

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 105 Week ending 15/05/2022

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. Town and Parish Council election results

Results for contested town and parish councils in the Somerset West and Taunton area have been published.

Electors were able to vote for candidates in 12 towns and parishes across the district at the elections on 5 May: -

- 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

The [results](#) are available to view on the SWT elections page together with the [statements of persons nominated](#) for election at uncontested towns and parishes.

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

2. Democracy and Governance

Committee Meetings

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](#). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

- **SWT Annual Council, SWT Full Council – Tuesday 24 May 2022**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 20 May.
- **SWT Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 25 May 2022**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 23 May.
- **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 26 May 2022**, in the JMR at 1.00pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Tuesday 24 May.

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 Register of Interest Forms

The Monitoring Officer recently sent out an email, attaching the required forms that need to be completed following the elections.

This included: -

- LGA model Councillor Code of Conduct City, Town and Parish Councils
- Declaration of Acceptance of Office Form
- Register of Interest Form

The Localism Act 2011 requires that the Monitoring Officer hold and maintain a register of interest for all District, Town and Parish Councillors.

All Town and Parish Councillors are required to fill in a new Register of Interest (ROI) form. A form will need to be completed irrespective of whether they have been a Councillor before. SWT delete and securely destroy any previous ROI forms.

They will have 28 days to return their form following their declaration of acceptance of office. The email address to send the forms to is governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk. If any Councillors decide to print and send the forms in the post, please ensure that they are addressed as:

Governance Team
Somerset West and Taunton Council
Deane House,
Belvedere Road,
Taunton,
TA1 1HE

Once the forms arrive with the SWT Governance Team they will have signatures redacted, be scanned and uploaded to the website. It is a legal requirement that the Monitoring Officer publishes all Register of Interest forms on the SWT website. If any Councillors are concerned about this, please ask them to contact the Monitoring Officer to discuss.

Traditionally, some Town and Parish Councils have been better at returning their ROIs than others. This year the Monitoring Officer will give an update to each Ward Member (in mid to late June) on the returns that are missing so that this can be raised when they are attending the next Town or Parish Council meeting. Updates will also be regularly given to the Standards Committee.

4. Training available to Councillors and Parish Clerks

Now that you have your new Councils/Councillors in place it is worth thinking about training, as it is always good to get your new Councils off to a good start

The [Somerset Association of Local Councils](#) (SALC) run a number of courses that are designed for new Councillors (or are a useful refresher), which include:

- Councillor essentials – P1 Roles and Responsibilities
- Councillor essentials – P2 Governance and Finance
- Responding to Planning Applications
- Successful chairing
- The Council as an employer

They also offer training on the Code of Conduct.

However, in previous years SWT has also offered a number of sessions on the Code of Conduct, Register of Interests, meeting etiquette and the pitfalls of social media. As well as offering several virtual sessions that any Councillor or Clerk can attend, the Monitoring Officer is also willing to undertake training for any Town and Parish Council, if they would like it.

Please email A.Tregellas@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk if your Council would like to attend a SWT training session.

5. Funding available for electric vehicle charge points

SWT has launched a new round of grant funding to support the installation of electric vehicle charge points (EVCPs) across the district.

Parish and town councils are being invited to apply for grants of up to £1,500 in match funding for installation of the charge points.

Several parishes have installed EVCPs following successful grant applications in the initial round of funding from SWT including Brushford, Luxborough, and Stoke St Gregory.

Applications from parish and town councils, and community centres, are welcome **before the 30 September 2022**.

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

6. SWT shortlisted in regional planning awards

SWT's Climate Positive Planning guidance has been shortlisted in this year's Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) South West awards.

The RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence highlight exceptional examples of how planning and planners have a positive impact on the quality of life for people and communities in creating places and protecting the environment.

The [Climate Positive Planning](#) guidance, which was published in February 2021, has been shortlisted for the awards' 'Excellence in Plan Making Practice' category, in recognition of its role as a swift and flexible tool through which the Council has effectively integrated its declarations of Climate and Ecological Emergencies into planning.

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

7. New campaign promotes SWT as business 'growth hotspot'

Backed by key business leaders, SWT has launched an exciting new inward investment campaign to put the area on the map with future business investors.

