

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 103 week ending 01/05/2022

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. Make sure you are ready to vote on 5 May

With just under one week before people in Somerset go to the polls, voters are being urged to get ready for the forthcoming local elections. Voters will already have a poll card informing them where they should go to cast their vote. Voters will be allocated to a polling station based on their home address.

Information on polling stations is also available on the Electoral Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/your-election-information. For more information about the elections, please visit: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/how-the-council-works/elections/>

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 meetings and events are scheduled to take place over the next couple of weeks, which are as follows:

- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 4 May, Cancelled.**

- **Elections 2022, Polling Day – Thursday 5 May.** Polling stations will be open from 7.00am to 10.00pm. Voters who have opted to vote by post must return their postal ballot pack by 10pm; they can hand it in at their polling station if they have not got time to return it by post.
- **SWT Executive Committee – Wednesday 18 May 2022,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions will be 4pm on Monday 16 May.

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.

Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements. Information on speaking at public meetings is available on the SWT [website](#).

3. Town and Parish Council Elections

People elected to represent their community at the town and parish council elections also taking place on 5 May, will serve a five-year term.

For your information the only contested parishes/parish ward areas are:

- Brompton Regis
- Cheddon Fitzpaine (Maidenbrook Ward)
- Cutcombe
- Old Cleeve (Old Cleeve Ward)
- Porlock
- Stogursey
- Watchet
- Wellington (East Ward)
- Wellington (Rockwell Green Ward)
- Wellington (South East Ward)
- Wellington (South Ward)
- Winsford

Polling day is on **Thursday 5 May** and the counting of votes and declarations of the results for the town and parish council is scheduled to take place on **Saturday 7 May 2022**.

Please visit the [SWT Elections 2022](#) page on the Council website for more information.

4. Purdah – Pre-Election Period

During local government elections, there is a period described as a ‘period of heightened sensitivity’ (formerly referred to as purdah). For the forthcoming elections, this is **until Thursday, 5 May 2022**. During this time, the focus is on the publicity that certain actions or decisions may create. It certainly does not

mean that all council activity grinds to a halt, that committee decisions cannot be made, nor non-contentious consultations launched.

Elected Members, who are currently members and seeking election to Somerset Council can continue to express their own views to the press and are at liberty to organise any proactive publicity themselves, **but not** utilising any resources of the council; the auspices of the press offices, photographs that the authorities have paid for or taken.

The important detail is that no publicity from any Council at this particularly sensitive time should appear to support a particular candidate or even to support a single specific viewpoint as advocated by a particular candidate.

Any publicity should not be perceived as seeking to influence public opinion or promote the public image of a particular candidate or group of candidates.

The main point to bear in mind is that a local authority shall not publish any material that, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect support for a candidate or political party.

If in doubt, please contact:

Amy Tregellas, Monitoring Officer
A.Tregellas@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Kevin Williams, Deputy Monitoring Officer
K.Williams@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

5. SWT updates climate positive planning advice

In response to changes in legislation and policy, SWT has updated its interim planning guidance with regards to consideration for the Climate and Ecological emergencies.

Originally approved and published in February 2021, the *Climate Positive Planning: Interim Guidance Statement on Planning for the Climate and Ecological Emergency* supports the Council's [Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience \(CNCR\) Action Plan](#) and the countywide approved [Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy](#) by ensuring that consideration for climate and ecological factors have been applied when submitting and approving development proposals.

Intended as a temporary measure, it seeks to clarify related policies adopted within the Council's existing Local Plans until successive policies can be implemented by the new unitary authority for Somerset (Somerset Council), following its formation in April 2023.

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

6. Electric Vehicle Charge Points installed

The latest additions to the SWT charging network include twin 22kW fast charging points at:

- North Road Car Park, Minehead
- Central Car Park, Porlock
- Belvedere Road and Wood Street Car Parks, Taunton
- Swain Street Car Park, Watchet
- Killick Way Car Park, Williton

Each charging station comprises one or two rapid charge points, available for public use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Users are able to locate the stations easily using apps such as [Zap-Map](#), the newly launched InstaVolt app or via the [InstaVolt](#) website. Payment will be contactless using a debit or credit card and on a no subscription, pay-as-you-go basis.

