

# Somerset West and Taunton

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

### **Issue 93 Week ending 06/02/2022**

#### **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. COVID-19 Business Support Grants**

There are two new business support grant schemes, to help certain local businesses within the rating system, deal with business impacts caused by the rise of Omicron in recent weeks.

- Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant.
- Local Hospitality Support Grant (from the Additional Restrictions Grant fund).

This support will take the form of payments in the sum of £2,667, £4,000 or £6,000, depending on the rateable value of the business premises concerned.

Please note that the criteria for the Local Hospitality Support Grant has recently been extended to include the travel, hospitality supply chain, fitness and personal care sectors.

SWT anticipate the closing date for applications to be mid-day on 14 February, however in the case of over-subscription the closing date may be brought forward.

Please [click here](#) for further information on these schemes.

## 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 8 February** – SWT Full Council at 6.15pm in the JMR. (The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](#)).
- **Wednesday 9 February** – SWT Budget Setting Executive at 6.15pm in the JMR. (The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](#)). Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 4 February.
- **Thursday 10 February** – SWT Phosphates Planning Sub-Committee at 1.00pm in the JMR. (The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](#)).

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. Notice of Election – Alcombe Ward

A notice of poll has been published for the election of a district councillor for the Alcombe Ward at SWT. The poll will take place on **Thursday 10 February 2022**.

A statement of Persons Nominated has now been published and can be viewed [here](#). The candidates are Craig Coleman(Cons), Nicole Hawkins (LibDem), Richard Lillis (Indep) and Roos Shanti (Lab).

#### **4. Hazardous tree to be thrice replaced**

A tree which is leaning perilously over Taunton High Street opposite the Vivary Park gates, is set to be replaced with three new saplings.

Thought to have been planted when the High Street was originally pedestrianised in the 1970's, the Acer Saccharinum (Silver Maple) has outgrown its brick planter, rupturing 18 inches of the surrounding reinforced concrete.

Following a detailed inspection, SWT Council's Parks and Open Spaces team have determined that the Silver Maple must be felled to safeguard pedestrians and nearby properties.

Public notices have now been displayed within the vicinity and the removal works have been scheduled for **Sunday, 13 February**.

In line with its three-for-one policy, SWT will replace the Silver Maple with three new specimens to include: a Gleditsia Triacanthos (Honey Locust) in Victoria Park, a Metasequoia Glyptostroboides (Dawn Redwood) in Taunton Green and a Liquidambar Styraciflua (Sweet Gum 'Worplesdon') in Priorswood Playing Field.

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

#### **5. Green Flags raised in award winning parks**

Green flags have been raised at seven of SWT's parks and open spaces – a sign they have been recognised as some of the very best in the country.

Flags have been raised at Blenheim Gardens in Minehead; Taunton's Vivary, Victoria, French Weir and Comeytrove Parks; Wellington Park and Swains Lane Nature Reserve in Wellington.

They were awarded to the Council through the [Green Flag Award Scheme](#) to demonstrate they have the highest possible environmental standards, are beautifully maintained and have excellent visitor facilities.

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

#### **6. Reminder - SWT Green Flag Parks – Survey**

Do you spend time visiting SWT Green Flag Award Parks? How would you rate them and what could be improved to meet your needs?

Have your say by completing SWT's online survey to help towards developing a 2022 management plan. The survey closes on **Tuesday 8 February 2022** and can be accessed [here](#).

## 7. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

### Recycle More: Bright Blue Bags on their way

With launch less than a month away, this is a big week for Recycle More in Sedgemoor and West Somerset.

The second and crucial information leaflet - "Recycle More is coming soon" - should be landing on doormats, containing the all-important calendar setting out collection days for the next 12 months.

This week also sees the start of Bright Blue Bag deliveries. The bags are a pivotal part of the expanded collections being introduced by Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) from **Monday 28 February**.

With a 60-litre capacity, the Bright Blue Bags are tough, waterproof and washable. Key features include:

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

The Bright Blue Bag is used to hold:

- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays (rinsed and squashed/nested)
- Tins and cans (rinsed and crushed if safe to do so)
- Aerosols (empty)
- Foil (rinsed)

It should take around two weeks for everyone to get their bag. As they are delivered, stickers will be stuck on recycling boxes making it clear what needs to go where once Recycle More starts.

No one should put their bag out for collection until their first Recycle More collection day – which is made clear in the leaflet calendar.

As well as the calendar, the "Coming soon" leaflet includes a simple "what goes where" guide to the new service.