The SWITCH campaign is being delivered to promote the area of Somerset West and Taunton as a key business destination, rich in growth and innovation opportunities.

The campaign, which launched yesterday (12 May 2022) at Somerset Cricket Club in Taunton, focuses on the opportunities in key growth sectors and the Council's investment and regeneration plans for the area; highlighting the many benefits for national and international organisations looking for a location for their business to thrive.

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

8. Vivary Park resurfacing underway

Work has started to resurface the network of paths in Taunton's [Green Flag](#) award-winning Vivary Park.

The work at Vivary Park is part of SWT ongoing re-surfacing programme and improvement plan for the Council's parks and open spaces.

It will be carried out in stages by contractors [RK Bell](#), to ensure continued access for the public with temporary restrictions on the paths being re-surfaced. The programme of works will not affect events in the park and will be suspended over the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend when the Council is hosting a [Big Jubilee Lunch](#) on Sunday 5 June.

Resurfacing of the paths in Wellington Park is complete and a new raised walkway has been built at the Swains Lane Nature Reserve in Wellington.

Further works are planned at other locations in Taunton and Minehead.

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

9. Local leisure centres exceed pre-pandemic membership levels

Local leisure operator, Everyone Active, has exceeded pre-pandemic membership levels, proving that health and fitness is firmly back on the agenda of the local community.

Managed in partnership with SWT, Everyone Active has seen a sharp rise in Health and Fitness memberships at its sites which host gyms - Wellsprings Leisure Centre, Wellington Sports Centre and Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa.

The award-winning leisure operator has reported an increase in demand for holistic and wellbeing classes such as, Yoga, Pilates and Body Balance. In addition, 25–34-year-olds are the most common age group to attend the gym and fitness classes.

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

10. Launch of SWT Climate News

The SWT Climate Change Team has just launched its first 'Climate News' which will be published monthly on the SWT website and sent to SWT residents and businesses who sign up to receive a copy.

The newsletter aims to showcase all the great work that is happening across Somerset West and Taunton to achieve carbon-neutrality by 2030.

Please [click here](#) to read Issue 1.

11. SWT Housing Survey undertaken by Acuity

SWT have commissioned a company called Acuity to survey our housing tenants by telephone. The survey will help SWT understand tenant satisfaction with us, as their landlord. Please re-assure SWT tenants that if they do receive a call from Acuity, it is legitimate.

12. Reminder - SWT Hardship Fund

SWT has provided a Hardship Fund of £50,000 for use as a means-tested benefit of up to £200 available for application by eligible low-income households residing in the SWT area.

During 2022/23, Taunton Citizens Advice and West Somerset Advice will use the fund to provide financial assistance to low-income households who are unable to pay for essentials due to lack of sufficient means (and have exhausted recourse to other support such as Local Assistance Scheme (LAS), Surviving Winter fund, foodbanks and any other scheme for which they may be eligible).

If you know someone who may be eligible for this financial help, please ask them to contact [Taunton Citizens Advice](#) or [West Somerset Advice](#).

13. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Fixy unveiled and in Taunton this Saturday

SWP's Fixy initiative kicked-off its campaign to bring repair and reuse of electricals to all corners of the county this week. The converted van was unveiled on Somerset Day and makes its debut at eat:Taunton event this Saturday.

Recycling is great, but repair and reuse is even better, and this is about loving your stuff for longer. If it has a plug or takes batteries, Fixy wants to help give it new lease of life.

Somerset has a flourishing network of Repair Cafes and similar groups. Fixy will be giving them practical support and helping them grow.

Carrying helpful tools and vital spare parts, the van – named Fixy McFixface in a public vote - boasts a solar-powered power supply and will offer a portable appliance (PAT) testing service to give fixed electricals a safety check.

Join the team at eat:Taunton on **Saturday (14 May, 10am-4pm)** in East Street to find out more about repair and reuse and enter a prize draw to win a refurbished laptop, smartphone, or tablet.

The team will be sign-posting people to [Taunton Repair Café](#) which is running from 1.30-4.30pm at nearby Moose Hall on Tower Lane (TA1 4AR).

The café's volunteers will do their best to fix anything taken along, including electricals, electronics, clothing, furniture, toys, tools and ceramics. They will also be able to sharpen knives and small tools.

If you haven't tried repair and reuse, now is the time to give it a go!