7. Online reporting of Housing Repairs

Recently the Housing Service launched an online repair tool to allow customers to report repairs to council properties. It can be accessed here [Housing repairs \(somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](https://somerwestandtaunton.gov.uk).

Please report repairs using this online tool or via the **0300 304 8000** number. Repairs that are reported by other methods may be delayed as the correct information has not been captured. Please help SWT to provide the best possible service to our customers by reporting repairs using the most effective method.

8. Somerset West Lottery Spring 2022 bolt-on-prize

The Somerset West Lottery is now running the spring 2022 bolt-on prize draw.

Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets between now and 25 June 2022 will be in with a chance to win a luxury forest staycation worth £1,000 with holiday company, [Forest Holidays](#), courtesy of external lottery management company [Gatherwell](#).

[Forest Holidays](#) offer luxury hot tub cabins and a wide range of activities for families, groups and couples at a variety of locations situated in some of the UKs most beautiful forests in Scotland, Cornwall, Snowdonia, Norfolk and more. All tickets bought during this timeframe will automatically be entered into the bonus prize draw as well as being in with a chance to win up to £25,000.

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

9. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Bank holiday collection changes

Don't forget - rubbish and recycling collections take place a day later than usual next week to accommodate the bank holiday on **Monday 2 May**. That includes collections scheduled for Friday 6 May taking place **on Saturday 7 May**. Please

make sure your boxes, bags and (if needed) bins are out on the right day and before 7am.

Remember, collection days can always be checked online using the My Collection Day feature on the Somerset Waste Partnership website somersetwaste.gov.uk

You can also download a printable copy of your calendar. Better still click the iCal icon to download collection dates into the calendar on your computer or mobile device (Android and Apple) creating automatic reminders.

Thanks to Recycle More, more material than ever can be recycled from the kerbside, including plastic pots tubs and trays, and cartons including Tetra Pak. Small electricals can be collected too, but please try to get them repaired or passed onto others before putting them out for recycling. Items must be small enough to fit into a carrier bag (not a black sack) left untied next to your other recycling.

Household batteries will also be collected, including AA, AAA, C, D sizes, camera and watch batteries and lithium batteries from computers and phones. Put them in a small, tied, see-through plastic bag, like a bread bag or freezer bag, on top of your recycling.

Crews make around 350,000 collections every week and you can help them by squashing, flattening and crushing your recycling if you can. It saves space in your boxes and bags and helps crews complete rounds quickly.

- Squash plastic bottles and cartons and put the lids back on.
- Crush tins and cans if it is safe to do so.
- Flatten cardboard boxes and tear up larger pieces.

Tops, whether plastic or metal, can be left ON plastic bottles and glass bottles and jars, but remove the spray nozzles, trigger tops and pumps.

To see, download, print or add to a smart device all your collection days - for recycling, rubbish and garden waste - visit My Collection Day at somersetwaste.gov.uk. (When entering your post code in the search bar, please include the gap i.e., AB12 3CD)

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. Extra guidance and support can be requested using a form on this page, or by calling SWT.

New Somerset Council

Polls open in just one week

Voters in Somerset will be heading for the polls in just under a week's time – and will be able to cast their vote for **two** candidates in the County Council election on **5 May**.

This year's election is different as 110 councillors will be elected – two in each of the 55 divisions – as Somerset prepares for the biggest change in local government in decades.

For their first year, the 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.

So, it is crucial that people in Somerset use their two votes to elect those who will represent them for the next five years.

You can follow the election results as they are announced during the day on 6 May by following Somerset County Council's twitter account [@SomersetCouncil](#) and [#SomersetVotes](#). Results will also be updated on the County Council's website: www.somerset.gov.uk.

