

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 111 Weeks ending 26/06/2022

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. SWT-funded Arts Hub brings new life to historic building

SWT has revived one of Taunton's 17th Century Manor Houses by repurposing it as a new Arts Hub for cultural and creative activities.

The building, known as Flook House in Belvedere Road, will provide office and studio space for creative organisations and practitioners, as well as a conference-ready meeting room for community-based programmes, workshops and vocational learning.

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 Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 29 June 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 Monday 27 June 2022.

- **Special Meeting, SWT Executive – Tuesday 5 July 2022**, in the JMR at 4pm. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 1 July 2022.
- **SWT Full Council – Tuesday 5 July 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 1 July 2022.
- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 6 July 2022**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 4 July 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](#).

3. 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.

4. Fields in Trust – Search for the Nations Favourite Park

Which is your favourite park? The search is on for the UK's Favourite Parks and [Fields In Trust](#) need your help! Our local parks have been a sanctuary for so many of us over the last few years and so it's time to celebrate the green spaces that we all relied on so much.

Whether a space for solace, recreation, dog walking or spending time with your family, show your support by nominating your favourite SWT park **before 9 July 2022**.

Nominate your favourite park today and share why it is so special to you! Please [click here](#) to make your nomination.

5. South West Heritage Trust Consultation

The Local Heritage List for Somerset and Exmoor recognises the unprotected buildings, places and features that are cherished by local people and contribute to their area's special character.

[The South West Heritage Trust](#) is holding a public consultation on behalf of the Somerset and Exmoor Local Authorities to identify and protect heritage assets for the Local Heritage List.

The consultation runs up to the **30 June 2022**, so have your say on the buildings, places and features that matter to you.

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

6. Reminder - Free workshop for food and drink businesses

A recent survey showed that Somerset food and drink businesses are facing several challenges - from concerns about food regulations and labelling to issues with training and supply chains.

In response to this, SWT and Sedgemoor District Council have teamed up with the Heart of the South West Growth Hub to organise an event specifically designed for businesses in the food and drink sector.

When: 5 July 2022, open from 7.30am for an 8am start

Where: Junction 24 (TA6 6DF), near Bridgwater

What: This event has two parts: a Breakfast Briefing and a Workshop

Who: Open to anyone in the food and drink sector

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

7. Reminder - 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.

For those households who do not submit a claim by the middle of July £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.

8. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Barbeque (BBQ) safety

Stay safe and stop fires in your rubbish bin, threatening your home and family. It's easy: drench ash and coals before adding them to your rubbish or let them cool completely.

As well as the danger of a fire in a rubbish bin threatening your home and family, lack of care could start a blaze in a rubbish lorry, as has happened in Somerset streets in recent times, putting drivers, pedestrians and firefighters at risk.

[Check these few simple steps to stop rubbish fires](#), from better care with batteries to emptying and recycling aerosols.

And be smart in sorting the BBQ waste you create. All food waste - every scrap, including the burned bits - goes in your food waste bin, unless it can be home composted. Kerbside green box for cartons/Tetra Paks and glass bottles and jars. Your Bright Blue Bag for plastic pots, tubs, trays and bottles, plus cans and foil. Any empty five-litre kegs of beer or cider should be taken to a recycle site.

A good way of keeping up with collection news is 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.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highway Maintenance Update

Hot weather this week has allowed the Highways Team to complete many safety works, and the planned works have continued well. SCC Highways are currently monitoring whether any roads are melting and will react accordingly – so far SWT has escaped lightly considering the elevated temperatures.

The earthworks/safety fence works at **Cothelstone Hill, Bishops Lydeard** are coming to a close early due to good weather and SCC will open the road fully from Friday 24 June (eve) to Monday 27 June (am) when they require 1 more working day of closure to complete the works

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

The surface dressing program commenced this week has moved to the **Blackdown Hills** and **Corfe** (this is extremely weather dependent and cannot be carried out in heavy rain or extreme heat)

This week SCC Highways have successfully completed 184 Safety Defect repairs in the SWT Area (84 in Taunton and 100 in West Somerset).

Works for week commencing 27 June 2022 are:

- **New:** Drainage works at **Peacehay Lane, Sampford Arundel** (10 day temporary road closure commencing Monday 27 June)
- **New:** drainage works at **Weacombe Lane, Bicknoller** (4 weeks temporary road closure commencing Monday 27 June)

- Continuing: installation of 5 new cattle grid gates on **Exmoor**
- Continuing: Replacing post and rail fencing **Cothelstone Hill, Bishops Lydeard** (Please see comments above)
- Continuing: Drainage works at **Chilcombe Lane, Bicknoller**

- Completed: Resurfacing works at **Cher and Quirke Street, Minehead**
- Completed: Verge Works (concrete channel) at **Blackwater Lane, Wiveliscombe**
- 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**

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.