From the first new collection, recycling should be sorted as follows:

- Green box – glass bottles and jars, and cartons, including Tetra Pak
- Black box – paper and card
- Brown food waste bin – all food waste

Household electricals can go into an untied carrier bag on top of recycling. The bags will be returned. Small batteries should go into tied bread bags or similar see-through bags.

You can find lots more information about Recycle More online at [somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more](https://somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more) Extra guidance and support can be requested using a form on this page, or by calling SWT.

Recycle More will also improve recycling for homes with shared or communal collections - for example blocks of flats and homes of multiple occupancy – later in the year.

## **New Council for Somerset**

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](#).

The website <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk> 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).

## **Legal Framework for the new Somerset Council to be debated in Parliament**

Government has laid before Parliament the Structural Changes Order (SCO) that will create the legal basis for a new council in Somerset. The detail of the order will be debated by both Houses of Parliament in the coming weeks. Once approved, it will be law that a new single new unitary council – Somerset Council – will be responsible for providing both county and district council services from 1 April 2023.

This is a crucial part of the process. It comes in good time for us all to move forward together and build a new council that can improve services and speak up for Somerset on the national stage.

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

Don't forget to check the website for the latest news [newsomersetcouncil.org.uk](https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk) And you can contact the team anytime by emailing [info@newsomersetcouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@newsomersetcouncil.org.uk)

## **Be a Champion of Your Community**

The clock is ticking down on the deadline for candidates to come forward if they want to stand for election in Somerset in May. There are around nine weeks to go before nominations close for those interested in standing as one of Somerset's community champions at county or local level.

These are crucial elections for Somerset with the creation of a new, unitary council in April 2023 – the first major change to the way the county is governed in almost 50 years. New councillors will build a new and very different kind of local government, that will shape the county for decades.

Nominations can be submitted to the appropriate District Council office from 22 March and close at 4pm on 5 April for the elections taking place on 5 May at county,

city, town, and parish council levels. For the county, 110 councillors will be elected who will serve a five-year term.

City, town, and parish council elections also take place on 5 May, offering the chance for people to stand up for their community right at the grass roots. They too will serve a five-year term.

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

If you are interested in standing for election, at county or city, town, and parish level you can find out more here:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/how-the-council-works/elections/>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor>

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-elections>

## Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

### Somerset County Council (SCC)

#### SCC Highway Maintenance Update

The end of January brought us much milder temperatures and consequently fewer salting actions on the Highway network. The consequences of the last couple of months of freezing/thawing are currently a high number of Safety Defects such as potholes becoming apparent across the County. These works will take priority to ensure the safety of the road using Public.

Currently SCC Highways are carrying out a programme of footway resurfacing schemes. These include:

- **B3187 North Street, Wellington** (starting on 31 January, temporary road closure).
- **Broomfield Close, Taunton** (starting on 7 February); and
- **Broughton Close, Taunton** (starting on 14 February).

Road Edge ploughing works:

- **A396 Exe Valley** – various locations (from 7 - 10 February – Stop & Go boards)

Drainage works are:

- **A39 Exeter Road Sampford Arundel** (started on 31 January, temporary lane closure) – these works will run for the next 2 weeks.
- **Ash Priors Common, near Bishops Lydeard**, (started on 1 February, temporary road closure).
- **Higher Lodge, Willet** (now completed).
- **A39 Bratton Straight**, between **Minehead** and **Selworthy** (starting on 7 February, temporary traffic signals).

There is also a lot of carriageway patching, gully emptying, drain jetting and verge work being undertaken on a localised basis across Somerset West and Taunton.

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.

## **Urgent Emergency Road Closure – Albermarle Road, Taunton**

Please be aware that SCC has received a notification of a TTRN (urgent / emergency) road closure at **Albermarle Road, Taunton** which commenced on **31 January 2022** and is expected to last until **18 February 2022**.

The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site **is not permitted** on this occasion.

For any further information about this closure please contact **Wessex Water** on **0345 600 4600**, quoting reference: **ttro480198**.

## **Reporting a problem on the road**

Alerting SCC to potholes or a host of other problems on the road is now easier and quicker – and you can track its progress after you've reported it.

Gone is the need to make phone calls or send emails - thanks to a new upgraded online system with an improved interactive map, members of the public can report a problem 24/7 and the Highways team will get on the case. From potholes, blocked drains and broken manhole covers, to overgrown vegetation, damaged pavements or cycle paths, faulty traffic lights or missing markings - they can all be reported in just minutes from a smartphone, tablet or computer.

The full range and how to report is available here [www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/).

