

# Somerset West and Taunton

## **Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

### **Issue 87 Week ending 05/12/2021**

#### **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. Prime Minister sets out new measures due to Omicron variant**

With effect from 30 November, the Prime Minister has confirmed new temporary and precautionary measures following the emergence of the Omicron variant in the UK.

The Omicron variant contains a large number of spike protein mutations as well as mutations in other parts of the viral genome. Urgent work is ongoing internationally to fully understand how these mutations may change the behaviour of the virus with regards to vaccines, treatments and transmissibility.

Vaccines remain the best line of defence. Experts remain confident that the current vaccines will provide protection against the new variant, but the extent of this continues to be investigated.

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:

- **Tuesday 7 December** – SWT Full Council at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are now available to view on the [website](#)).
- **Monday 13 December** – SWT Audit and Governance Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are now available to view on the [website](#)). Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 8 December)
- **Wednesday 15 December** – SWT Executive at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 10 December).
- **Thursday 16 December** – SWT Planning Committee at 1pm in the JMR (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 13 December).
- **Monday 20 December** – SWT Licensing Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 15 December).

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](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk).

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

### **3. Countdown to Christmas continues....**

In partnership with the Town Centre Working Group, [Taunton Independent Market](#) will run a series of Christmas markets in Castle Green on 5, 12, 18 and 19 December. Subsidised by the Government's Welcome Back Fund as part of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), these quality markets will showcase the very best in local producers of food, drink, crafts, homewares, beauty, and fashion.

Taunton's indoor shops will also stay open until 9pm for late-night shopping on the five Thursdays leading up to Christmas.

Anyone wishing to see the events planned for Taunton are advised to check for COVID-19 symptoms before visiting and to take a rapid lateral flow test if possible. Anyone displaying symptoms should self-isolate immediately and get a free NHS test. The use of face coverings is recommended to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 through crowded areas.

For further advice and guidance on how to stay safe and help prevent the spread, visit [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). If using public transport to attend any of the events, follow the Government's [safer travel guidance for passengers](#).

#### **4. Unique lightshow displayed to boost festive trade in Taunton**

The Somerset West and Taunton-led Town Centre Working Group has commissioned a 3D animation to be projected onto the Lloyds Bank building in North Street, Taunton.

The animation aims to boost Christmas trade by attracting visitors and their families into the town for late-night shopping and weekend festive celebrations.

The first showing will be on 3 December between 5pm and 9pm, and then repeated every Thursday, Friday and Saturday until Christmas.

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

#### **5. SWT supporting the independent quarter this Christmas**

SWT is giving a festive boost to traders in Taunton's independent quarter this Christmas.

The Council is hoping to encourage people to visit the many unique retailers and businesses around St James Street, Riverside Place and the Courtyard.

It is providing festive lighting and decorations, along with extra signage to the area. There will also be live music at an event to celebrate Small Business Saturday on 4 December.

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

#### **6. Carols Around the Bandstand**

The ever-popular [Carols Around the Bandstand](#) event will return to Vivary Park on Monday, 13 December at 6.30pm, featuring [Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir](#), the [West Somerset Singers](#) and [Taunton Concert Band](#). Visitors are encouraged to bring a torch or lantern.

#### **7. Reminder - Free parking to support local shopping**

SWT is once again offering free parking to support festive trading in the run-up to Christmas.

Free all-day parking will be available in Council-owned [car parks](#) in Dulverton, Dunster, Minehead, Porlock, Watchet, Wellington and Williton on the Saturdays

of 4, 11 and 18 of December, and in Dulverton again on Sunday, 5 December for the annual [Dulverton by Starlight](#) event.

Free parking will also be available after 3pm on the same three Saturdays in Council car parks in Taunton, except for Kilkenny car park, which is a long stay commuter car park.

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

## **8. School competition launched to promote new litter and recycling bins**

SWT has launched a school poster competition as part of its new *Recycling On-the-Go* campaign, which will see 130 new joint litter and recycling bins installed across the district.

As well as litter and dog waste, the configuration of the new bins will enable plastic bottles and cans to be deposited separately, making recycling on-the-go easier when out and about visiting towns, villages, parks and open spaces.

The new bins will replace a number of existing litter bins throughout the district, which are either damaged, obsolete or no longer fit for purpose.

Installation commenced earlier this week and is scheduled to complete in the new year.

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

## **9. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP) Think outside the box and cut the card this Christmas**

Festive shoppers are asked to think outside the box this year as figures reveal the scale of Somerset's the cardboard culture.

The cardboard collected from the average Somerset home has increased by more than a third compared with pre-Covid levels, as more people than ever shopping online.

Nearly 16,800 tonnes were collected from county kerbsides in the 12 months up to the start of October, an average of 65kg per household compared to 47kg in 2019-20.