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

A dedicated inbox to ensure enquires about the new council and the unitary programme are dealt with quickly and efficiently has been set up. Email info@newsomersetcouncil.org.uk.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highway Maintenance Update

This is the first update for the new financial year, and we start with some good news regarding the closure of the B3191:

On Thursday 29 April the landslip alert warning system was triggered at **Cleeve Hill, Watchet** and as a precautionary measure SCC Highways had no alternative but to close the B3191 at this point for public safety. SCC engineers have been to site and discovered that the issue was due to deliberate vandalism, and so have lifted the closure and re-opened the road in time for the Bank Holiday weekend. As this is not

the first occasion of vandalism the Police have been informed and are monitoring the situation.

This week, the Highways team have successfully completed the repair of 232 Highway Safety Defects. (153 in Taunton and 79 in West Somerset respectively).

New works for week commencing 2 May 2022 are:

- Repair of sinkhole in **Duke Street Taunton** on 3 May - approx. 2 days duration.
- Changing of speed limit signs **Stoke St Gregory Taunton** on 3 May – approx. 4 days duration.
- Carriageway resurfacing preparation works **Cher, Minehead** on 3 May – all week.
- Continuing: footway resurfacing works in **Bishops Lydeard at Darby Way** and at **King George Road, Minehead**

Completed: resurfacing preparation works **Quirke Street, Minehead**, using a temporary road closure. Resurfacing works will be carried out shortly (details to follow).

For information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit 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/.

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 Closure: - BT - St Augustine Street, Taunton

Please follow the link [ttr0786807TD](#) to view the above road closure; and the link for the **Notice 2** which can be found [here](#).

The works are expected to commence on **9 May 2022** and last for **4 days** to enable **TLU Contracts Ltd to carry out ducting works on behalf of BT Openreach**.

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 **TLU Contracts Ltd** on **01823 661 104**, quoting reference: **ttro786807**. Please note that should you require to view a closure which is more than two weeks ahead, you will need to register for free with www.One.Network

Hinkley Point C

New training centres ready for next phase of construction

The Energy Minister, Greg Hands opened one of three new training centres to support the Hinkley Point C project in Somerset, on Thursday 28 April 2022.

Together with existing facilities and investment into education and skills, the centres will be ready to help local people join the additional 4,000 workers needed for the next phase of the power station's construction.

The Minister unveiled the new Welding Centre of Excellence at Bridgwater and Taunton College's campus in Bridgwater. The project has invested £8 million into the three new training centres, in partnership with the college. The Welding Centre will train and qualify 500 welders a year, helping local people into work and meeting skills shortages in the South West and across Britain.

The welding facility is the latest Centre of Excellence to be opened in support of the Hinkley Point C project, which has now invested a total of £24 million into education, skills, and employment support. It joins the Electrical Centre of Excellence in Bridgwater and the Construction Skills and Innovation Centre, in Cannington. A Mechanical Centre of Excellence will open in Cannington this summer, to train students in pipefitting, steel erection and plating. Together they will support the next phase of the project, as electrical systems and major components begin to be installed.

The centres will provide new routes to people who are looking to start a career in construction, regardless of their background or skill set. New training courses have been launched, including the government's Bootcamp scheme, T-level work experience placements and supported traineeships.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the Welding Centre of Excellence.

Step Up Somerset

Employment advice service coming to a location near you

Looking for work, new skills and training opportunities or information on how to grow your business? Would you like to try out digital equipment to find out what might suit you? Then come and visit the new Step Up to Mobile Outreach service which is coming to a location near you.

Step Up to Mobile Outreach will be visiting localities across Somerset from May to the end of October, with the aim of helping people access a range of employment, digital and business support provision.

Friendly advisors will be on hand to help you explore work opportunities, improve your CV, give helpful tips on how to find and apply for jobs online, and signpost you to a range of organisations who can provide specialist support. If you are currently in employment, the advisors will provide advice on training and skills opportunities to help you progress in work or change career pathways.

Information will be readily available if you are thinking of starting up your own business or want to grow an existing business, including how the local library service can help you achieve your goals.

