

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 109 Weeks ending 12/06/2022

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. Annual Plan 2022 – 2023

The Annual Action Plan 2022/23 outlines what the Council aims to achieve by 31 March 2023, in order to support the delivery of these priority strategic themes and outcomes.

The Plan doesn't contain everything SWT does, but sets out at a high level, the key projects and actions outside of the core work, that the Council intends to focus on during the 12 months from 1 April 2022. These are in addition to delivering excellent day to day services on which our communities rely.

The Council will formally report on the progress of the Annual Action Plan twice a year as part of its performance management arrangements.

The Leader of the Council highlights the priorities for the 2022/23 financial year in the Annual Plan video [here](#).

2. Highlights from 2021/22

During 2021/22 SWT continued to make great progress against the corporate priorities.

In this [video](#) SWT's [Executive Councillors](#) look back and share some of the highlights from the year.

3. 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 Audit and Governance Committee – Monday 13 June 2022**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](#).
- **SWT Executive Committee – Wednesday 15 June 2022**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions is 4pm Monday 13 June 2022.
- **SWT Licensing Committee – Monday 20 June 2022**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 16 June 2022.
- **Taunton Charter Trustees, Annual General Meeting – 21 June 2022**, in the JMR at 6.00pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 17 June 2022.

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](#).

4. Reminder - Town and Parish Register of Interest Forms

Thank you to those town and parishes that have already returned their Register of Interest Forms. 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.

5. SWT supporting Armed Forces Day

SWT will be showing its support for the Armed Forces by holding two flag-raising ceremonies on **Monday, 13 June**.

Services will be hosted at Deane House in Taunton by the Mayor of Taunton, Councillor Sue Lees, and West Somerset House in Williton by the Chair of Somerset West and Taunton Council, Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey.

The Armed Forces Day flag will be flown leading up to National Armed Forces Day on Saturday 25 June.

Residents wishing to pay their own tributes can find out more at armedforcesday.org.uk/get-involved.

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

6. Council Tax Energy Rebate Payments

If you are eligible to receive an energy rebate payment and have not yet received it, you can claim now.

SWT will make payment into your bank account. Payments cannot be made by cash or cheque.

If you were in receipt of Council Tax Support on 1 April 2022, on top of the £150 energy rebate, SWT will also add a £24 discretionary top up. This will be applied automatically as part of the claim process.

For those households who do not submit a claim by the end of June, £150 will be paid direct to their Council Tax account and a revised bill will be issued showing the effect this has made to their account.

Please [click here](#) to find out more information and submit a claim for energy rebate.

Claims can also be made over the telephone on [0300 304 8000](tel:03003048000) Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm. The same details will be required as for online claims.

7. Litter trial results indicate early positive impact

Results from SWT Council's litter enforcement trial indicate the scheme is already having an impact, positively influencing attitudes towards littering and helping to clean up the district.

The 12-month trial scheme, which aims to make Somerset West and Taunton a clean and safe place to visit, is being carried out in partnership with East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) and since launching on 1 April 2022, 346 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been issued to people carelessly dropping litter in urban and rural hotspots.

Littering carries a maximum fine of £2,500 and potentially, a criminal record. Those caught dropping litter can opt to pay an on-the-spot fine of £100, or £80 if paid within 14 days of the fine being issued.

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

8. District Councils to consider joint ecological vision

SWT and Sedgemoor District (SDC) Councils are working on joint proposals to reverse the deterioration of ecosystems within each Local Authority area.

The joint proposals have been incorporated into an [Ecological Emergency Vision](#) and [Action Plan](#) (EEVAP), which set out the Councils' ambitions to deliver ecological enhancement and protection through a framework of key actions and projects.

It completes SWT's commitment to nature recovery following its declaration of an Ecological Emergency in September 2020 and builds upon the nature-based actions listed in SWT's [Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Action Plan \(CNCR\)](#) and SDC's [Climate Emergency Action Plan \(CEAP\)](#).

In their [2019 report, State of Nature Partnership](#) reported that since the 1970's, 41% of UK species have declined, with 15% threatened by extinction and 27% found in fewer places. In Sedgemoor, 63% of its terrestrial SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) habitat which should be in pristine condition, is in an unfavourable, declining or partially destroyed condition and in Somerset West and Taunton, only 11 out of 35 are described as being in a favourable condition.

