

# Somerset West and Taunton

## Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

### Issue 88 Week ending 12/12/2021

#### **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. Government goes to Plan B in response to Omicron Variant**

The Prime Minister has confirmed that England will move to Plan B following the rapid spread of the Omicron variant in the UK. Urgent work has been ongoing to understand the impact of the new variant with regards to vaccines, treatments and transmissibility. Early indications showed a large number of concerning spike protein mutations as well as mutations in other parts of the viral genome.

From **Friday 10 December**, face coverings will become compulsory in most public indoor venues, such as cinemas, theatres and places of worship. There will be exemptions in venues where it is not practical to wear one, such as when you are eating, drinking or exercising. For that reason, face masks will not be required in hospitality settings.

From **Monday 13 December**, those who can, will be advised to work from home.

From **Wednesday 15 December**, and subject to parliamentary approval, the NHS Covid Pass on the NHS App will become mandatory for entry into nightclubs and settings where large crowds gather – including unseated indoor events with 500 or more attendees, unseated outdoor events with 4,000 or more attendees and any event with 10,000 or more attendees.

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 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](#)).
- **Tuesday 14 December** – Taunton Charter Trustees at 6pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are now available to view on the [website](#)).
- **Wednesday 15 December** – SWT Executive at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are now available to view on the [website](#)).
- **Thursday 16 December** – SWT Planning Committee at 1pm in the JMR (Agenda and report packs are now available to view on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 13 December).
- **Monday 20 December** – SWT Licensing Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR. (Agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 15 December).
- **Wednesday 5 January** – SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee at 6:15pm in the JMR. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 22 December).
- **Thursday 6 January** - SWT Community Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 23 December).
- **Thursday 13 January** – SWT Planning Committee at 1.00pm in the JMR (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 10 January).
- **Wednesday 19 January** – SWT Executive Committee at 6.15pm in the JMR (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 14 January).

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. Coronavirus Helpline's 17,000<sup>th</sup> caller**

A dedicated helpline set up to provide a single point of contact for Somerset residents at the start of the coronavirus pandemic has now taken more than 17,000 calls.

Somerset's Coronavirus Helpline was launched in April 2020 by the five Somerset councils (Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council) working together with partner organisations such as Mindline, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Village Agents to offer a range of vital support.

The contact centre advisors who answer the phones have had to keep a firm grasp on the latest information and changing guidance.

Since the start of the pandemic, the nature of calls has evolved to reflect changes in the community – moving from requests for help with food and prescription delivery to support with finances, employment, and mental health.

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

### **4. Local Authority scheme improves energy efficiency of park homes**

District councils in Mendip, South Somerset, Sedgemoor and Somerset West and Taunton have been working with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) to secure funding to deliver energy efficiency improvements to park homes across Somerset.

Through engagement with park home site owners, four key park home sites across the county were identified where park homeowners could benefit from the insulation works.

The scheme resulted in 28 park homes receiving fully funded external insulation measures and ventilation enhancement, improving their Energy Performance Certificate rating, making their homes easier to heat and keep warm, which will reduce carbon emissions and their energy bills.

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

## 5. New planning guidance to support high quality design

SWT has adopted new planning guidance to ensure consistency in the quality of new developments across the district.

Members adopted the [Somerset West and Taunton Districtwide Design Guide](#) and the [Public Realm Design Guide](#) for Taunton Garden Town as supplementary planning documents at a meeting of the Full Council this week.

The guides, produced following extensive consultation throughout 2020 and 2021, seek to encourage a higher standard of design for development across the whole Local Planning Authority area and to reflect Taunton's status as a Garden Town.

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

## 6. Reminder - 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 11 and 18 of December.

Free parking will also be available after 3pm on the same 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. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

### Be ready to reduce and recycle this festive season

Know how to wrap responsibly? Ready to recycle your Pringles tubes? Clued-up on Christmas collection days?

The answer to these and other Christmas conundrums can be found in a one-stop shop for festive waste management guidance available on the Somerset Waste Partnership website [somersetwaste.gov.uk/festive](https://somersetwaste.gov.uk/festive).

The festive season generates a huge amount of waste, and residents are urged to think ahead and reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible.

Helpful hints for managing seasonal staples include:

## Wrapping paper

- Reuse if possible and choose only PAPER gift wrap which can be recycled. Steer clear of glittery, foil and plastic wraps which should be put in your rubbish bin.
- Try the scrunch test – only paper wrap that stays scrunched can be recycled
- Remove sticky tape, bows and decorations.
- Paper wrapping paper needs to be added to the other paper in the correct recycling box. SWP cannot accept black rubbish sacks of paper.
- If you take wrapping paper to a recycling site, put it in the special bins provided.

