

# Somerset West and Taunton

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

### **Issue 97 Week ending 06/03/2022**

#### **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. Advice for those living with COVID-19 and their contacts**

There is no longer a legal requirement for people with COVID-19 infection to self-isolate, however if you have any of the main symptoms or a positive test result, the public health advice is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

The advice is for:

- people with any of the main symptoms of COVID-19,
- people who have received a positive COVID-19 LFD or PCR test result,
- people who live in the same household as, or who have had close contact with, someone who has COVID-19.

This also applies to children and young people who usually attend an education or childcare setting, with [additional information available for these settings](#). There is separate guidance for those [working in health and social care settings](#).

This guidance applies to England.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

## 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 14 March** – SWT Audit and Governance Committee in the JMR at 6.15pm. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Wednesday 9 March).
- **Wednesday 16 March** – SWT Executive in the JMR at 6.15pm. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 11 March).
- **Thursday 17 March** – SWT Planning Committee in the JMR at 1.00pm. (Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 14 March).

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. Set up Council Tax direct debit to receive energy rebate quickly

SWT is urging bill-payers to set up a direct debit to pay their council tax, to ensure they get their £150 energy rebate payment as quickly as possible.

The energy rebate scheme was recently announced by the Chancellor Rishi Sunak to help people with rising energy bills. This includes those who already receive assistance in paying some or all of their council bill through local council tax support.

All eligible households in England in council tax bands A to D, should get the £150 payment from their District Council from April this year.

Around 78% of households in Somerset West and Taunton pay their council tax by direct debit and will receive the payment into their bank account without needing to take any action.

However, that leaves around 20,000 households who do not currently pay their council tax through this arrangement and getting the rebate money to them will take longer as they will need to go through a claims process.

To set up a council tax direct debit please call SWT on [0300 304 8000](tel:03003048000). For new direct debits the Government require SWT to have successfully collected a first payment of council tax by direct debit before the energy rebate can be paid.

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

#### **4. SWT approves draft arrangements for new Taunton council**

SWT has approved draft arrangements for the creation of a new town council for Taunton.

The preferred options identified by the Community Governance Review Working Group were supported at a special meeting of the Full Council last night - Thursday 3 March.

They will now be subject to further public consultation before the final recommendations are agreed.

The cross-party working group was set up in March 2021 and presented a set of options for consideration in October, when the Council resolved to commence a community governance review of the unparished area of Taunton and eight adjoining parish areas with the intention to implement a town or parish council for all or part of that area.

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

#### **5. Somerset West Lottery spring bonus prize draw**

Everyone who signs up to buy one or more tickets in the Somerset West Lottery between 1 March and 23 April 2022 will be in with the chance to win a £1,000 gift card to spend in store at B&Q.

All tickets bought during this timeframe will automatically be entered into the bonus prize draw, courtesy of external lottery management company Gatherwell, as well as being in with a chance to win up to £25,000 in the weekly lottery run by SWT.

A lucky winner received a £1,000 Sainsbury gift card in the 26 February bolt on prize draw where 26 Somerset West Lottery players also won cash and free ticket prizes.

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

## **6. Reminder - Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant**

Businesses only have until **18 March** to apply for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant.

Businesses offering in-person services and occupying business-rated premises in hospitality, leisure and accommodation may qualify.

If you have not previously claimed and believe you may qualify, please complete a Register of Interest form which can be found on the SWT website [here](#).

## **7. Reminder - Museum of the Moon comes to Taunton**

SWT has teamed up with UK artist Luke Jerram and St Mary Magdalene Church to bring the Museum of the Moon to Taunton.

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

## **8. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)**

### **Recycle More up and running**

Recycle More collections have kicked-off in Sedgemoor and West Somerset with bags more collected from the kerbside.

The new Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) service started on Monday and crews are reporting a good response and surge in materials, especially plastic.

By the end of the week around 70,000 expanded recycling collections should have been made and more than 23,000 of the new three-weekly rubbish collections.

SWP would like to thank everyone who has helped spread the word about the new service and encouraged residents to prepare.

If you live in the area, please urge friends, family and neighbours to make sure they know their new collection day and look after the collection day calendar in their "Coming soon" leaflet.

Around two-thirds of homes have had a change in collection day and the three-weekly rubbish collections are that little bit harder to remember.