While SWP and its collections contractor SUEZ make sure this recycled in the UK, producing it and collecting cardboard has a carbon cost that contributes to climate change.

The extra loads also put a strain on hardworking crews who have worked throughout the pandemic, coping with record levels of waste.

At the festive season nears, SWP is asking shoppers cut the card to help the planet and the Somerset economy.

- Buy gifts that don't need boxes – vouchers for restaurants, attractions or pampering treatments; subscriptions for newspapers magazines or streaming service; memberships for trusts or clubs.
- Go off-line - shop on the High Street and cut out the extra packaging that comes with online delivery.
- Shop on-line but local - Local retailers can deliver to your door and they tend to use less packaging than the big multi-nationals.

Cardboard also be recycled at all 16 of Somerset's recycling sites. Please take larger pieces here.

All 16 sites are open on their usual winter hours over the Christmas and New Year period, except for Christmas, Boxing and New Year's Day.

Dulverton and Crewkerne sites have one-off extra festive days open 9am-5pm to help with post-Christmas waste.

### **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](http://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](http://somersetwaste.gov.uk), sign up for the SWP e-newsletter or follow @somersetwaste on Facebook or Twitter.

## **New Council for Somerset Unitary Council Election May 2022**

The Structural Change Order confirms that elections will take place in May 2022. 110 councillors will be elected to the County Council and will take responsibility for all current County Council services and local government reorganisation.

In April 2023 the new Somerset Council assumes responsibility for all local government functions for Somerset, including those of the current district councils, and the transition comes to an end. The 110 elected representatives of Somerset County Council, become the councillors of the new Somerset Council.

Under the proposal, the new Somerset Council is intended to take over the county-wide functions and powers that already exists for Somerset County Council (SCC). Legally, this is described as SCC being the 'continuing authority' – but in practice, Somerset Council will be a new organisation in both name and operation.

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

## **Website Launched**

The new website <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk> is now open for business and contains a link to the One Somerset Business Case, recent press releases and details of Local Government Reorganisation Governance meetings. It will also signpost queries from the public to the mailbox at [newsomerset@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:newsomerset@somerset.gov.uk).

## **Lively debate sets “springboard” for new council**

Residents and representatives from organisations including Spark and Historic England attended the Advisory Board on November 25 when it met to discuss the next steps in Local Government Reorganisation.

The Board’s role is advisory, but its proposals, ideas and recommendations will feed into the unitary programme and the decision-making Joint Committee. Meetings will be held monthly in locations around the county.

Presentations from this Advisory Board meeting held in Donyatt Village Hall are available [here](#).

The next Advisory Board will be held in **Stoke St Gregory Village Hall**, near Taunton, on **16 December from 3pm-5pm**.

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

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**

Storm Arwen hit the British Isles hard over the weekend of 26-29 November. Whilst not as seriously affected as Scotland and the North-East of England, there was significant disruption in Somerset. The strong northerly winds brought down many trees across the county and SCC Highways attended 88 incidents where trees or branches had fallen onto the road. This is the largest amount for a particular storm for some time.

All parts of Somerset were affected but the Mendip area had the highest number of call-outs. With the air mass coming from the north, this also depressed road surface temperatures and salt runs had to take place when the skies cleared at night.

The Somerset River Authority funded drainage improvement works at Carhampton have now been completed, as have the carriageway repairs at Greenway Crescent, Taunton and the footway repairs on the A358 Taunton Road at Bicknoller.

Works for the week commencing 6 December include drainage works at **Maidenbrook Lane, Cheddon Fitzpaine** and **Blackwell Road, Chipstable**, both under the cover of temporary road closures.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit [www.travelsomerset.co.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk) or follow [@TravelSomerset](https://twitter.com/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.](#)

### **Department for Transport**

#### **Reminder - eCargo Bike Grant Fund – Deadline looms**

£400,000 has been made available by the Department for Transport in 2021/22 for the purchase of ecargo bikes, to support businesses switching to a sustainable transport solution.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the fund. The deadline for applications is the **14 December 2021**.

### **Department for Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) The Farming Investment Fund is now open.**

The Farming Investment Fund (FIF) provides grants to improve productivity and bring environmental benefits. FIF is made up of 2 separate funds:

- **Farming Equipment and Technology Fund** (for grants between £2,000 and £25,000). This fund provides grants towards the cost of equipment and technology to improve the productivity of farms in a sustainable way. The Round 1 application period opened on 16 November 2021 and **will close on 7 January 2022**.
- **Farming Transformation Fund** (for grants between £35,000 and £500,000) This fund provides grants towards large capital items to help businesses improve productivity, profitability, and environmental sustainability. They are:
  - Water Management
  - Improving Farm Productivity
  - Adding Value

The Water Management grant is open for applications and **will close on 12 January 2022**.