The new development means that if you're reporting a fault, you can now track its progress. If it's safe to pull over, all you need to do is take a quick picture of the fault, then visit the Report It site on your phone, answer a few simple questions and upload your picture. You'll be sent a link which enables you to track its progress.

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

## **The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

### **A celebration to remember in Somerset**

The Lord Lieutenant of Somerset is calling on the county's residents to come together to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and make it an event to remember.

The Queen will formally start to celebrate her personal Platinum Jubilee year from Sunday 6 February – the date of her Accession to the Throne in 1952.

The Lord Lieutenant of Somerset Mrs Annie Maw is encouraging the communities of Somerset to make the most of the once in a lifetime chance to commemorate this unique milestone in the nation's history.

The focus of celebrations will take place over the extended Bank Holiday Weekend **June 2-5**. During that period the Queen will be attending several official events including Trooping the Colour, a service in St Paul's Cathedral, a huge concert at Buckingham Palace on the Saturday evening, and a spectacular pageant outside Buckingham Place on Sunday 5 June.

In Somerset, there is the chance to mark the occasion with a range of activities over the Jubilee weekend, not least the Beacon celebrations which are due to be lit at **9.45pm on Thursday 2 June**, and the traditional Street Parties or Village Hall parties on **Sunday 5 June**.

Everyone who is planning or organising a Beacon ceremony, please register it. There is no cost to registering a beacon and it means your event is on the national map – and you can obtain a certificate to mark the occasion.

If you are holding a Street Party, Village Hall Party, or another event, please submit details onto the interactive Platinum Jubilee event map: [Events – The Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022](#).

For guidance on planning and registering events for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, visit [www.platinumjubileesomerset.org.uk](http://www.platinumjubileesomerset.org.uk).

Please [click here](#) to read the full SCC Press Release.

## **National Apprenticeship Week 2022**

### **Building Futures**

Next week sees the start of National Apprenticeship Week 2022. For young people, the week offers excellent opportunities to find out:

- how to become an apprentice.
- what apprenticeships are available.
- which employers offer them.
- and information about starting an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships are available at multiple levels, offer on-the-job training and the opportunity to earn while training - and some include a qualification, like a degree.

Please [click here](#) to view a range of opportunities to find out more about apprenticeships from employers, education establishments and training providers in Somerset.

## **Exmoor National Park (ENP)**

### **Exmoor Dark Sky Discovery Trail**

Immerse yourself under some of the darkest skies in the country exploring the [Exmoor Dark Sky Discovery Trail](#). This gentle walk will take you to the heart of the

National Park's International Dark Sky Reserve - the first to be designated in Europe - for a magical experience. On a clear night thousands of stars will be visible, as well as the sounds of nature and wildlife all around you.

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

## **Quantock Hill AONB**

On the morning of Saturday 15 January the Government published its response to the [Landscapes Review](#), an independent review completed and published three years ago into protected landscapes (AONBs and National Parks) led by Julian Glover. The Government response is in the form of a 33-page document and can be found on GOV.UK here: [Landscapes review \(National Parks and AONBs\): government response - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

There is much to like in the government response from an AONB perspective although key funding proposals are disappointing.

To comment on the response, see the government consultation here: [LPconsultation](#)

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

## **Idverde Ltd**

### **National Nest Box Week (14 – 21 February)**

In February, Idverde take part and promote National Nest Box week. Since 1997, [Nest Box Week](#) was set up and developed by the [BTO](#) (British Trust for Ornithology) and always runs for a week around the 14 February. It is timed to take place when "love is in the air", and smaller birds are pairing up ahead of the breeding season.

During this week, there's lots of advice and activity in the media to encourage everyone to put up nest boxes in their local area and conserve our native breeding birds.

Idverde looks after thousands of parks, nature reserves, school grounds and open spaces across the UK. As part of the service, Idverde work alongside local volunteer organisations, Friends of the Park groups, schools, and members of the public. Public interest in nature conservation has never been higher, and yet funding for nature is declining every year, not to mention the pressures of housing development, loss of habitats and climate change.

Idverde have nesting boxes available to be given to parishes and community groups, to put up in public places for the enjoyment of all.

If you would like to find out more about this offer, please contact Idverde on [Julie.Lynch@idverde.co.uk](mailto:Julie.Lynch@idverde.co.uk) at the Minehead depot.

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

### **Top causes of rescues and how to avoid them**

DSFRS do more than just put out fires. They rescue people too. Did you know that they attend more road incidents than fires each year?