Recycle More is already delivering hundreds of tonnes of extra recycling every week in other parts of the county, and it is expected to quickly become part of the Sedgemoor and West Somerset recycling routine too.

As with any big service change, things won't work perfectly for everyone from day one, but SWP will be working hard with SUEZ to iron-out any teething problems.

A relatively small number of the new collections have taken place a day late this week as crews continue the catch-up from the disruption from Storm Eunice, as well as getting used to the new routes and materials.

They will be working this Saturday (5 March) to complete the catch up.

Anyone who hasn't had their bag or leaflet can request replacements using the form on [somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more](https://somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more) or by calling SWT.

Collection day information is also available online using the "My Collection Day" feature on the somersetwaste.gov.uk website. Calendars can be downloaded for printing or directly into your laptop or mobile device's calendar - creating helpful automatic reminders.

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.

### **Food Waste Action Week 7 – 13 March**

Look out for tips, guidance, and waste-cutting inspiration in the second Food Waste Action Week which starts on Monday.

Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) is backing the second of the annual awareness weeks which highlights environmental consequences of food waste.

The clear message is that food waste feeds climate change - and cutting it is one of the best things you can do to reduce your carbon footprint.

### **Recycling it is great but avoiding food waste in the first place is far better.**

Throughout the week, the [Love Food Hate Waste](#) campaign will be raising awareness of the environmental consequences of wasting food and promoting actions that help to reduce it.

You can also follow @somersetwaste on Facebook and Twitter where SWP will be sharing great food waste tips throughout the week.

The website features hundreds of recipes that can help everyone make the most of their leftovers.

It also has lots of tips on various topics that help avoid food waste – which is good for the planet and good for your pickets, including:

- Meal and portion planning so you only buy what you need and eat all you buy.
- An A-Z guide to good food storage.
- A guide to "compleating" – helping make sure that no edible parts of ingredients are thrown away.
- Making the most of your freezer and fridge.

Each year around 4.5million tonnes of edible food is thrown away by UK households – the equivalent of 8 meals per week.

As well as wasting the food itself, it means wasting the valuable resources that have gone into creating it too - from the land, fertilisers and water that was used for growing it to the greenhouse gases created from its production and transportation.

Where food waste cannot be avoided, recycling it through SWP means it gets turned into electricity and farm compost, all here in Somerset.

In 2018, more than a quarter of the contents of the average Somerset rubbish bin was food waste, 71% of which could have been eaten (excluding things like eggshells and fruit stones).

A staggering 35% of the food waste was thrown away still in its packaging, yet much of it could have been frozen at any time before its use-by date.

Last year SWP collected more than 22,000 tonnes from the county's kerbsides – boosted by the successful “Slim My Waste” campaign in early 2020.

If all that had been avoided, it would have saved an estimated 84,000 tonnes of CO2.

## **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](#).

## **Advisory Board Meetings**

All PowerPoint slides presented at the fifth LGR Advisory Board on 4 February can be found [here](#).

The next meeting will be held in person on **Thursday, 17 March 2022, 4.30pm** at Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory, Taunton TA3 6EU.

An agenda will be made available seven days before the meeting, as will confirmation as to whether the event will be recorded, or live streamed. You'll find the latest updates [here](#).

## **Town and Parish Conference February 2022**

More than 100 representatives from grassroots councils across Somerset attended February's virtual conference to learn more about plans for the new Somerset Council that will come into being in April 2023.

It was a packed programme, and you'll find [all the presentation slides here](#).

## **Be a champion for 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 five 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. They will have more power to drive the changes people want, whether standing for their county, or more locally in city, town, and parish council elections.

Councillors are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job. They can make sure that decisions being made meet the needs of the people of Somerset. They will be the voice of their community helping to shape and direct local services. People from all walks of life can bring something special to their council, whether it's at a county level or hyper-local.

City, town, and parish councils will – if they wish – play a bigger part in making sure that Somerset's services are the best they can be. More powers will be devolved, and grass roots councils will be given the chance to take on greater responsibilities.

Nominations for election can be submitted to the appropriate District Council office from 22 March and the deadline is 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 in 55 divisions, and they will serve a five-year term.

For their first year, County Councillors will take responsibility for all current County Council services and oversee the local government reorganisation to establish a single unitary council on 1 April 2023. District councils will remain until 31 March 2023 and the councillors serving on them will continue in their roles until that date.