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

9. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

The Fixy Van is in Otterford on Sunday 12 June

The Fixy van is in Otterford, between Wellington and Chard, on Sunday 12 June to promote repair, encourage reuse volunteers and accept smart tech donations.

It will be working alongside Otterford's repair café, 11:00am - 2.00pm at Otterford Parish Hall, Bishopswood TA20 3RS.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about Flxy and other Repair Café dates.

Platinum Jubilee Waste Collection arrangements.

Due to the Platinum Jubilee Weekend, all collections are one day later this week, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 11 June.

This is the perfect excuse to use the My Collection Day feature on the SWP homepage somersetwaste.gov.uk

You can use it to download your collection days into the calendar on your laptop or mobile device - it works for Apple and Android devices and sets up automatic reminders, so you need never miss a collection again.

Or you can use the same feature to just check your days online or download a printable copy of your collection day calendar.

You can also check the 12-month calendar that was sent to all homes as part of the roll-out of the new Recycle More service. In some parts of the county, the calendar will cover the Jubilee changes.

New Council for Somerset

Section 24 Agreement explained

The legal basis for the new council was confirmed in the recent Structural Changes Order (SCO) following consideration by both Houses of Parliament.

Within that SCO, there are also some controls and parameters, particularly around budget and expenditure. These are known as a Section 24 agreement.

A Section 24 agreement means District Councils will seek County Council approval during the remainder of 2022-23 for any land sales over £100,000 where legal agreements are not already in place, new revenue contracts worth more than £100,000 which go beyond 31 March 2023, and for any new capital commitments above £1m.

Where possible, agreement will be sought through the Chief Financial Officer, but the most significant issues will require approval through the formal committee processes.

These rules are about fiscal responsibility and transparency. They are designed to protect the budgetary situation of the brand-new Somerset Council when it opens on 1 April 2023

CEO Recruitment

The aim remains for an appointment to be made this summer now that the application window has closed (9 June). An extraordinary meeting of Somerset County Council will be taking place on **Wednesday 15 June at noon** and included on the agenda is a report from SCC's Appointments Panel.

This will provide an update on the Chief Executive recruitment process and the terms and conditions regarding the role. The agenda [can be viewed here](#) and the meeting will also be broadcast.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highway Maintenance Update

Very good weather this week has allowed the Highways Team to complete a large number of safety works and the planned works have continued well.

The verge maintenance works on the A and B road networks have now completed and the team are moving on to the C and D road networks.

This week SCC Highways have successfully completed 229 Safety Defect repairs in the SWT Area (221 in Taunton and 28 in West Somerset).

New works for week commencing 13 June 2022 are:

- Replacing post and rail fencing **Cothelstone Hill, Bishops Lydeard** (Road closure commencing **13 June 2022** for 15 days)
- **Continuing:** Drainage works at **Chilcombe Lane, Bicknoller**

- Completed: Verge Works (concrete channel) at **Blackwater Lane, Wiveliscombe** 30 May to 1 June.
- Completed: Drainage works at **Holywell Lake, Wellington**
- Completed: Footway works at **Grange Drive Taunton**
- Completed: Works at **Chip Lane & Outer Circle Taunton**
- Completed: Footway resurfacing in at **Bradford on Tone Rd, Taunton**
- Completed: Carriageway patching at **A396 Bridgetown**
- 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.

Think Travel Can Help

A new one-stop travel information website has been launched by Somerset County Council to support more local people to access public and community transport.

If you don't own a car - or want to leave it at home and travel more sustainably, Think Travel can help you with your transport options. Whether it's getting to the doctors, shops, travelling to work, college, or school, or just into town to meet friends or family, the new travel planner shows you what's available. It covers public transport, community transport, the Slinky demand responsive transport service and car sharing.

To start your search, all you need to do is enter your journey start point and destination in the planner and Think Travel will find the available options for you. As well as information on train and bus services, there's also a dedicated car sharing notice board you can sign up to, where offers or requests for car sharing journeys can be posted.