The fire service attends over 1,000 road traffic collisions a year. On average, 55 people are killed, while a further 650 are seriously injured. More people die on the road than they do in fires. You should:

- check your car before you drive and keep up to date with servicing and your MOT. [Car fires](#) and accidents can be prevented with regular car maintenance,
- drive appropriately in severe weather conditions,
- stick to the speed limits,
- never use your mobile phone when driving,
- always wear a seatbelt,
- never drink or take drugs and drive.

[Find out more about staying safe on the road.](#)

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

### **Spark Somerset**

#### **Velocity Digital Inclusion Event**

**Wednesday 9 February, 2.00pm – 4.00pm (Online)**

This is the first in a series of free workshops for Somerset voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations being delivered by the Velocity digital inclusion programme.

This free online workshop will show how Microsoft 365 can improve collaboration within your organisation. - book your space [here](#).

### **Grow for Good Forum**

**Wednesday 16 February 7.30pm – 9.00pm (Online)**

A free forum for voluntary groups and individuals in Somerset who use growing and gardening to support positive change in their communities.

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

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 book your place.

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

#### **New neighbourhood grants fund launched**

Somerset Community Foundation have launched a new grant pot through the Somerset Community Partnership Fund.

The fund has been created in partnership with Somerset Community Foundation, The Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and Somerset County Council. Grants ranging from £500 - £5,000 are available to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations for day-to-day running costs, or for specific projects.

That means it can be used for things like rent, utilities, or insurance as well as staff time or to buy equipment.

The SCF want to support a wide range of groups and will prioritise those that:

- improve people's health and wellbeing, including those involved in social prescribing,
- reduce people's isolation by connecting them with others
- tackle stigma and discrimination,
- run community buildings and other facilities,
- bring communities together and build their resilience.

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

## **Training and Employment Support Grants**

The South West Enterprise Fund has opened applications for Training and Employment Support Grants.

The grants are for individuals who are aged 16 - 30, either entering or are currently in training or an apprenticeship and need some help with the cost of essential things such as travel, work clothing, laptop or equipment. Grants up to £500 are available.

To receive a decision in March 2022, applications need to be submitted by **Friday 25 February 2022**.

Please [click here](#) for more information and how to apply.

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

Talking Cafes provide a local place you can pop into, for advice and support from a local Village Agent, or if you just want a friendly chat. They can provide help and advice on important services such as: caring for another, housing, health, finance, food boxes, adult social care, children's services, feelings of loneliness and isolation – or anything that is worrying you.

Please [click here](#) to find a Talking Café near you.

You can also watch the Village Agents weekly online [Facebook Live Session](#). These take place every **Wednesday at 1pm**.

Please [click here](#) to visit the webpage and view the schedule.

## **West Somerset Green Forum (WSGF)**

### **More volunteers needed**

WSGF is the new name of the well-established green campaigning group “Forum 21”, who organise West Somerset Together gatherings and have been behind many other green projects over the last three decades.

The Forum is on the lookout for new board members – especially if you have social media or project management skills. To find out more email [wsforum21@gmail.com](mailto:wsforum21@gmail.com).

### **West Somerset Together – Who Are We?**

West Somerset Together bimonthly gatherings are organised by West Somerset Green Forum. The aims of the gatherings are:

- 1). A Support Forum - It can be challenging getting new initiatives or ways of doing things off the ground. West Somerset Together is a forum of like-minded people who will encourage you with your projects and activities if the going gets tough. A place to share solutions, skills, knowledge and enthusiasm!
- 2). Connecting People - They aim to be a hub which helps groups stay connected with each other and enables projects/activities to coordinate with each other.
- 3). People are Power to enable new things to happen! - Together the group can put public pressure on local authorities and better engage with them to influence strategies, services and priorities.

For West Somerset Together gatherings to be even more effective in communicating green initiatives, sharing good practice, and working together to apply for funds, WSGF is really keen for every parish council to send a representative to their meetings. They would also like any local district or county councillors to attend to keep them in the loop with local government actions, strategies and funds. If you know of someone who may be interested, please get in touch to join the mailing list on [westsomersettogether@gmail.com](mailto:westsomersettogether@gmail.com).

### **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

### Young Somerset

#### Children's Mental Health Week: 7-13 February 2022

The theme of this year's Children's Mental Health Week is **Growing Together**.

For Children's Mental Health Week 2022, [Place2Be](#) is encouraging children (and adults) to consider how they have grown, what they need to help them grow, and how they can help others to grow too.

Young Somerset, in partnership with Somerset County Council, have adapted some resources to encourage children and young people to explore the theme 'Growing Together' throughout Children's Mental Health Week. This is a great way for teachers and parents to incorporate awareness around development and growth.