Go the extra mile to help others as a volunteer driver

If you are over the age of 18, have a clean full driving licence and own a four-door car, you could play a rewarding role as a volunteer driver helping people get to vital medical appointments.

Volunteer drivers provide a crucial transport service for non-emergency NHS patients and social care users, enabling them to get to various locations across the county and sometimes further afield. The volunteer drivers can also provide a valuable service helping transport children to college or school.

SCC is hoping to recruit more brilliant volunteer drivers now that coronavirus restrictions have eased and there is more demand for the service. Even by committing as little as one day per week, volunteers can make a huge difference.

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

Somerset Financial Wellbeing Project

SCC alongside four Somerset based credit unions; Westcountry Savings & Loans, Great Western Credit Union, Somerset Community Credit Union & Mendip Community Credit Union, has launched an exciting new initiative the Somerset Financial Wellbeing Project.

This scheme offers free information, events and training to anyone living or working in Somerset some of whom might be facing financial anxiety and worry caused by the cost-of-living increases, the aftermath of COVID-19 or because they are facing a change in circumstances.

Anyone living or working in Somerset can find out more information by visiting www.westcountry.org.uk/SFWP. A calendar of events and training will be confirmed over the coming months however free information is available now from the website.

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

EDF (UK)

June 2022 Update - Hinkley Point C shares site progress

Hinkley Point C's Delivery Director, Nigel Cann has released his latest update on the project.

The footage shows how work has progressed over the last six months, with the site moving into new phases of construction. Work has accelerated following the subsiding of the pandemic, with around 8,000 people now working on site.

The nuclear power station will be vital in helping the UK fight climate change, and in ensuring energy security. It will generate reliable, low-carbon electricity for 6 million homes and will work alongside wind and solar in place of fossil fuels.

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

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP)

Exmoor Dark Skies Festival 2022 Programme Announced

The programme of events for year's Exmoor Dark Skies Festival (13-30 October 2022) has been released online at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/stargazing.

Sponsored by **Somerset Business Agency CIC**, the festival is on track to be the biggest yet with well over fifty events already planned. This includes the popular planetarium sessions, set to return after a two-year break.

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

Somerset Wildlife Trust

The Great Somerset Wildlife Count 2022 (17-26 June)

Somerset Wildlife Trust are running a big wildlife count over the next week and would love people to take part. All the information gathered will be used by conservation organisations across Somerset.

Take part in the Big Count by spotting and counting as many of our 12 species between 17 – 26 June. When you are out on a walk, exploring your local green space, on school grounds, at work, on a nature reserve – anywhere – Somerset Wildlife Trust need you to keep your eyes peeled for the special twelve! Take a snap and log it on the iNaturalist platform.

If you visit the Somerset Wildlife Trust's webpage you can also see photos of all the species plus other information about why these species have been picked. [Big Count Species | Somerset Wildlife Trust](#)

Carry on afterwards - Although the big count is for one week only, the team would love to see observations being logged all the time. If you haven't already you can join the National Parks Lookwild project on iNaturalist and carry-on longer term as well. <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/national-parks-uk-lookwild>.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Stay Well Back – Don't risk your life for a selfie

Not only was June 21 the [#SummerSolstice](#), meaning the longest day of the year, but it was also [#NationalSelfieDay](#)!

Whether you're out making the most of the extended hours of sunlight or just taking a snap while out on a coastal walk, just remember [that no photo is worth your life](#). The cliffs along the UK coastline are continually eroding and cliff falls can happen at any moment.

- Stay away from cliff edges - NEVER risk your safety for the 'perfect' photo!
- Always keep your dog on a lead
- Stick to signposted coastal paths and take note of local warning signs
- Make sure you're back before dark

We all want to capture memories and a selfie is often a great way of doing so, but make sure the memories you make aren't for the wrong reason.

Emergency at the coast? See someone in need of help? Call 999 and ask for the coastguard.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS)

Williton Fire Station Open Day – Saturday 25 June, 10am – 12pm

Come and look around your local fire station! Explore the fire trucks and the lifesaving equipment. Feel the weight of the jaws of life and the breathing apparatus or sit in the driving seat. Bring your children along for this unique experience - everybody is welcome!