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

## **Exmoor National Park (ENP) Invasive species trials showing promise**

Electrocution of plants and sterilisation of male signal crayfish are two ground-breaking techniques showing early promise in ENP as part of a three-year programme due to end next year. Initial findings from the [Exmoor Non-Native Invasive Species](#) (ENNIS) project will be presented at a [free online event](#) on **Thursday 9 December from 7-8pm**, during which a new short film about the project will be screened.

Funding for the three-year [ENNIS project](#) started in 2019 and comes from the EU Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, aimed at strengthening the EU's agriculture, agro-food and forestry sectors, as well as rural areas in general. The project has supported some of the UK's first trials of state-of-the-art Rootwave Pro technology to take place on Exmoor, using electricity to zap the roots of problem plants thus avoiding the need for chemical herbicides.

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

## **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) Community Risk Management Plan**

The next virtual event to answer questions on the draft Community Risk Management Plan is being held on **Thursday 9 December (6pm – 7.30pm)**.

This is a public event being held on Microsoft Teams. Please [click here](#) to go to the registration page.

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

### **Spark Somerset Grow For Good Networking Event Wednesday 8 December at 7.30pm via zoom**

Recent events have highlighted the important role that community growing projects can play in promoting health and wellbeing and protecting our natural environment.

Following the last forum in June, this meeting will bring together Somerset-based social enterprises, voluntary organisations and individuals who 'grow for good'.

Whether you're involved with a community allotment, therapeutic garden, or any other initiative which uses growing and gardening to support positive change, come along to network and share ideas with others who are involved in similar projects.

Please [click here](#) to find out more and register for this free event.

## **Volunteer Coordinator Forum**

**Thursday 9 December at 11am – 12pm via Zoom**

This is a free forum for anybody who manages or coordinates volunteers in Somerset, offering a chance to network, share ideas, discuss best practice in volunteer management and other useful information.

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

## **Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)**

### **Surviving Winter Appeal**

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) has launched this year's Surviving Winter appeal, which encourages people who can afford it to donate some or all of their Winter Fuel Payment to help vulnerable older people in Somerset who are unable to afford to heat their homes to stay warm and well.

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 even more isolated.

Every year Surviving Winter helps around 500 elderly people living in Somerset through the cold winter months, thanks to generous local donors who, last year, donated over £150,000 to the appeal. And this year, the first £15,000 of donations will be boosted by an incredible 50% thanks to matched funding from the Field House Trust, meaning your giving makes an even greater impact.

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

## **Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

### **Smart Communities launch new website**

Smart Communities Ltd has launched a NEW stand-alone website demonstrating its community focused services for the Southwest of England. Smart Communities provide community and economic development, strategic planning, sustainability, future planning, evaluation / research as well as offering training and events for both community and corporate clients. **Visit:** <https://smartcommunities.online/>

### **Reminder- Meal and food boxes**

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

### **Reminder- Do you need an emergency delivery of fuel?**

The CCS Oil Scheme partners AF Affinity have a great scheme where they can deliver a fast, emergency parcel of fuel to tide you over until you can get a full

delivery! Call them on **01603 881888** between 9am – 4.30pm to order or email [somersetbuying@af-affinity.co.uk](mailto:somersetbuying@af-affinity.co.uk). For more information, [click here](#).

## **Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP) Consultation on draft strategy, Somerset Moves ending soon**

Being active is so important for physical and mental fitness, never more so than during a pandemic. In Somerset nearly a quarter of the adult population are inactive and activity levels for children and young people have also dropped significantly over the past year. Lack of confidence, time pressures, ill health plus a thousand other things can make the decision to be active harder for some than others.

**Somerset Moves** is a system wide, multi-agency draft strategy for the development of physical activity and sport across Somerset.

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. SASP have set up a dedicated form to capture comments and responses to this consultation.

Please [click here](#) to add your views on the draft strategy using the Consultation Response Form. The consultation will run until **Monday 6 December 2021**.

## **Free fun activities return for eligible children this winter**

Children and young people eligible for free school meals in Somerset will once again be offered free fun activities over the school holidays this winter.

Young people aged 5 – 16 years will have the opportunity to take part in enriching physical activities and be provided with a nutritious meal and information about eating healthily, as part of the Government's Holiday Activities and Food programme initiative.

The winter school holidays will see most of the delivery across Somerset from Monday 20 December to Thursday 23 December 2021. However, a select few providers will be providing activities and opportunities during the week commencing Monday 27 December 2021.

All details on what's on offer, the locations of holiday clubs and days operating can be found at [www.sasp.co.uk/happy-healthy-holidays](http://www.sasp.co.uk/happy-healthy-holidays).

