draft plan that's been put together. People are at the centre of what the fire service do, so your views really do matter. Even if you read the plan and agree with the proposals, they still want to hear from you.

Please [click here](#) to read the draft plan and take part in the consultation.

Community Risk Management Plan – Virtual Events

DSFRS are holding a series of virtual events where you can find out more about the draft Community Risk Management Plan and put questions to senior managers.

Please [click here](#) to find out more. The link to register for these events will be posted shortly on the DSFRS page.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency Racing the tide is never worth the risk!

Whilst there are no causeways on the SWT Coastguard watch there are plenty of fords and on occasion flooded roads. Please don't take risks.

Just 30cm of moving water can float an average family-sized car so imagine if you breakdown or the tide beats you – the loss could be irreversible.

To make a safe crossing and avoid getting caught out: check tide times, leave plenty of time to get back and never underestimate the rate of the incoming tide or drive through water.

HM Coastguard Watchet

Over the last 7 days Hm Coastguard Watchet has been called upon to assist with the search and rescue of several missing persons and casualty evacuations with Avon and Somerset Police and the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

Due to new reporting conditions the coastguard are unable to give further details of these incidents but working alongside partners including [HM Coastguard Minehead](#) and [Minehead Lifeboat Station](#) they have all been successful outcomes.

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

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

Spark Somerset

Reflecting on a Year Like No Other

Since the pandemic hit, people have faced some of the most difficult times of their lives. From the initial lockdown to the 'learning to live with it', from the social isolation to the challenges of home schooling, from the fear of losing loved ones to the reality of losing jobs.

Within days of the start of the first lockdown, community groups across the county – formal and informal – networks, neighbours and social enterprises, rallied round to help people in need. From shopping to prescription pick-ups, friendly phone calls to hot meals, wonderful groups and passionate staff and volunteers joined together to help.

At a time of crisis, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) and 'community action' really came into its own.

Spark is delighted to share their 2020/21 Impact Report [here](#).

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Surviving Winter Appeal

Somerset charity Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) is inviting businesses to help support vulnerable older people and help spread some festive cheer in the county this Christmas, as part of their long-running Surviving Winter appeal.

As we head into winter, rising energy costs mean more of our older neighbours here in Somerset are forced to choose between heating and eating. This winter will continue to be difficult and worrying for many in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, as many pensioners will need to stay at home to keep themselves safe, and will find themselves cut off from family and friends, facing higher costs to heat their homes while becoming more isolated than ever.

Surviving Winter encourages people who don't need their Winter Fuel Payment to donate some or all of it to help local older people who are unable to afford to heat their homes to help them stay warm, safe and well every winter.

Alongside providing winter fuel grants to hundreds of vulnerable older people, SCF is inviting local businesses and individuals to help reduce loneliness and spread some

warmth and cheer by donating £250 to fund local charities to safely provide festive activities, Christmas meals and gifts to our isolated older neighbours.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Carers Rights Day 2021

Next week is Carers UK [#CarersRightsDay2021](#) and Somerset Carers have a lot planned!

The Talking Cafes are hosting a whole week of activity and online training for unpaid Carers in Somerset - this is for you if you look after another person regularly, whether that's your partner, child, friend or neighbour.

The programme may be added to so keep an eye on the webpage for updated information. Please [click here](#) to find out more.

Somerset Activities Sports Partnership (SASP) Somerset Moves – Consultation on draft strategy underway.

Everyone has a role to play in Somerset Moves; people, communities, and organisations, from every sector and place across the county, pulling together with a shared goal to help move more and improve their lives in the process. The draft strategy has been shaped by people's ideas from online conversations, virtual workshops, and evidence of what helps people to be active.

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

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

The number of cases of COVID-19 in Somerset has reduced again this week, although they do remain high. Many of the cases continue to be among school and college-age children as well as staff within education settings. This week has also seen a greater proportion of cases among people over 60 years of age.

This clearly shows COVID-19 is still present in Somerset and reminds us all to continue to wear a face-covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, regularly wash hands and undertake lateral flow tests if we don't have symptoms and are meeting people who are outside our own household. If people have any symptoms of COVID-19 such as a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, a loss or change to the sense of taste or smell, they should self-isolate immediately and book a PCR test.

In the week up to 30 October approximately 76,599 tests were carried out across the county with 2,310 new confirmed cases. The rates have decreased in the last reporting week to 410.9 per 100,000. This is below the South-West but higher than the national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset has decreased to 75 COVID-19 in patients in Somerset hospitals. The number of people in hospital with COVID-19 is higher than last year during wave1 and wave 2 of the pandemic.

Clinton's COVID catch up

This week Clinton discusses the importance for us all to accept the offer of a third, or booster, vaccination when we receive it. The film can be viewed [here](#).

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

Booster jabs are now available for people over 50 years old, or people over 16 years old considered to be at risk. To receive a booster jab, it must be six months or more since the receipt of the second vaccine, but you can now book your appointment five months after your last dose. The boosters are very important as they significantly reduce the likelihood of serious illness or hospitalisation should you catch COVID-19 so, if offered, please make a booking without delay.

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.

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 Centres offer walk in clinics for 12–15-year-olds

COVID-19 vaccination centres in Somerset are now offering walk-in clinics for those aged 12 to 15. This is part of a local drive to make it as easy as possible for local people to get vaccinated.