The Step Up to Mobile Outreach service's first event will be:

- outside the **Community Centre in Wiveliscombe on Tuesday, May 10** between 10am and 2pm.
- This will be followed by stops at **Dulverton town car park on May 11**, between 10am and 2pm,
- and **Brittons Ash Community Hall in West Monkton on May 12**, between 10am and 2pm.

Keep an eye on the Step-Up Somerset website at [Events \(stepupsomerset.org.uk\)](https://stepupsomerset.org.uk) for updates on the dates and locations of upcoming events.

Exmoor National Park (ENP)

What is Lyme Disease and why do we need to be tick aware?

[Lyme disease](#) is an infection caused by a type of bacteria that is carried by some species of ticks. People can get the disease if bitten by an infected tick.

Ticks are most active in the spring and summer months when the weather warms up but can be found all year round. There are estimated to be around 3000 cases of Lyme disease diagnosed in England each year.

People are most likely to be exposed to ticks when spending time outdoors in green spaces.

Ticks and the potential risk of Lyme disease shouldn't stop you from enjoying the outdoors, but there are various things you can do to avoid being bitten and to reduce the chance of being infected.

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

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Top tips for motorcycle safety

DSFRS want motorcyclists to prepare themselves (and their bikes) for the road this summer. Motorcyclists only make up 1% of traffic on the road, but in 2020 accounted for 20% of road fatalities and 12% of road casualties in Great Britain.

The greatest proportion of road fatalities happen on rural roads, and there are many of those in Somerset West and Taunton.

- Get a CRASH card - place this card in your helmet so paramedics can locate your medical info and next of kin in case of a fall.
- Maintain your bike - find out what DSFRS recommend you check before you ride.
- Wear proper safety clothing to protect you from serious injury in the event of a crash.
- Appreciate the impact weather conditions can have on your journey. Wet roads can be very slippery after a period of dry weather.
- Attend a FREE Biker Down workshop and learn how to save the life of a motorcyclist and those who ride with them.

Please [click here](#) for more tips and information from the Fire Bike team.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Sea Swimming and cold-water shock

The sun may be out for many of us now that spring has started, but the sea is still 'brrrr'acing. If you're tempted to have a dip, perhaps for the first time, please remember that the average temperature of the sea around the UK is a chilly 12°Celsius, (which is about the same as a pint of beer!)

Cold water shock is very real and can put you in difficulties very quickly, no matter how fit you are. A little preparation can help to minimise the risks:

- Don't swim alone,
- check the weather forecast and tide times,
- ensure you have warm clothes for before and after your dip.
- Wearing a wetsuit will help increase your buoyancy and reduce the chances of suffering cold water shock.
- Be seen – wear a brightly coloured swim cap and consider using a tow float.
- Acclimatise to the water temperature slowly – never jump straight in.
- Stay in your depth and know your limits.
- Take a mobile phone in a waterproof pouch so you can call for help if you need to.

If in doubt, stay out – there's always another day to go for a swim. If you see anyone in difficulties around the coasts, please call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Read more about swimming safety and cold-water shock [here](#).

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

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

Get outside in Somerset – volunteering opportunities

SASP are looking for volunteers to help at the **Laps of Lyngford** event in Taunton on **19 May**. Tasks include setting up and packing away, marshalling, lap counting and handing out medals.

It's a great opportunity to be part of a community event and work alongside local organisations, large and small.

You can find out more and sign up [here](#).

Life Cycle UK

Get Somerset Cycling Project

Life Cycle UK has received charitable grants from the HPC Community Fund, Somerset Community Foundation and National Grid Community Grant Programme to help more people in Somerset unlock the benefits of cycling and bikes. By enabling people to make more short journeys by bike, it can help to mitigate the residual impacts of building the Hinkley Point C power station - such as increased volumes of traffic - while improving the economic and environmental well-being of local communities.