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

### Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Government has announced that the measures put in place under plan B in England are lifted. You should continue to follow safer behaviours to protect yourself and others:

- If you haven't yet had a vaccination, you should step forward, whether it's a first dose, second dose or booster. Please check [here](#) for full booking details.
- Please continue to take regular lateral flow tests – particularly before meeting others. These can be ordered [here](#). Also, remember to report your test results [here](#).
- Wear a well-fitting face-covering when in enclosed spaces such as supermarkets and try to meet others outside or ensure there is good ventilation when meeting inside.
- If you have any Covid-19 symptoms you need to take a [PCR test](#). If you test positive, you must self-isolate.
- Keep your hands clean by washing often with soap and water or using an antibacterial handwash, this protects against a lot of infectious diseases.

[Find out how to stay safe and help prevent the spread.](#)

You can find full coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance and support on the [GOV.UK website](#)

### Somerset COVID Cases

COVID-19 case numbers in Somerset remain high with Omicron now clearly being the dominant strain in the South-West.

In the week ending 23 January approximately 111,270 tests were carried out across the county – this is a slight reduction on the previous week. There were 5,274 new confirmed cases identified by these tests. The rates of COVID-19 remain high and have increased in the last reporting week to 938.1 per 100,000. This is below both the South-West average and the national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset is around 59 COVID-19 in patients in Somerset hospitals.

Rates are particularly high in the school age population, and the highest rates are amongst primary age students. Most children and young people who are infected with Omicron will have mild symptoms or are asymptomatic. Hospitalisation for severe COVID-19 illness remains highest in older age groups and the unvaccinated.

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

There is lots of walk-in availability at a number of vaccination sites across Somerset. These slots are available for first, second and booster vaccinations for everyone aged 18 and for first and second vaccinations for those aged 12–15 and 16-17. Visit the [Grab a Jab](#) site for information about any walk-in clinics being held near you.

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.

Currently there is lot of spare capacity at vaccination sites and locations so there is plenty of choice and opportunity to get vaccinated. The overall aim to vaccinate 95% of the general eligible population still remains and particularly the younger age groups are being asked to consider vaccination if they have not already done so.

### **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](#).

### **Clinton's COVID Catch Up**

This week Clinton discusses the changes which have occurred in the move from Plan B to Plan A regulations. You can view the video [here](#).

### **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](#)
- <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

## **FAQS**

- Q. I am planning a holiday outside the UK. I am unsure what to do on my return. What are the rules on testing and quarantine now?**
- A.** The rules are due to change for international travel with effect from 11 February 2022. Further advice and guidance can be found [here](#).

## **Crime / Safeguarding**

### **Avon and Somerset Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) PCC increases precept to help deliver Police and Crime Plan**

PCC Mark Shelford confirmed an increase in the policing part of the council tax – known as the precept – of 4.1% for residents, 83p more per month for the average band D household.

PCC Mark Shelford's proposal was supported by the Police and Crime Panel.

The increase will help deliver the PCC's ambitious [Police and Crime Plan](#), which aims to provide an efficient, effective and legitimate police service for local people.

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

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

#### **Fraud and Cyber Protect Officers**

Did you know that fraud and cybercrime are two of the fastest growing crime types in the country, almost doubling year on year?

Hard hitting statistics show that £190 billion is lost nationwide to scams every year, and fraud is the UK's biggest crime type accounting for a massive 1/3 of all crime recorded.

A&SP Fraud and Cyber Protect Officers are offering to deliver fraud and cyber awareness talks to local community groups. If you know of a group that would benefit from a session, please contact: [FraudProtect@avonandsomerset.police.uk](mailto:FraudProtect@avonandsomerset.police.uk).

This crime prevention initiative was set up to encourage individuals to identify different types of fraud, educate them on the current threat of fraud and cyber-crime and how best to protect themselves. The team will cover the most common type of scams which include romance fraud, transfer to safe account scams and courier fraud.

Lots of great advice will be given on how to keep safe online, such as creating a unique and strong password for accounts using 3 random words, how to save them to your browser and turning on two-factor authentication (2FA). This is a great learning opportunity to strengthen and protect local communities.

## **Wellington Neighbourhood Policing**

Officers are appealing for information after thieves stole tools and equipment from two vans in Wellington overnight from Monday 31 January - Tuesday 1 February 2022.

A&SP understand how such crimes affect the livelihoods of tradespeople. They know it's not always possible to empty a work van overnight, but recommend that you do so, if you can.

Please [click here](#) for more help and advice on securing commercial vehicles.

## **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.