Repair cafes are also scheduled for [Wells](#) and on the [Blackdown Hills](#) on Saturday 14 May as part of “The Big Fix” – a nationwide initiative to promote repair and reuse.

In the coming months, Fixy will be attending events to promote repair and reuse, provide information about local repair cafes and groups, and encourage volunteers to get involved and share their skills.

By teaming up with Somerset-based Donate-IT, Fixy will be taking donations of broken or unwanted smart tech for repair to pass on to those schools, groups or individuals who need them.

For more information and the latest on Fixy, including where Fixy McFixface will be and when, and how to get involved in repair and reuse visit somersetwaste.gov.uk/fixy

Remember: working electricals and electronics should always be passed on to others or donated to charity shops if they are no longer needed. Broken items that cannot be repaired for reuse can be recycled from the kerbside as part of Recycle More collections. Items must be small enough to fit into a carrier bag (not a black sack) which should be left untied next to your other recycling.

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

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 Council for Somerset

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

The good weather this week has contributed to works being completed ahead of schedule.

SCC contractors have successfully completed the repair of 166 Safety Defects (131 in the Taunton area and 35 in West Somerset).

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT for users of the **A39 between Porlock and Minehead** on the hill at Venniford (the narrow section between the Wootton Courtenay junctions):

Works to undertake important drainage work on the A39 between Minehead and Porlock have been **temporarily postponed**. These works will need to take place prior to the resurfacing planned in the summer and an alternative schedule will be shared with the community and road users as soon as it becomes available.

New works for week commencing 16 May 2022 are:

- NEW: Footway resurfacing in at **Bradford on Tone Rd, Taunton** – 5-day road closure from **Monday 16 May**.
- NEW: Carriageway patching at **A396 Bridgetown** – 5-day road closure from **Monday 16 May**.
- Completed: Pedestrian safety barrier repairs: **Hamilton Road, Hurdle Way and A38 Musgrove entrance – Taunton**
- Completed: Footway resurfacing: **Oaken Ground, Wellington**
- Completed: Carriageway resurfacing preparation works **Cher, Minehead**
- Completed: Repair of sinkhole in **Duke Street Taunton**
- Completed: Changing of speed limit signs **Stoke St Gregory Taunton**
- Completed: footway resurfacing works in **Bishops Lydeard at Darby Way** and at **King George Road, Minehead**

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.

National Highways

Supplementary Consultation launched on A358 Dualling Project
National Highways is consulting on design changes for the proposed upgrade to the A358 between Taunton and Southfields roundabout.

The consultation will run from Tuesday 24 May until **11.59pm on Sunday 26 June 2022**.

National Highways is looking to upgrade approximately 8.5 miles (13.6 km) of the A358 to a high-quality and high-performing dual carriageway. Since the 2021 consultation changes have been made to the preliminary design which will improve safety and access to local roads and reduce the impact on communities, the environment and the local landscape.

Your feedback will help National Highways develop the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO), the type of planning permission needed for the scheme.

When the supplementary consultation opens on 24 May you will be able to find out more about the proposals and have your say, by visiting National Highways' online exhibition or one of the consultation events. The project team will be on hand at face-to-face events and webinars to answer your questions.

Consultation Events in Person (from 11.00am – 8.00pm)

- **Thursday 26 May** Monks Yard (Conference Room) Ilminster (TA19 9PT)
- **Wednesday 8 June** Somerset County Cricket Club (TA1 1JT)
- **Saturday 11 June** Taunton Racecourse, (TA3 7BL)

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

New Journey Planning website for Somerset

SCC has developed a new journey planning website called 'Think Travel'.

The website is dedicated to planning journeys within Somerset and includes information on public bus services, community transport and the demand responsive 'Slinky' service. There is also a dedicated noticeboard area to help facilitate car sharing.

The website will be particularly useful to individuals or groups who have difficulty

accessing public transport and want to know what other transport options are available to them.

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

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 us at the new Step Up to Mobile Outreach service which is coming to a location near you.

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.