Life Cycle UK have joined with local community organisations across Somerset to develop and deliver projects that support local people to get cycling and make the benefits of cycling more accessible. They will also strengthen the 'cycling sector' by giving professional training to bicycle mechanics and cycling instructors.

The aim is for everyone in Somerset to be able to access to this healthy, green and low-cost form of transport if they want to.

Life Cycle UK is bringing an exciting set of cycling activities and support to "Get Somerset Cycling!" From money off refurbished bikes to confidence-boosting cycle tuition - wherever you are on your cycling journey, they can help! They are also supporting local businesses and community organisations to encourage and enable cycling.

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

Somerset Community Foundation

Grants from the Somerset Fund available for local charities

Grants up to £2,500 are now available for smaller charities, community groups, sports clubs and social enterprises based in Somerset.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) manages [The Somerset Fund](#) and is encouraging groups that run on less than £100,000 a year to apply now for funding.

The grants from The Somerset Fund can be used to pay for essential running costs, like rent, utilities, insurance, or staff time – sometimes known as core costs. The money can also be used for the costs of delivering a project or service in or for your community.

Applications to the fund must be made by **5.00pm, Friday 3 June 2022**.

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

Spark Somerset

Free Workshops and networking events for Social Enterprises

The Somerset Social Entrepreneurs Programme is led by the [School for Social Entrepreneurs](#) (SSE) in partnership with Somerset Community Foundation, Smart Communities Ltd and Spark Somerset.

Income Generation

Wednesday 4 May, 10.00 – 11.30am, via zoom

With increasing competition for limited pots of funding, there's never been a better time to think about how you can make your Social Enterprise more sustainable. Led by [SSE](#) Delivery Lead, Sam Haydock, this workshop will explore alternative sources of income and help you understand which options will work best for you.

Networking Event

Tuesday 10 May, 7.00-8.00pm

The Smart Communities SSE network is here to help social enterprises across the county flourish. If you would like to attend this event please email Marie@somersetccc.org.uk.

Live Social Enterprise Workshop

Wednesday 18 May, 11.00am – 1.00pm Albermarle Centre, Taunton

This live event will explore the fundamentals of Social Enterprise. Come along to hear local success stories, share ideas and experiences, consider your future direction and find out how the Spark Somerset and Smart Communities teams can help you.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Could you REHOME your old phone?

By donating an unused phone to the CCS, you can help reduce loneliness and isolation for people in West Somerset, as well as help in their everyday lives such as doing their shopping online and staying connected to friends and family.

The CCS will:

- refurbish the phone
- remove any personal data
- provide the new owner with a SIM card
- support them to use the phone with video tutorials and install apps that will help them to keep in touch with their loved ones

Check your 'bits and bobs' drawer where old devices lurk waiting to be loved again!
To donate, please contact Village Agent Wayne Stokes on: Email: waynes@somersetccc.org.uk or via **07538 316526**.

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

Health and Welfare

NHS Somerset

Neighbourhood Health Coaching Team

Stop Smoking & Fire Safety Event on Wednesday 4 May

At the Priorswood Community Centre, Taunton

Supporting you to improve your health and wellness including stopping smoking, weight management and drinking less alcohol. If you would like to see a health coach please call **07917 251 587** or email somcgg.healthcoaching4U@nhs.net.

NHS Jobs for You - Online Careers Event

Tuesday 10 May 2022, 6.30 – 7.30pm via Microsoft Teams

Would you enjoy a practical or administrative job or perhaps a supportive patient facing role? With more than 350 different careers in the NHS – there is bound to be one to suit you.

The Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) offers free training and guidance that can lead to flexible, fixed term or permanent employment in the NHS.

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

National Healthy Start Scheme

What is Healthy Start?

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, the [Healthy Start](#) scheme can help you **to buy healthy foods like milk or fruit and get free vitamins**.

The NHS have launched a digital scheme, which offers a prepaid card to those applying for Healthy Start. This replaces the paper vouchers. This card will be automatically topped up every 4 weeks. [This animation](#) - explains how to apply online.