Until recently, those in the 12- to 15-year-old age group were being vaccinated in schools or could book a jab at a number of vaccination centres across the county. Now families also have the option of getting their children vaccinated at a walk-in clinic.

You can find out which centres are offering walk in clinics, including those for 12 to 15 year olds on the [“grab-a-jab” website](#).

Children will also continue to be offered the COVID-19 jab through their schools

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.

From 1 November there will be a reduction in the opening hours at regional and local testing sites. Instead of opening from 8am until 8pm, they will operate from 8am until 6pm – 2 hours less per day.

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 How and when can I get my COVID-19 booster vaccine?

A If you're eligible, you'll be offered a booster dose at least 6 months after you had your 2nd dose.

Most people can book:

- a vaccination appointment online for an appointment at a vaccination centre or pharmacy
- go to a walk-in vaccination site to get vaccinated without needing an appointment
- wait to be contacted by a local NHS service such as a GP surgery and book an appointment with them

Please [click here](#) to find out more information about the booster vaccine.

Q Do I need to take anything with me when I go for my vaccination?

A On the day of your appointment, you'll need to bring:

- your booking reference number
- a face covering, unless you cannot wear one for a health or disability reason

If you are an eligible health or social worker, you will only be vaccinated if you bring official proof. This can be either a photographic work ID card, a wage slip or letter from your employer dated within the last 3 months.

Crime / Safeguarding

Which? Consumer Rights

How to spot a text message scam

Messaging scams can be very convincing, so it's important to know what to watch out for to stay ahead of the fraudsters. Scammers are increasingly taking advantage of smartphones and are getting very clever with how they try to take your hard-earned money.

They can even make it look like a legitimate organisation is contacting you via text or a messaging app by using identity masking technology to change the name displayed as the sender. This is known as 'number spoofing'.

If you get sent a scam message, it's important you report it so others don't fall victim. Reporting a scam message is free and it will help stop the spread of these messages. Fraudsters can use many different types of messaging systems and apps, like SMS, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Viber, Skype, Google Hangouts, Snapchat and many other platforms to try scam you out of your money.

Please [click here](#) to find out how to report scams and warn others.

Spot a scam bank message

If you get a message purporting to be from your bank, always treat this with caution. And know the eight things your bank will never ask you.

Your bank should **never**:

- Ask for your Pin or internet banking password
- Send someone to your home to collect cards or banking information
- Ask you to email or text personal or banking information
- Email a link where you have to then input your internet banking details
- Ask you to authorise a funds transfer which you haven't requested
- Tell you to invest in diamonds, land or other commodities
- Ask you to carry out a test transaction
- Send you to a mobile app other than their own official app

How to avoid message scams

Here are a few tips to help you avoid message scams.

- **Don't follow any links**
This is the most effective way to avoid text scams. Links can take you to cloned websites designed to steal your money or personal data. Because links are often shortened to help them fit into the message, it's not always easy to tell the real ones from the fakes. Clicking on links could also lead you to download malware - malicious software that can take over your phone and access your data.
- **Don't share personal information**
Treat all messages requesting sensitive information - or that link you to websites asking for personal details - with suspicion. Legitimate organisations will never text you to ask for your personal or banking details upfront.
- **Contact the organisation directly if you're unsure**
If you're not sure if a text is real, contact the company that claims to have sent it to check. Use the official contact details listed on the company's website or documents you might have been sent, if it's your bank then you can usually find its official number on the back of your credit or debit card.

- **Don't reply**
Replying to a fake text, calling the number it's been sent from or clicking through on suspicious links only lets the scammers know your number is being used. You might be bombarded with even more scam messages and calls. The number has likely been spoofed anyway, which means you'll probably only be messaging an innocent member of the public who has had their number stolen.
- **Report it**
You report the fake text by forwarding it to 7726 - a free reporting service provided by phone operators. This information is then shared with the police and intelligence agencies working to stop text scams. If you've fallen victim to a text scam, you can report it to [Action Fraud](#).

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Operation Sceptre underway

This week, ASP are taking part in Operation Sceptre, a national week of action, with the aim of reducing the number of people carrying knives.

The operation, co-ordinated and led by the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), brings police forces across the country together in a period of intensification to concentrate efforts on enforcement, education and engagement.

Force wide activity started on Saturday (13 November) when police volunteers worked with officers to test retailers' compliance with the law, which states it is illegal to sell knives and other bladed articles to anyone under the age of 18. A range of stores from large supermarket chains to smaller army / outdoor shops were tested, in the biggest test purchase operation Avon and Somerset Police has ever carried out.

Of 82 shops tested, 21 failed, and sold a knife to an underage volunteer, or failed to ask for ID. Officers from the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams will visit retailers who failed and issue a warning notice, along with an advice pack which outlines the law and how they can adhere to it.

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

For further Neighbourhood Policing Updates...

For regular updates on events/campaigns and what is happening in your area, please keep an eye on the relevant policing Facebook pages detailed below:

- [Minehead and West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing](#)
- [Wellington Neighbourhood Policing](#)
- [Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](#)
- [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).

If you have concerns about your own health and Coronavirus please visit the [NHS](#) website.