The aim is to grow this facility and encourage local car sharing networks to evolve. You can check out "Think Travel" here: <https://somerset.thinktravel.info>

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP) Storm Wrecked Exmoor Coast Path Reopens

A three-month clear-up operation to reinstate the South West Coast Path along Exmoor National Park's 35-mile heritage coastline was concluded just in time for the sunny Jubilee bank holiday weekend.

National Park rangers were forced to close and divert more than 20 paths across the National Park, including a long stretch of more than 5-miles of the iconic South West Coast Path, after the February storms left long sections treacherous and impassable. They rallied together with local landowners, contractors, communities and the National Trust, who own large stretches of the coast, to undertake a massive clear up operation.

Some of the most challenging work involved a remote 3-mile section between Culbone Church, near Porlock, and Desolate, near Lynmouth. This included deploying mini diggers along narrow stretches of high coastal woodland, after lifting root balls and fallen trees tore out sections of the path.

The [South West Coast Path Association](#) has responded by launching a special appeal to help cover the cost of the damage, estimated at between £15,000 and £25,000.

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

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.

HM Coastguard Watchet

Multi Agency Rescue at St Audries Beach

On Thursday 9 June at 1.20pm the team were tasked with the locating of and evacuation of an elderly male with a serious lower leg injury from the shoreline at [St Audries Bay](#).

Arriving on the beach close to the waterfall, members of HM Coastguard Watchet joined [South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust](#) paramedics who were already tending to the casualty. The team assisted them with packaging the injured male onto the Cliff Rescue Stretcher.

With the flooding tide not far from the scene, the decision was made to stand down the incoming Coastguard Rescue Helicopter and instead carry him immediately off the beach.

The team were joined on the beach by members of [HM Coastguard Minehead](#) and crew from [Minehead Lifeboat Station](#) as well as the paramedics from the [Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance](#) which had landed in a nearby field on the clifftop.

With minutes to spare the injured male was clear of the water and stretchered off the beach to the landing site, from where he was conveyed to hospital.

Another great example of Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles, **(JESIP)** teamwork.

Remember in a coastal emergency to dial 999 and ask for the coastguard.

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

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

Latest national activity survey reveals disabled people feel forgotten in recovery

National charity Activity Alliance is calling for greater priority for disabled people as the country recovers from the pandemic. This week, the leading voice for disabled people in sport and activity releases their latest Annual Disability and Activity Survey. It highlights the worrying effects on the nation's disabled population and the need for urgent attention to tackle growing inequalities. The full report is available to view at www.activityalliance.org.uk/annual-survey.

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

Spark Somerset

Volunteer Coordinator Forums

Spark's online Volunteer Coordinators Forums are a chance to network, share ideas, discuss best practice in volunteer management and more. They are open to anyone whose role includes working with and supporting volunteers, whether paid or voluntary.

The next Forum will take place on **16 June**, with further meetings on 15 September and 8 December. [Please click here](#) to find out more and book a place.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Carers Week 2022 – Visible, Valued and Supported

Carers Week is the 6 – 12 June 2022. Somerset Carers, a free support service for unpaid Carers, has a week full of treats and activities especially for Carers in Somerset. This year's Carers Week theme is: **Visible, Valued and Supported**.

Caring for others is very rewarding, but can be challenging, overwhelming and lonely at times. In Somerset alone it is estimated there are over 66,000 unpaid Carers. Many people might not recognise that they are a Carer to another person, as they provide care out of kindness or love. Somerset Carers (provided by the Community Council for Somerset – CCS and funded by Somerset County Council and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust) has a dedicated team of CCS Village Agents who support Carers.

What is a Carer? Have you ever wondered if the help you give someone else could count you as a Carer?

According to the NHS website, a Carer is anyone, including children and adults who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.

To contact Somerset Carers, call the freephone advice line 0800 31 68 600. You can also visit the website www.somersetcarers.org which has a live chat facility, newsletters and booklets for Carers in Somerset. Alternatively, you can text CARER to 78070 and a Village Agent will call you back.

West Somerset Food Cupboard (WSFC)

The Local Pantry

The Pantry has now been running for 4 weeks and is proving a great success. Every Tuesday morning the WSFC receives a delivery of surplus supermarket food from FareShare South West. The team leaps into action sorting and dividing up the food ready for the 30 member households to collect in the afternoon.