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

New Leaf

Free Online Mental Health Half Day Awareness Course

Wednesday 11 May 2022, 2.00pm – 6.00pm – Online

New Leaf is working with the Somerset Public Health Team to deliver workplace emotional wellbeing training to small and medium sized (SME) businesses across Somerset.

The focus is on supporting those who have been impacted by COVID-19 through the virus itself, experience of lockdown or the impact of the recession.

The course is free for SME's, sole traders and micro providers working in:

- Visitor Economy
- Arts and entertainment
- Construction
- Health and social care
- Farming and agriculture

The Adult Mental Health Awareness Course lasts 4 hours and is accredited with Mental Health First Aid England. It is an introductory session to raise awareness of mental health. Learning takes place through a mix of presentations, group discussions and workshop activities.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about this event, and register your attendance.

Living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19

The [Government has published important advice](#) for people with symptoms of respiratory infections, such as COVID-19; people with a positive COVID-19 test result and their contacts; and advice on safer behaviours for everyone.

There are simple things you can do in your daily life that will help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, such as flu and protect those at highest risk.

Things you can choose to do are:

- Get vaccinated.
- Wear a face covering or a face mask.
- Let fresh air in if meeting others indoors.
- Stay at home if you have [symptoms](#)
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Practise good hygiene:

If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, you are advised to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.

Please [click here](#) to read the guidance on what to do if you have symptoms but have not taken a test.

COVID-19 Testing

Free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for COVID-19, for the general public, came to an end on the **31 March 2022**, in line with the move to the [Living with COVID-19 strategy](#).

Please [click here](#) to find out more information on who can access free COVID-19 tests from 1 April 2022 and how to get them.

Spring Booster Jabs

SCC's Public Health team is urging older and more vulnerable residents to take up the offer of a free, further COVID-19 booster vaccine.

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), as part of its latest review of the UK vaccination programme, has recommended an additional spring booster dose for our most vulnerable individuals. People aged 75 years and older, residents in care homes for older people, and those individuals aged 12 and over with weakened immune systems, are being offered a spring booster of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine.

The Spring Booster is being rolled out for these groups of people because they are at higher risk of developing severe complications from COVID-19. Protection from their previous vaccinations may be lower and may decline more quickly over time. If the number of infections increases over the summer, this booster should help to reduce their risk of developing serious illness and being admitted to hospital with COVID-19.

Across Somerset, there are more than 80 thousand people eligible to receive their spring booster. They will be contacted by the NHS when it is their turn to receive the vaccine, although anyone eligible who has had six months since their last booster can also go online to book through the [National Booking System](#) or by calling 119 for an appointment.

There are also plenty of walk-in appointments available across the county. Please check the local NHS website: [COVID-19 vaccinations in Somerset](#) to find clinics in your area or use the national portal to find a clinic: www.nhs.uk/grab-a-jab.

Somerset Public Health

New ICON training will save babies lives

Somerset Public Health has joined other organisations from across the county to promote lifesaving training which will save babies lives.

'Babies cry, you can cope' is a key message being delivered in new '[ICON](#)' training which helps families create a nurturing environment and learn supporting comfort methods which can help soothe crying babies.

Working with the NHS, healthcare organisations, social care, early years and community and voluntary partners, Somerset County Council's Public Health team have launched a prevention programme which includes [specialised training for practitioners](#) as well as wider family and community support.

The new training is part of the [National ICON programme](#), which aims to raise awareness of coping with crying and strategies to support parents and carers to prevent serious injury, illness and even death of young babies as a result of shaking incidents

Clintons COVID Catch Up

In this week's [catch-up film](#), Clinton draws attention to the ICON campaign, and offers simple advice on how to cope with a crying baby.

Coronavirus Helpline Update

In line with the lifting of Government restrictions the Coronavirus Support Helpline is now closed having taken over 18,000 calls from Somerset residents who needed help during the pandemic.