The Step Up to Mobile Outreach service's events will be held at the following venues, **between 10am and 2pm** on the relevant date:

- Tuesday 17 May - **North Curry**- Village Hall Car Park,
- Wednesday 18 May – **Stogursey** - Victory Hall Car Park,
- Thursday 19 May – **Churchinford** - Village Hall Car Park,
- Tuesday 24 May – **Williton** - SWT Car Park,
- Wednesday 25 May - **Watchet**- The Esplanade,
- Thursday 26 May - **Bishops Lydeard**- Village Hall Car Park.

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. for a chat or contact **0330 12227015**.

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP)

Section 119, Highways Act 1980

Proposed diversion of Public Bridleway WL18/49 (Part): Parish of Old Cleeve.

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP) is proposing to divert public bridleway [WL18/49](#) in the parish of Old Cleeve. Prior to making an Order ENP would like to hear your views on the proposal. Please [click here](#) to view a summary of the proposal, schedule and proposal plan.

Please return any comments on the proposal by **6 June 2022** to cerirapsey@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or to Ceri Rapsey, Rights of Way Support Officer, Exmoor National Park Authority, Exmoor House, Dulverton, TA22 9HL. If you would like to meet on site to discuss the proposal prior to making your comments, please do not hesitate to contact the Public Rights of Way and Access Officer, Sue Applegate on 01398 322292.

If we do not hear back from you, we will assume you have no comments to make.

Quantock Hills AONB

Please keep dogs on leads

Just a reminder that it is a legal requirement to keep your dogs on a lead on open access land between 1 March and 31 July.

The Quantock Hills has an abundance of lovely dog walks, although you'll need to be mindful of wildlife and livestock. Please keep dogs on a short lead to avoid disturbing ground nesting birds and help to protect ewes and lambs.

RSPB England

Here's a great little [video](#) from [RSPB England](#) about ground nesting birds and how we can help to give them space to breed safely.

Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Planning a Jubilee Event?

On 4 June 2022, beacons will be lit by communities across the UK to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Please read the following advice to ensure that you stay safe whilst enjoying the celebrations.

- Please let DSFRS know if you plan to light a beacon.
- Call the (non-emergency fire control number 03333 990014) and state the accurate location (DSFRS recommend using the What3words app).
- Fire control will plot the Jubilee beacons as 'controlled burns' and this will help the fire service avoid sending fire engines to false alarms when they could be responding to a real emergency.

Please [click here](#) for more helpful advice if you are planning to celebrate the Jubilee.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Are you eligible for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme from April 2022?

On 23 May 2022 a new grant scheme for homeowners upgrading from gas boilers to either an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) or a biomass boiler may be eligible for a grant of £5,000, or £6,000 if upgrading to a Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP).

The government will provide grants to encourage property owners to install low carbon heating systems such as heat pumps, through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS). These grants will help property owners overcome the upfront cost of low carbon heating technologies.

The scheme will be open to domestic and small non-domestic properties in England and Wales. It will run from 2022 to 2025.

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

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP) Crime Prevention through Sport Fund

The Crime Prevention Through Sport Fund aims to support projects that use sport and physical activity to reduce violence, crime and anti-social behaviour. This fund is for projects that focus on using activity as a tool to engage and support young people up to the age of 25. Applications that use sport in its widest sense including traditional, informal sports and activities will be considered and encouraged to apply.

SASP are keen to receive applications from the following areas this year: Bridgwater, Yeovil, Taunton, Wellington and Minehead.

SASP are proud to be working in partnership with [Wesport](#) to deliver the Crime Prevention through Sport Fund commissioned by Avon & Somerset Constabulary. Together this partnership will endeavour to support projects that have a considered approach to supporting young people who are involved or are at risk of being involved in criminal activity.

Deadline for applications is noon on **Monday 6 June 2022**. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Somerset Community Foundation Growing Grants

Somerset County Council (SCC) has set up Growing Grants to support community-led food projects that make healthier food affordable for everyone.

It is a partnership between the Council and Somerset Community Foundation, assisted by the SCC [Healthy Lifestyles Team](#) and [Somerset Community Food](#).

Growing Grants will support projects that involve:

- growing food as a community effort
- educating local people about healthy food and nutrition
- teaching and supporting people in your community how to shop and cook healthier
- serving balanced and nutritious communal meals
- using food and growing projects to help connect local people to each other
- building networks of community-led food projects.

Groups can usually apply for a grant of between £500 and £5,000, which would need to be spent within 12 months^[MS1].