## Pringle and other crisp tubes

- These are now accepted at 12 Somerset recycling sites (all but Castle Cary, Cheddar, Dulverton and Somerton) in the skips for cartons/Tetra Pak.
- The same goes for similar “paper containers with metal ends” like those for hot chocolate or custard powder.

## Tubs and tins of sweets and chocolates

- Reuse for storage if possible.
- Plastic tubs go in your Bright Blue Bag if you have one. Or they can be taken to any recycling site and dropped off in the skip for plastic pots, tubs, trays and bottles.
- Metal tins can go in your Bright Blue Bag if you have one, in your black recycling box if you have not. Or they can be taken to any recycling site and put in the metal skip.

You can also find ideas for reducing the festive cardboard mountain by thinking outside the box and tackling food waste by planning ahead.

Bank holidays also mean changes to collection days over the festive fortnight. Check the changes on the [festive webpage](#) or use the My Collection Day feature on the SWP homepage.

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

Recycle sites at **Dulverton on Monday 27 December** and **Crewkerne on Tuesday 28 December** have one-off 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

### 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).

### Reminder - 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.

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

More wet and windy conditions, this time from Storm Barra. However, with the winds coming from a more conventional, for Somerset, south-westerly direction, there was less highway disruption than the previous week's Storm Arwen.

Temperatures have been variable, and with generally wet roads, some gritting actions have been required.

Completed schemes include drainage works at Maidenbrook Lane, Cheddon Fitzpaine and footway resurfacing on Queensway, Comeytrowe.

Works for the week commencing **13 December** include drainage works at **B3187 Burn Hill, Milverton** (temporary traffic signals) and **Blackwell Road, Chipstable**, (temporary road closure).

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.](#)

## **Somerset Education Business Partnership**

### **Inclusive Employment**

19% of working age people in the UK have a disability or long-term health condition - that's 6 million people. Whilst 56% of employers surveyed in 2012 saw the benefits of employing disabled people, only 8% employed someone with a disability or long-term health condition.

The Somerset Education Business Partnership is supporting the **Disability Confident** scheme. [Watch their video](#), featuring Somerset employers benefitting from employing those with additional needs and/or disabilities. Alternatively, you can find out more, or sign up to the scheme [here](#).

## **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**.

## **Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)**

### **We are Undefeatable Evaluation Report**

We Are Undefeatable is a national campaign and movement to inspire and support people with health conditions to be active. Developed by 16 leading health and social care charities and backed by expertise, insight and significant National Lottery funding from Sport England, its purpose is to support and encourage finding ways to be active that work with each person's conditions, not against them.

West Somerset has always been a difficult place to activate due to its rural geography, limited public transport links and ageing population, issues which are prevalent across wider Somerset. Digital inequality is also an issue, particularly with the older population; digital access and confidence is low across area. The aims of the campaign strongly aligned with the direction of SASP's strategic priorities around supporting older adults and people with long-term health conditions through physical activity.

SASP have produced an evaluation report online for people wishing to understand more about the campaign activation journey, the challenges, successes and learning, and insight and recommendations in West Somerset (and wider as it is expanded to the rest of the county in response to the pandemic). [Click here to read the report.](#)

### **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.

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.

## **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)**

### **Exmoor Art Exhibition inspires others to “Caremoor”**

Lanacre Barn Gallery in Exmoor has raised over £2600 towards the [CareMoor Woods & Trees Appeal](#) and the creation of a new 12-hectare woodland in the National Park, just a few miles from the gallery.

Details about the business scheme and the CareMoor Woods & Trees appeal can be found at [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/caremoor](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/caremoor).

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

## **Notice of Confirmation of an Order**

### **Highways Act 1980**

Public Footpath DU6/14 (Part)

Parish of Exton Path Diversion Order 2021

On 12 November 2021, Exmoor National Park (ENP) Authority confirmed the above order. A copy of the order is attached or can be viewed on the ENP website under [“changes to the path network”](#).

## **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS)**

### **Think before you drink – plan to avoid drink-driving**

This year alone 2,049 people were arrested in Devon and Somerset for drink and drug driving offences.

With the Christmas party season getting started, DSFRS are encouraging you to plan ahead and reduce your risk of inadvertently drink-driving the morning after. Driving when over the alcohol limit is dangerous and illegal. Yet many people don't realise **you could still be over the limit 24 hours after your last drink**.

DSFRS are raising awareness of the risks of drink driving the morning after. Test out your skills by taking this [Think before you drink Christmas quiz](#) (and be in for a chance to win a £100 Amazon gift voucher).

## **HM Coastguard Watchet**

### **Award for Community Service**

Last week the Watchet Coastguard team were proud to receive a community award from Somerset County Council for the contribution team members have made to the people of Watchet and West Somerset.

