

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 115 Weeks ending 24/07/2022

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 declares “cost of living emergency”

SWT Council has declared a districtwide emergency in response to rising living costs currently suffered by residents.

A motion declaring a “cost of living emergency” and subsequent action to address energy bills, universal credit and fuel duty was considered and passed by Councillors at last week's Full Council meeting.

During the meeting, the Council resolved to administer a £50,000 support fund to be ready by the end of the summer for residents most affected by food and energy price increases. Work to set up the support fund is already in progress and will be distributed by Citizens Advice.

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 Tenants Strategic Group – Monday 25 July 2022**, in the JMR at 6pm. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).
- **SWT Standards Committee – Tuesday 26 July 2022**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).
- **SWT Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 28 July**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 25 July. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).
- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 3 August**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 1 August.

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. Local leisure centres supporting the community

Leisure centres in SWT are set to offer free membership to children in care and care experienced young people from this month.

Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa, Taunton Swimming Pool, Wellington Sports Centre and Wellsprings Leisure Centre run by award-winning operator Everyone Active in partnership with SWT are taking part in the new initiative to reduce the barriers between children and young people participating in sport and physical activity.

The free membership will give them access to a range of facilities depending on their age, including gym, swim, soft play and group exercise.

According to latest figures from the [Department for Education](#) for children looked after (CLA) in England, the number of children in care is at an all-time high, at more than 80,000 children or 67 in every 10,000.

This year, Everyone Active has launched its national [Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), with the aim to meet the needs of individual communities through programmes that support people to be physically active, and to feel happy and healthy.

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

4. 'Recycling on the Go' poster competition winner announced

Evelyn Stead, 14, from Court Fields School in Wellington has been announced as the winner of SWT's 'Recycling On-The-Go' school poster competition.

The competition was launched at the end of last year to encourage more recycling and responsible litter disposal with the introduction of 130 new public litter bins.

In addition to litter, dog waste and cigarette butts, the configuration of the new bins enables plastic bottles and aluminium or tin cans to be deposited separately, making 'Recycling On-The-Go' easier whilst out and about within the district.

The competition aimed to inspire secondary school pupils to raise awareness of the new bins within their local communities and to promote their use through the creation of an informative and engaging poster.

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

5. SWT consulting on new taxi fare cap proposal

SWT is seeking the public's views in response to new requests to increase the maximum fares charged by local taxis.

Requests from the local taxi trade to reconsider the fare cap have been put to SWT on account of the rising cost in fuel.

The maximum fares were increased as recently as February, but according to the RAC, the price of petrol has since risen by 26.5% with diesel up by 28.1%, giving rise to concerns that operating a taxi could cease to be viable for many, which would negatively impact members of the public who rely on hackney carriage services.

The public is now being consulted on proposals to reduce the initial £2.40 distance charge from 425 yards to 390 yards and similarly, the subsequent 20p distance charge from 145 yards to 135 yards. Note, neither the existing fare cap nor proposed changes apply to private hire vehicles.

Any members of the public wishing to object can have their say via the Council's [Taxi Fare Increase Proposal](#) consultation webpage, which will remain open until 3 August 2022.

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

6. Reminder – 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.

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.

7. Reminder - Get prepared for National Tree Planting Week 2022

SWT is once again offering Parish and Town Councils across the district **free trees** as part of its commitment to work towards carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030. With Tree Planting Season now over SWT is looking ahead to September when the new Season begins.

Councils can choose from a wider variety of bare root trees from last year to the value of £100 which will be delivered on the week commencing 19 November in a pre-arranged timeslot.

The scheme opens on 01 August, and you are invited to place your request ready for National Tree Planting Week.

If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the team via email at freetrees@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

8. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP) Waste collection is hot stuff

Big thanks to everyone who has given ice lollies, cool drinks or just a little extra patience to waste collection crews this week.

SWP's collections started extra early on Monday and Tuesday, so crews could avoid the worst of the soaring temperatures.

They were also encouraged to stay hydrated, slap on the sunscreen and take short breaks in the shade when needed.

An average recycling collector walks about ten miles per round, picking up about 1,000 boxes – it's hard work at the best of times and the heat makes it harder going.

Lots of residents have seen fit to hand out ice lollies and cool drinks. If you're one of them, then many thanks – it helps take the edge off the heat and reminds crews that their hard work is appreciated.