From 1 April 2023, the 110 councillors of the unitary council will be responsible for services that are currently delivered by the county and four district councils, ranging from adults and children's social care to highways and housing, and from libraries to planning and licensing.

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>

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).

# Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

## Somerset County Council (SCC)

### SCC Highway Maintenance Update

This week has been slightly calmer weather wise albeit wet, but it has allowed SCC Highways to catch up significantly on safety defect repairs.

As we go to press it has just been confirmed that following a Geo inspection at **Cleeve Hill, Watchet** the road is now safe to re-open, and the closure is being lifted. SCC Highways thank the Public for their patience and understanding regarding this emergency closure as it was necessary to close the road at short notice until the damage caused by Storm Eunice could be thoroughly inspected.

The current schemes in the area are:

**Honiton Rd, Trull, Taunton**, drainage works – **commencing 7 March** (temporary road closure).

**The Parks, Minehead**, footway works - **commenced on 22 February** (temporary traffic signals).

**Harvey's Court, Taunton**, footway works - **commencing on 7 March** (temporary closure of the path).

A programme of drainage grip (small channels cut across verges for highway drainage purposes) cleansing is also underway on our network of rural lanes.

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.

### 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.

## **Temporary Road Closures**

### **Honiton Road, Trull**

SCC in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along **Honiton Road - from the junction with Wayside, northwards for 130 metres.**

This Order will enable Somerset Highways to carry out drainage works. The Order becomes effective on 3 March 2022 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **7 March and last until 25 March 2022** between the hours of 00:00 - 23:59 for a total of 19 days.

Please visit <https://one.network> for further information on the alternative route.

### **Priory Avenue, Taunton**

SCC in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along Priory Avenue - from the junction with Winchester Street in a south westerly direction for 22 metres.

This Order will enable Jurassic Fibre to dig down and repair a double blockage.

The Order becomes effective on 10 March 2022 and will remain in force for eighteen months. The works are expected to commence on **14 March and last until 16 March 2022** between the hours of 6.30pm - 6:30am for a total of 2 nights.

Please visit <https://one.network> for further information on the alternative route. The works promoter will contact residents and businesses directly to discuss access arrangements.

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

### **High praise from Exmoor visitors amid pandemic**

Visitors to Exmoor last year amid the pandemic left glowing reviews in the [National Park's recently published visitor survey](#), with 81 per cent rating their experience as 'very good', up from 67 per cent in 2018 when the survey was last conducted. Despite the ongoing disruption, overall visitor satisfaction held at 99 per cent.

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

## **Quantock Hill AONB**

### **Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme**

Work is beginning next week to protect an area of Quantock Common owned by Friends of Quantock and regularly damaged by unauthorised car parking on the grassland along the road. Quantock Common is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the [Quantock Hills](#), a nationally important wildlife site, but it has had a growing problem with cars badly churning up the turf during wet

weather. Concern is growing about water run-off damaging the nearby sensitive acid mire and archaeological remains are also at risk. The need for action has become especially obvious with the influx of new visitors during the pandemic.

A shallow ditch and low bank will be dug along a total of about 350m of the 1800m-long east side of the Nether Stowey to Crowcombe Road. This will be done only where the terrain or old banks aren't already enough of a barrier and will be just big enough to deter unauthorised parking.

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

## **Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) Faulty household appliances**

DSFRS attend around 115 fires each year caused by domestic appliances.

The most common household appliances to catch fire are tumble dryers and washing machines which cause around 60 fires each year in Devon and Somerset.

The fire service attends around 12 fires each year caused by dishwashers and 10 each year caused by fridges or freezers.

- Never leave an appliance such as a washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher running when you are out, or asleep. If it starts to smoke or a small fire breaks out and you're in the house, you can call the fire service who can deal with the fire before it develops. This will reduce the risk of it causing more serious damage to your whole home.
- Use one socket per appliance. All of these appliances are powerful and use a lot of electricity, so should never be used with extension leads or multi-plug sockets. This will overload the socket and could cause a fire.
- Clear out the lint from your tumble dryer after every use. Follow the manufacturers' guidelines for cleaning and maintenance.

Please [click here](#) to read more safety advice from DSFRS.