The 11 volunteers are on call 24/7 and have expertise in coastal emergencies, first aid and casualty care. The team meets weekly and frequently supports the RNLI and Air Ambulance services. Coastal safety messaging and incident prevention patrols were also acknowledged by the Chair of the Council as being undertaken by the team ahead of their 200th Birthday as the world's oldest emergency service.

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

# Community Support – What help is out there?

## Voluntary and Community Sector Support

### Spark Somerset

#### Thriving Communities Somerset Roadshow (Taunton)

10am – 12pm on 18 January 2022 at the Creative Innovation Centre CIC

[Thriving Communities Somerset](#) is a project being delivered by [Spark Somerset](#), in partnership with [Take Art](#) and [Somerset Wildlife Trust](#).

The aim is to strengthen and expand the range of social prescribing activities available across the County, including those which are creative and nature based.

This event has a focus on activities in Taunton and West Somerset but will be of interest to anyone in Somerset who would like to promote wellbeing in our communities through social prescribing.

Tickets are freely available to Health and Social Care staff, charities, voluntary organisations, activity providers and community groups working to improve wellbeing.

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

### Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

#### Hidden Somerset – Food Poverty Report

Hidden Somerset is a series of short reports looking at aspects of life in Somerset that are often hidden from view. By lifting the lid on the experience and insights of frontline grassroots charities that work at the heart of communities, SCF aim to stimulate debate and understanding across a wider audience, helping to inspire new and more impactful philanthropy.

Food Poverty in Somerset is widespread. It is not known exactly how many people rely on emergency food parcels, but the number has been growing steadily for several years. Without access to nutritious food, children's education suffers, and our health declines. It becomes difficult to live our lives with any dignity.

The research highlights that:

- Over 70,000 people in Somerset are worried about being able to provide enough food for their household
- By the end of the academic year in 2021, over 12,000 children were eligible for free school meals in Somerset, an increase of 10% since the start of the year
- There has been a 63% increase in demand for community food projects and initiatives over the last two years
- National research shows that the groups most likely to access food support are single parents, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Reflecting the demography of our county, our survey respondents said that the groups that most accessed their services were single parents, older people and those on

universal credit. 20% of groups reported universal credit recipients as their sole client.

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

## **Surviving Winter Appeal**

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) is thrilled to announce that, following the appeal launch at the end of November, the 2021/22 Surviving Winter appeal has already raised a phenomenal £100,000 - thanks to the incredible generosity of local donors. The team at SCF have been busy distributing funding across the county and aim to support over 500 vulnerable older people in Somerset with a Surviving Winter grant again this winter, helping to keep them warm, safe and well.

The annual appeal encourages pensioners to donate some or all their Winter Fuel Payment, if they don't need it themselves. These donations provide funding and support to our older neighbours across Somerset who are struggling to heat their homes.

To donate some or all of your Winter Fuel Payment, or to make a donation of any size to the Surviving Winter appeal, please visit: [www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter](http://www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter).

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

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

### **Christmas Events across the district**

Each year the CCS Village and Community Agents gather together all the events happening over the festive period in the parishes where they work.

Please [click here](#) to visit the website and find out what's happening where you live.

## **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**

Last week, in response to the Omicron variant, the Government introduced some temporary laws and guidance focussing on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The same control measures prevent the spread of Omicron as those which prevent the spread of other variants of COVID-19. The changes included a change to travel regulations with various countries being added back onto the red list, and the following, which are now temporary law:

- International arrivals from non-red list countries who are fully vaccinated will need to isolate at home and take a PCR test on or before day 2 following your arrival. You are only permitted to leave isolation if this test result is negative. If your test result is positive, you will need to isolate for 10 days.
- Face coverings are a legal requirement in shops, public transport and various other settings. A full list can be found [here](#).
- Those who have come into close contact with an individual who has been infected with the Omicron variant will need to self-isolate for 10 days. This will apply even if you are fully vaccinated or aged 18 or under.

### **Somerset COVID Cases**

The number of cases of COVID-19 in Somerset has slightly increased over the last week but is broadly remaining stable. There has been a change to the national rules however, due to the Omicron variant.

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 28 November approximately 81,913 tests were carried out across the county with 2,482 new confirmed cases. The rates have increased slightly in the last reporting week to 441.5 per 100,000. This is below the South-West average but above the national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset remains at 45 COVID-19 in patients in Somerset hospitals.

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

The Government has recently announced that all eligible adults in England aged 18 and over will be offered a COVID-19 booster vaccine by the end of January.