It's a quick turnaround but means that fresh food gets from FareShare's chiller van to WSFC's chiller cabinets and then straight to household fridges and dinner tables as quickly as possible and at minimum cost to members. The 30 places available were all taken up by the end of week 2 and there is now a waiting list. Places become available as people's circumstances change, and all members are encouraged to give up their place at 6 months so that others can benefit from this opportunity.

The [WSFC Facebook page](#) is also regularly updated and is a great way of sharing ideas about what can be done with the fresh food received.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the project and sign up for the monthly newsletter.

Lendology

Council-funded loans help homeowners towards net zero

With the current climate emergency, homeowners may be wondering what they can do to support a reduction in carbon emissions. The rising costs of energy also means many are wondering how to cut their utility bills.

Many homes in the UK struggle to retain heat because of their age and poor energy efficiency, as well as how they are heated. Whether looking to invest in renewable technologies such as solar or heat pumps, or to install energy-saving measures, homeowners may be eligible for an energy efficiency loan to help fund the upfront cost.

Working in partnership with Social Enterprise lender, [Lendology](#), SWT provides accessible finance in the form of low interest loans to homeowners wishing to increase their energy efficiency.

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

Health and Welfare

SCC Public Health

Impact of the Pandemic Survey

Your experience of living through the pandemic is important, as the pandemic has changed many aspects of life and has impacted us all in different ways. [This survey](#) aims to find out your experiences of the impact of COVID-19 and adjusting back to “normal” life now that there are no longer any restrictions.

The results of this survey will help SCC to inform the public health schemes that will support groups of people in this next phase of the pandemic. There are no right or wrong answers. Your responses to this survey will be completely confidential and securely stored, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). No information that will identify you as an individual will be recorded in any reports.

New COVID-19 Dashboard

As a result of recent changes to policy, the number of detected cases alone no longer provides an accurate or consistent indication of the prevalence of COVID-19 in our community.

As a result of this, detailed cases data such as the map and district level figures have been removed from the SCC and NHS in Somerset Dashboard. Cases are still shown on the chart; however, it now includes additional information (ONS Prevalence*) that may give a better indication of the actual number of people with COVID. Testing data has also been added to provide further context.

The hospital admissions data also now includes mechanical ventilation bed patients who are positive as a better indicator of serious illness being treated. The OPEL level on this page provides a snapshot of how the health and care system overall is managing.

[The vaccination page](#) now provides more overall strategic vision of how the vaccination programme has been implemented and provides an indication of the effective level of immunity provided to our community by boosters and third doses. The current version of the dashboard can be accessed at any time [here](#).

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.

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.

Action Fraud

New warning issued as reports of Holiday Fraud skyrocket by more than 120%

Action Fraud has launched a national awareness campaign to urge the public to think twice before handing over money and personal information when booking holidays.

As travel restrictions become more relaxed, Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, is warning the public to remain vigilant against holiday fraud when booking flights or accommodation online.

In the financial year 2021/22, Action Fraud received 4,244 reports of holiday and travel related fraud – a substantial increase of over 120% when compared to the previous financial year.

Victims reported losing a total of £7,388,353 – an average loss of £1,868 per victim.

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

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Celebrating Volunteers Week

In [#VolunteersWeek](#) ASP want to say thank you to all the Neighbourhood Watch volunteers for keeping our communities safer and helping to prevent crimes.

ASP have 3,900 community watch volunteers, covering over 120k households across Avon and Somerset. These households are all safer because of what the volunteers do.

“When Storm Eunice struck in February this year, our volunteers galvanized into action right across Avon and Somerset, quickly working together to make sure our communities were safe.

This proves that Neighbourhood Watch is not only a fantastic resource for the prevention of crime, but it also provides a way for us to keep people safe in the most challenging of circumstances.

Thank you to all our Neighbourhood Watch volunteers for everything you do.”

Liz Hughes, Chief Superintendent Neighbourhoods and Partnerships

Please [click here](#) to find out more about the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

For 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.

Attachment: Avon and Somerset Police, Rural Affairs Unit Newsletter.