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

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

**Saturday 5 March, 10am – 5pm**

**Centre for Outdoor Education & Community Hub (C.O.A.C.H),  
French Weir Park, Taunton, TA1 1AW.**

The centre is adjacent to the River Tone and the beautiful Longrun Meadow Country Park. There will be taster sessions in an array of activities from Zumba to exercise classes in the parkroom, to different activities on the outdoor space opposite The Weir Cafe.

This is a free event and no booking is required for the outdoor activities. The friendly instructors will put you at ease, so bring a friend and come along. SASP will also have local businesses showcasing what's on offer and a special celebratory parkrun at 9am to celebrate International Women's Day. Families and friends are welcome for support.

Please [click here](#) to register for this free event and book onto the indoor activities.

## **Spark Somerset**

**Reflect, Recover, Renew:**

### **A Shared Vision for Somerset's Voluntary and Community Sector (VCSE)**

Delivered by Spark Somerset, Reflect, Recover, Renew investigates the impact of COVID-19 and creates a shared vision for the future of the VCSE sector in Somerset.

It is hoped that the report will be a useful tool for charity leaders, community groups, stakeholders, statutory partners and anyone involved in supporting our communities.

Please [click here](#) to read the full press release and find out more information.

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

### **Making Space for Nature at your village hall and green spaces**

**Tuesday March 8, 10.30am – 12.00pm (Zoom)**

To help nature recover, more people need to take action for nature in their lives and communities. CCS have joined up with Somerset Wildlife Trust to provide training and support to enable communities to take positive action for wildlife at their village hall and/or associated green spaces. Community buildings and associated land provide a fantastic opportunity to provide habitats for wildlife that are also of benefit to local people

Find out how your community can help nature at your village hall or community building and the land associated with these important places.

Somerset Wildlife Trust's Pippa Rayner will provide inspiration, ideas and practical advice on taking positive action for wildlife in ways that also benefit your community. This workshop is free but you need to book your space [here](#).

## **Community Buildings Network Event**

**Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall**

**Thursday March 17 10.00am – 11.30am**

A chance to meet up informally with other village hall trustees for a chat and a coffee. This is a great opportunity to share any questions, concerns or ideas that you have. The event will also include a tour of Norton Fitzwarren Village Hall and a short visual presentation in the cinema room.

You can book your place on this event [here](#).

## **Somerset Wildlife Trust Annual Frog and Toad Spawn Count**

The Great Somerset Wildlife Count is Somerset Wildlife Trust's new community science initiative delivered in partnership with Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC). Its aim is to monitor changes in both the diversity (the variety) of wildlife species we have in the county and the abundance (the quantity) of species we have across the county - both of which also help us track the health of the habitats and ecosystems that exist to support them (and us), which are coming under increasing pressure from changes in our climate.

The Frog and Toad Spawn Count is the first in 2022. Frogs and toads typically spawn from Jan to March and their spawning can be a good indication of where good quality water bodies such as ponds are, and the quality of surrounding habitats. So until the **31 March**, Somerset Wildlife Trust are running a spawn count to collect important data on the location of breeding frogs and toads across the county. They want you to record both toad and frog spawn in your garden ponds, local community ponds, and any ponds you come across in your adventures in the countryside.

Please [click here](#) to find out more and download an information pack.

## **Community Employment Hubs Recruit West Somerset Careers and Jobs Fair**

**Wednesday 9 March from 3.00pm-5.00pm at Butlins, Minehead.**

Are you looking for your next job or to develop your skills for your next role? If so, don't miss out on the Recruit West Somerset Careers and Jobs Fair.

The event, which is being hosted by Butlins, is expecting more employers to attend this year, who are keen to raise awareness of employment opportunities within their businesses and organisations in West Somerset.

Many employers attending will have current vacancies and apprenticeships on offer and will be keen to seek out local talent. Therefore, attendees are advised to bring along an up-to-date copy of their CV.

If you would like any further information or you are an employer who has current vacancies and would like to book a stand at no cost: please contact Minehead Job Centre on telephone 01643 435822.

## **Somerset Recovery Fund Opportunity Boost Scheme Project**

A new grant has been launched to help people in Somerset overcome financial barriers when seeking employment and returning to work.

The Opportunity Boost Scheme will provide grants worth up to £500 to help with the cost associated progressing into work, such as transport costs, childcare, work clothes, learning resources and training courses.