Following advice from the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), everyone who is currently eligible – including those aged 40 and over, health and social care workers and those at increased risk from the virus due to health conditions – will be able to book their COVID-19 booster vaccine from three months after their second dose.

The Government and the NHS are urging younger people to wait until they are called forward by the NHS – with the more vulnerable continuing to be prioritised for their booster.

Younger age groups will be invited by the NHS in due course in order of age, grouped into five-year age bands.

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 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 NHS Test and Trace have contacted me because I have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the Omicron variant of COVID-19. What should I do?**

**A** It's a legal requirement to self-isolate if you're told to by NHS Test and Trace. You could be fined if you do not do this.

- You should also [get a PCR test \(a test that is sent to a lab\) on GOV.UK](#) to check if you have COVID-19,
- follow advice on [how to avoid catching and spreading COVID-19](#), and
- consider limiting contact with [people who are at higher risk from COVID-19](#).

**Q I was told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, but I have tested negative on my PCR test. Does this mean my self-isolation can end?**

**A** If you test negative:

- keep self-isolating for the rest of the 10 days (if you were told you need to self-isolate),
- anyone you live with who is self-isolating can stop self-isolating if they do not have symptoms.

**If you test positive:**

- you must self-isolate for 10 full days, counting from the day after your symptoms started, or the day after your PCR test if you did not have symptoms, and
- [check if people you live with need to self-isolate](#).

The full guidance about self-isolation can be read [here](#) on GOV.UK.

## **Crime / Safeguarding**

### **Action Fraud**

#### **Public urged to donate safely this Christmas**

Data from Action Fraud reveals that £1.6m of the public's money was lost to online charity fraud over the past year.

The fraud captured by this data includes asks for donations for non-existent charities and the fraudulent collection of funds from genuine charities. Action Fraud's data shows that the £1.6m loss to fraud is up by 16% on the figure reported in the previous year.

The call for the public to give safely this Christmas is being co-ordinated by the Fundraising Regulator – the body which oversees charitable fundraising in the UK. It is encouraging the public to take steps to protect themselves online, particularly as the nation approaches the festive period, during which appeals for charitable donations increase.

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

## **Counter Terrorism Policing**

### **Report Suspicious Activity**

If you've seen or heard something that could potentially be related to terrorism, trust your instincts and report it. Your actions could save lives.

It only takes a moment to make a [report online](#) in confidence.

In an emergency, or if you need urgent police assistance, you should always dial 999.

You can also report suspicious activity by contacting the police in confidence on **0800 789 321**.

Every year thousands of reports from the public help the police keep communities safe from terrorism.

When you make a report about suspicious activity or behaviour, specially trained officers and police staff will take the details and pass these on for further checks. The information you provide will be kept secure and your identity will be protected.

Your call is not recorded, and you do not need to give your name. Don't be concerned about wasting police time.

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

Find out more information on the [Counter Terrorism Police](#) website.

## **Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) Emergency Services come together to keep local communities safe this winter**

Emergency services have agreed to support one another this winter as the sector continues to face exceptional pressure as coronavirus cases continue to increase.

Avon Fire & Rescue Service (AF&RS), Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) and the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) have joined forces to remind residents of safety advice, to increase safety in their homes, their local communities and when engaging in events and celebrations over the winter period.

As the winter months draw in and coronavirus cases continue to increase, SWASFT continue to receive unprecedented demand for their Services across the region. Firefighters and police officers are committed to supporting fellow public sector colleagues by encouraging residents to follow important safety advice in attempt to reduce increasing demands on the ambulance service.

In an emergency, contact 999 and ask for the Service you require, if it is a non-emergency, you can contact all services online or by calling 111 for the NHS or 101 for the police.

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

## **Drink/drug driving contributes to almost one in three fatal collisions**

Almost one in three fatal collisions on the roads of Avon and Somerset in the last year have involved drink or drugs as a contributory factor. This equates to 12 collisions where people were killed through drink or drug driving.

ASP are highlighting these statistics as they participate in the National Police Chiefs' Council's Winter Drink and Drug Driving Operation which runs from 1 December 2021 to 1 January 2022.

ASP have already made 50 arrests for drink and drug driving offences since 1 December. This is up from 32 in the equivalent period last year, when they arrested

a total of 229 people during the annual campaign and up from 26 in the equivalent period in 2019, which saw 221 arrests across the month.

ASP officers are carrying out the largest operation in recent years, employing roadside tests and using information from the public to target known and repeat offenders.

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 last newsletter of 2021 (Issue 89) will go out next week. After a brief hiatus the first issue of 2022 (Issue 90) will be sent out in the week ending 16 January 2022.**

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.

### ***Attachments***

***Exmoor National Park – Order confirmation Notice and Plan***

***Exmoor National Park – Signed Confirmation.***