Williton Fire Station is crewed by staff operating the retained duty system which means personnel are on call to respond to the station at any time. The fire station is located on North Street in Williton. Crews provide an emergency response for the towns of Williton and Watchet and other parts of West Somerset. It covers an area of approximately 125 square miles and has a population of approximately 8000.

No need to sign up, but it would be nice to know if you are planning to come. You can find out more about this event [here](#).

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Community Employment Hubs

Jobs Fair – Thursday 30 June 10.00am – 2.00pm

The Castle Hotel, Castle Green, Taunton TA1 1NF

Free to attend and open to all. Come and meet employers and find out about opportunities in the area. Access support to move into work or training.

Somerset Community Foundation Refugee Week 2022

This week is [#RefugeeWeek2022](#). SCF would like to acknowledge the groups and charities who are working so hard to help those starting new lives in Somerset.

In March 2022 SCF launched the Welcome Fund to raise money to support refugees and asylum seekers from Ukraine and, in future, refugees from other countries who are starting new lives in Somerset.

Many will arrive with nothing. Many will have experienced unimaginable trauma. All have left their lives, homes, and country behind. SCF want to help them create a safe and secure home and feel welcomed into our communities here in Somerset.

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

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP) Bookings for Happy Healthy Holidays Somerset are now open!

This year's summer programme is jam-packed with fun activities ranging from sports to crafts, music, theatre, games and more. Follow the link to check out the upcoming activities that will be taking place over the Summer for children on benefits related free school meals <https://www.sasp.co.uk/happy-healthy-holidays> [#BeActive](#)

Spark Somerset

Somerset Mental Health Hub – Networking Event

Thursday 30 June at 10.00am – 1.00pm

Bridgwater Rugby Club, TA6 4TZ

The [Somerset Mental Health Hub](#) is the leading voice for the local VCSE organisations working in the area of mental wellbeing. The aim is to provide a space for collaboration, peer support and learning and the opportunity to share your views with local commissioners and decision-makers.

Join this live event for the chance to network with other groups and charities working to improve mental health and wellbeing in Somerset.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Smart Communities Ltd - Community Review Project

The CCS is excited to launch a new Community Review project, working in partnership with Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC). Its aim is to support and deliver 14 Parish and Town Council community plans by either initiating new or reviewing previous plans.

The lucky communities will have the CCS local expert team supporting them through the process.

Come along to one of the online welcome sessions:

- Thursday 30 June at 7pm – 8:15pm
- Tuesday 12th July at 2pm – 3:15pm

Meet the Smart Communities team and SALC team as well as an opportunity to hear from a Somerset community about the benefits of doing a Community Plan. The team will be giving further information about how to get involved and answering any questions you might have.

Please [click here](#) to book your space.

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

Health and Welfare

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

Unique Voice at Danesfield School – “What Would You Do?”

What an evening at [The Regal Theatre](#), Minehead for the [Crimestoppers](#) 'What Would You Do?' finale. The objective of the evening was to promote the importance of Crimestoppers to the local community via the mediums of dance, poetry, comedy and fun. The show was delivered by Year 5 pupils from [Danesfield Middle School](#), following a six week activities programme working with [Unique Voice CIC](#), using performance and creative workshops to explore issues of social and moral significance to raise awareness.

Monday night's show was supported by community residents who took part in interviews with the team. They helped compare similarities and differences of their experiences in the community. This made for a diverse, interesting and exciting show. Every young person from Danesfield did their school and community proud with outstanding performances.

A big thank you also to the families, school staff, community members, [Minehead and West Somerset Neighbourhood Policing](#), Assistant Chief Constable Will White and the Police and Crime Commissioner, Mark Shelford, for joining and supporting the event.

Please [click here](#) to see the photographs.

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Report Hate Crime

A hate crime is when someone commits a crime against you because of your disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion, sex or any other perceived difference.

We realise that people may still be persecuted because of who they love. If you would like to report a hate crime you can do that at

<https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/hate-crime/>

If you would like any support, please contact Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI) at saricharity.org.uk.

Officers and members of the public among Force Awards winners

An officer whose investigation saw the conviction of a dangerous sexual predator, members of the public whose brave actions saved a life and a cross force effort to bring the murderer of Andre Gayle to justice were among those recognised at the Avon and Somerset Force Awards ceremony in May.

Award winners were celebrated for their efforts at a ceremony at the Police Headquarters on Tuesday 10 May, which was attended by Deputy Chief Constable Nikki Watson, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner Mark Shelford, and High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, Sir Dusty Miller KBE.

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

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.