The funding for the scheme has been provided through the Somerset Recovery Fund, and the initiative is being delivered in partnership between Somerset County Council and Citizens Advice Somerset.

To qualify, applicants must live in Somerset, be aged 16 or over, not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking and had a pre-COVID salary of less than £25,000.

**Applications are now live and will close on Friday, March 25.**

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

### **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**

### **National No Smoking Day – Wednesday 9 March**

When someone stops smoking, they give their lungs the chance to repair and allows them to breathe easier. There are lots of other benefits too that start almost immediately when quitting.

Smoking causes damage to the lungs and airways and harms the immune system, reducing your ability to fight infection. It involves repetitive hand-to-face movements, which increase the risk of viruses, such as COVID-19, entering the body.

To support people in Somerset to quit, the Stop Smoking Service, [Smokefreelife Somerset](#) is available to provide free, expert support and guidance.

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

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Since 24 February, the legal requirement to self-isolate has been removed in England and replaced with [guidance for living safely with the virus](#).

The SCC Public Health team still advise basic infection control measures should be followed, as these will help slow the transmission of many seasonal illnesses and have a positive impact on reducing sickness levels and improving business continuity. These include regularly washing your hands, maintaining appropriate cleaning regimes and keeping occupied spaces well ventilated.

## **Somerset COVID Cases**

In the week ending 27 February approximately 166,828 tests were carried out across the county. There were 2,520 new confirmed cases identified by these tests. The rates of COVID-19 remain high but have decreased in the last reporting week to 448.2 per 100,000. This is above both the South-West average and the national average.

Hospitalisation data for Somerset has **increased** over the last week to around 62 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.

## **Clintons COVID Catch Up**

In this week's [Catch-up film](#) Clinton discusses the lifting of legal COVID-19 restrictions following the recent announcement by the Government.

COVID-19 is still with us, and Clinton meets with Professor Trudi Grant, Director of Public Health, to offer guidance for living safely with the virus and to encourage people to accept the offer of a vaccination.

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

Over 80% of eligible residents have received two doses of the vaccination. The Vaccination Programme is working with health and community partners to identify locations for mobile vaccination pop-up clinics. By localising the offer, the programme aims to reduce the barriers to access and better understand community needs.

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.

Over 60% of Somerset's young people aged 12 to 15 have had their first COVID-19 vaccine since rollout began in September. The second vaccination for 12–15-year-olds is now available to [book via the national booking service](#) and is also available at many [walk-in local](#) vaccination centres [COVID-19 vaccinations in Somerset - Somerset CCG](#). Please continue to ensure that all eligible groups are aware of the vaccination offer available to them, including those that may be contacted by their GP as part of the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable cohort.

The in-school offer for the second COVID-19 vaccination for 12-15 years olds has also begun, alongside the HPV vaccination. Parents and carers may find their local vaccination centre is able to administer the second COVID-19 jab to 12-15 year olds sooner than the school appointments.

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.

## **The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline**

This single phone number is available for anyone in Somerset who needs 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

## **Crime / Safeguarding**

### **Action Fraud**

#### **Beware of Scam Texts claiming to be from the NHS**

Watch out for fake text messages claiming to be from the NHS. Since January 1, 412 victims have reported losses totalling more than £531,000.

- Be aware of requests for personal information in messages claiming to be from the NHS
- Be alert to links or attachments in unexpected messages claiming to be from the NHS
- Do not respond to requests for money, bank details or passwords
- The NHS will never ask for payment or any financial details.

- If you are suspicious about an email forward it to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)
- If you are suspicious about a text message, forward it to the number 7726 (it's free of charge).

For information on NHS coronavirus testing, visit: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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

### **Rural Affairs Unit**

**Cutcombe Market, Wheddon Cross**

**Wednesday 9 March, 11.00am – 12.00pm**

Exmoor Neighbourhood Policing Team will be attending the Cutcombe Market to answer any local questions/concerns. It will provide a great opportunity to speak with your local officers and join the Farm Watch scheme if you are not currently a member.

### **Two men convicted following investigation into rural thefts**

Two men have been convicted of the theft and dishonest handling of property from farms across West Somerset following a lengthy police investigation.

These included thefts of quad bikes, trailers, a 4x4 vehicle and a motorhome with a combined value of around £45,000.

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.