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

## **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**

In the run up to Christmas there will be a lot of crowded outdoor events and markets happening which also means more opportunities to spread COVID-19 if we don't take simple precautions to minimise the risk of spread. Wearing a well-fitting face covering significantly reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19, and the more of us who do it, the more likely it is others will too. So, if organising an event, please set expectations and lead by example, with everyone who is part of the event (such as stallholders, staff and volunteer marshals) wearing face coverings as much as possible. And please make sure any advance publicity politely asks people to wear one.

### **Somerset COVID Cases**

The number of cases of COVID-19 in Somerset has increased. Many of the cases continue to be among school and college age children (particularly primary schools) as well as staff within education settings.

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 21 November approximately 76,986 tests were carried out across the county with 2,413 new confirmed cases. The rates have decreased slightly in the last reporting week to 429.2 per 100,000. This is below both the South-West and national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset has decreased to around 45 COVID-19 in patients in Somerset hospitals.

### **Clinton's COVID catch up**

In this week's Covid Catch-Up film, the discussion focuses on how lifestyle choices play a big part in the defence against COVID-19, so even if vaccinated, we should all try to keep ourselves and each other safe.

Simple ways to do this include wearing a face-covering in crowded and enclosed spaces, ensuring there is good ventilation when meeting inside, washing our hands regularly and continuing to take regular lateral flow tests. Also, if people are unwell,

they should self-isolate, not mix with others and book a PCR test. The film can be viewed [here](#).

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

Targeted measures to prevent the spread of the new COVID-19 Omicron variant took effect from 4am on Tuesday 30 November.

They were introduced as a precaution while more information is gathered and assessed on the variant's transmissibility and any possible effect on the vaccines.

Vaccines continue to remain the best line of defence, and all adults who have not yet received their first or second dose of the vaccine, or those who are eligible for their booster are encouraged to come forward to help protect themselves and others.

The booster programme has been extended to all 18–39-year-olds and the gap between the second dose and booster has now been reduced to three months. All those aged 12 to 15 years have now been advised to receive a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose.

Severely immunosuppressed individuals who have received three primary doses, should now also be offered a booster 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.

Once you have received the national invitation you will be able to go on the **National Booking site**: [nhs.uk/CovidVaccination](https://nhs.uk/CovidVaccination) or call 119. Vaccination centres across Somerset remain busy, but with slots becoming available all the time, please remember to check the National Booking Service regularly.

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

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](#).

It has also been announced that 16/17-year-olds will be able to book their second jab, 12 weeks after their first.

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.](#)

## Asymptomatic testing

The advice around asymptomatic testing has changed this week as there is now a focus on testing with a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) before a period of high risk - such as visiting a vulnerable person or attending a crowded event, but not routinely twice a week. This will mean some people will test less frequently; however, it is expected, particularly in the run up to the festive period, many people will be testing more often. The testing guidance for children, parents and staff at schools remains unchanged

**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:

- 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.

## COVID-19 – latest advice

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](http://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 I have been told that I will need to sit and wait for a mandatory fifteen minutes after having my booster jab. Why is this? I didn't have to wait last time!**

**A** Vaccinators frequently get asked "Is it alright if I wait in the car?" and "I never had to wait last time".

If you have previously had the Astra Zeneca vaccine, this is correct. You were allowed to leave right away after being jabbed.

However, this is not the case with the Pfizer jab. There is a mandatory observation period where patients must wait for 15minutes afterwards to ensure they don't faint, collapse, or have any other serious side effects. This is for the patients benefit and forms the legally agreed protocol and training for all sites administering this vaccine. All vaccinators are trained in CPR and have emergency packs containing adrenaline for anaphylaxis and CPR kits and defibrillators on site for use in emergencies.

**Q I was due to have my COVID-19 vaccination but then I tested positive. How long should I wait until I can get vaccine?**

**A** If you've had a positive COVID-19 test, you need to wait 4 weeks (28 days) before booking. This starts from the day you had the test.

## **Crime / Safeguarding**

### **Stop Scams UK Ltd / Global Cyber Alliance**

#### **The 159-telephone service**

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

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

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

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

## **Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

### **New Chief Constable appointed**

Sarah Crew has become the first female Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Police, 27 years after she joined as a new recruit.

Sarah was confirmed in post at a meeting of the Police and Crime Panel, three weeks after she was named as the Police and Crime Commissioner's preferred

candidate following a rigorous selection process. It follows her appointment as Temporary Chief Constable in July.

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

### **145 knives recovered during week of action on knife crime**

Last week, officers from A&SP took part in Operation Sceptre, a national week of action which sees police across the country intensify efforts to reduce the number of knives on our streets.

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/](http://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.