Anyone in need of Coronavirus-related support should contact their local authority from now on:

Somerset West and Taunton Council call 0300 304 8000
Somerset County Council on 0300 123 2224

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

Watch out for fake tickets

Now that summer is almost here, it will see the return of popular festivals, live music and national sporting events, with others set to follow in the coming months. Some people are taking advantage of this by trying to sell fake tickets to eager revellers.

To avoid disappointment, Action Fraud want you to be wary of unsolicited emails, text or adverts offering unbelievably good deals on tickets.

Here's how to spot the signs of ticket fraud and protect yourself and your money:

- Only buy tickets from the venue's box office, official promoter or agent, or a well-known and reputable ticket site. For example, the only way to guarantee tickets for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 is via the official FIFA World Cup ticket [website](#).
- Avoid paying for tickets by bank transfer, especially if buying from someone unknown. Credit card or payment services such as PayPal give you a better chance of recovering your money if you become a victim of fraud.
- Be wary of unsolicited emails, texts or adverts offering deals on tickets. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you think you've been a victim of fraud, contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud online at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling **0300 123 2040**.

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Grants available for communities to prevent crime

A brand-new fund has been launched in partnership between the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) and Quartet Community Foundation (QCF).

The Commissioner's Crime Prevention Fund will support community projects and activities that help to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.

Community groups and charities can now apply for grants (money that does not need to be paid back) of between £1,000 to £5,000 from the Commissioner's Crime Prevention Fund to help create safer communities in our area.

A total of £200,000 is available from the fund and Somerset's allocation is expected to be around £60,000. There will be three opportunities to apply across the year, and groups based in Somerset should apply for a grant by visiting Somerset Community Foundation's website, here: www.somersetcf.org.uk/opcc or by calling 01749 344949 **before the deadline of Friday 27 May 2022**.

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

Community Speed Watch

Community SpeedWatch is a partnership between the Community, the Police and Local Authorities. It gives local people the ability to actively get involved in road safety.

The aim of Community SpeedWatch is to make motorists who speed through residential neighbourhoods aware of the impact their actions have on local residents, or the danger they pose to other road users and pedestrians. This is something ASP are working with communities to address.

Watch the [video](#) to find out more about Community SpeedWatch:

A Community SpeedWatch can be set up in any village, small town, or urban area, governed by either a 20, 30 or 40 miles per hour speed limit.

A team of local residents who are willing to volunteer a small amount of time each week are trained and issued with speed detection equipment to monitor speeds. To find out if there is a Community SpeedWatch Scheme in your area, or request to set one up, email CommunitySpeedWatch@avonandsomerset.police.uk.

Rural Affairs Unit

Gamekeepers and the farming community are often those most affected by or are witness to rural crime. They provide the eyes and ears of the countryside and often suffer the consequences of rural crime. Hare coursing / poaching can lead to a

number of animal welfare issues, serious loss of income from the illegal taking of game and the damage which many offenders carry out to farmland in the process of carrying out these crimes.

The importance of reporting

ASP urge members of the public to report any incidents of coursing / poaching by calling 999 if in progress or reporting via 101 or on-line after the event.

You can pass on Important Intelligence via 101 alternatively if you wish to remain anonymous you can call Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

Please do not approach those taking part in this activity but please try to obtain as much information as possible:

- Location (consider WHAT3WORDS)
- Vehicle involved (type/colour)
- How many person/s involved descriptions.
- Dogs / weapons involved.
- Photos /video evidence can be helpful.

PLEASE REMEMBER DO NOT PUT YOURSELF AT ANY RISK!

Please [click here](#) for further details on the Farm watch scheme, and how to join.

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](#)
- [Rural Affairs Unit – Avon and Somerset Police.](#)

Finally

The below link may be useful to you, should there be a requirement to convert files to jpg format: <https://www.adobe.com/uk/acrobat/online/pdf-to-jpg.html>
It is important to keep up to date with the latest [information and advice from the Government.](#)

For quick up to date information regarding SWT services please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/ or Twitter [@swtcouncil](https://twitter.com/swtcouncil).

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