You must submit your application by **5pm Friday 10 June 2022**. SCF will not consider any applications submitted after that date.

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.

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)

Another chance to apply for the Somerset Food Resilience Grant

A new Food Resilience grant fund is being provided to help Somerset communities that support or directly work to develop food resilience. Any community group, charity, organisation, and agency in Somerset can apply for a maximum of £2,000.

The deadline for applications has been extended to the **31 May 2022** - or when the fund runs out. The grant is funded by Somerset County Council and provided by Smart Communities Ltd.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, food security became a huge focus for communities across the nation. Communities in Somerset came together to help support individuals, families, homeless people and anyone isolated to make sure that everyone in need had access to food through deliveries, collection points, and storage solutions. Often these needs have always in our communities but were unseen by the wider community. Now those groups are being offered additional funding to help continue to tackle those needs and continue the wonderful work undertaken over the last two years.

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

Health and Welfare

Dementia Action Week 16 – 22 May

This year the theme of Alzheimer's Society Dementia Action Week is diagnosis. Research shows that the misconception around memory loss being a sign of normal ageing is the biggest barrier to people seeking a dementia diagnosis. With diagnosis rates falling to a five-year low, we want to encourage those who might be living with undiagnosed dementia to get guidance and support so they can feel empowered to take the next step.

As well as the misconception around [memory loss just being part of getting old](#), research found being in denial, and referral times to specialists, are big barriers for those experiencing symptoms to seek a diagnosis.

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

Clintons Catch Up Understanding Dementia

This week, Clinton meets with [Reminiscence Learning](#) to learn more about the work they are doing around dementia awareness ahead of Dementia Action Week (16-22 May).

Please [click here](#) to watch the video.

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.

Spring Booster Jobs

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.

NHS staff are ready to welcome you whether it's for your first, second, or third dose.

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**

Mendip District Council call **0300 303 8588**

Sedgemoor District Council call **0300 303 7800**

South Somerset District Council call **01935 462462**

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

Crimestoppers

“What would you do?”

This is a programme to raise awareness of crime affecting children, young people and their families in our communities. It gives them a voice about how they feel about crime and skills to be resilient against it; whilst giving communities messages on how to report and how to access help. The clear message of Crimestoppers is

helping communities to speak up, stop crime and stay safe whilst remaining 100% anonymous. Always.

Crimestoppers is looking forward to bringing their showcase of 'What Would You Do?' with Danesfield School, Williton to the Regal Theatre, Minehead on **Monday 20 June, 6-8pm**. It promises to be very powerful indeed, and the children are working so hard on it.

Invitations to watch will be out soon via Eventbrite but the team are keen to have some community agencies involved to meet and greet families and let them know what help is available should they need it.

Please contact Karen.MacDonald@crimestoppers-uk.org if you have a stand or person who would like to take part in the meet and greet between 5.30 – 6.15pm on the 20 June at the Regal Theatre, Minehead.

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

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) UK-wide Firearms surrender campaign

ASP are appealing for people to hand in any unwanted guns during a two-week surrender of firearms and ammunition which started on Thursday 12 May.

Many firearms are held in innocence and ignorance of their illegality or are overlooked and forgotten in people's homes. Others are acquired and distributed by criminal networks to harm, threaten or intimidate.

This surrender, which is being co-ordinated nationally by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and The National Ballistics Intelligence Service (NABIS), gives people the chance to dispose of firearms or ammunition in a safe place and will be held for two weeks, running until **Sunday 29 May**.

During the fortnight, those surrendering firearms will not face prosecution for the illegal possession upon surrender and can remain anonymous.

Surrendering unwanted, unlicensed weapons stops the risk of them falling into the wrong hands and being used to commit criminal offences.

Firearms can be surrendered at any police station – [ASP encourage members of the public to click on this link for more details of station locations and full opening times](#).

Reminder - StreetSafe

Did you know that you can now use the [StreetSafe](#) online tool to anonymously report locations where you feel unsafe? These reports provide insight that help to shape local policing and make the streets safer for everyone^[MS2].

StreetSafe is a pilot service for anyone to anonymously tell the Police about public places where you have felt or feel unsafe, because of environmental issues, e.g.,

street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism and/or because of some behaviours, e.g. being followed or verbally abused.

To find out more or make a report, [click here](#).

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.