High temperatures inevitably slow things down a little too, and despite the early starts there were some missed collections at the beginning of the week.

These should have been returned for the following day, and SWP apologise for any inconvenience.

Recycle More Bags top award

SWP has bagged a top industry award for its new Recycle More service.

It won the Environmental Services category in the prestigious Local Government Chronicle Awards which celebrate the very best local authority achievements. Recycle More's expanded collections were introduced across the county in a four-phase roll-out that started in October 2020.

With their striking Bright Blue Bags, they have reduced the rubbish in the county's bins and helped push Somerset's recycling rate up to its highest ever level, more than 56%. 97% of our recycling is processed in the UK thanks to kerbside sorting.

SWP and Recycle More were up against strong competition from council initiatives up and down the country. Judges praised the partnership working seen across the five councils that make up SWP and said the new service has clear potential to be an exemplar for other authorities.

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

Share your reuse success now!

There's still time to share your reuse success stories for a chance to win a laptop or tablet.

As part of its first ever Somerset Reuse Week, SWP is asking for great examples of how you've reused to great effect.

Whether it's a charity fashion coup, an unrivalled upcycling project, or a broken turntable that's turning again – they want to hear about it.

Just share your story with a photograph (of the item) on the @somersetWaste Facebook page, the SWP Next Door page or email it to recycle@somersetwaste.gov.uk

At the end of Reuse Week, SWP will pick a winner at random who will have the choice of 'repaired for reuse' laptop or tablet – a great prize and a timely reminder that electricals and electronics can be given new leases of life too.

The closing date for entries is midnight this Saturday (23 July).

Reuse Week is aiming to add reuse to the Somerset DNA, promoting it as an alternative to buying new, recycling or throwing away. Using something again, either for its original purpose or for a new purpose is a step up the 'reduce, reuse,

At all events it will offer advice on repair and reuse, encourage volunteering and sign-post to the nearest Repair Cafes to get things fixed.

Thanks to Somerset-based Donatel, Fixy will also run a "tech amnesty", taking donations of broken or unwanted smart tech including laptops, tablets, mobile phones, digital cameras and games consoles.

These will be repaired if possible and passed on to schools, community groups and people who need them, or recycled.

Please check somersetwaste.gov.uk/reuse-week for more details about what's on this week.

New Somerset Council

Latest News

New Somerset Council Supports local decision-making

Somerset councils have set out their plan for developing new Local Community Networks (LCNs) – groups that will be established in every part of the County to support decision-making at its most local level.

Three LCN pilots continue to advance in Exmoor, the Frome Area and in South East Somerset:

- On Exmoor, a Highway Steward has taken up their post and we will be able to report early progress shortly.
- The South East Somerset pilot will meet next month for a third time, to discuss options for tackling rural isolation and improving wellbeing.
- The Frome Area pilot is focussing on better outcomes for children, young people and families.

An LCN development officer role has been filled to help the pilots as they progress, and to evaluate their work.

A timeline for LCN development is in place, as follows:

- Consideration of role, geographies, governance and funding of LCNs – July 2022
- Refine governance and financial modelling, linked to Medium Term Financial Planning – July to September 2022
- Engagement and Consultation on geographies for LCNs – Autumn 2022
- Formal Decision Paper including a resourcing plan – November 2022

A plan on how LCNs are developed will go before the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implementation Board on Friday, 29 July. The Board has responsibility to inform and act on behalf of Somerset County Council's Executive, to ensure delivery of the new Council on time and to budget.

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

Somerset County Council appoints new Chief Executive – will lead the new unitary Somerset Council from April 2023

A meeting of Somerset County Council has confirmed Duncan Sharkey as the new Council Chief Executive.

Currently Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Mr Sharkey will take up the post with SCC in the autumn and will become Chief Executive of the new unitary Somerset Council from April next year.

Mr Sharkey was selected after a high-profile national search with the appointment process involving staff and members from across the five existing councils in Somerset, a panel of key stakeholders and partners, and a panel of young people from Somerset's Youth Parliament and the Unstoppables.

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

A dedicated inbox to ensure enquires about the new council and the unitary programme are dealt with quickly and efficiently has been set up.

Email info@newsomersetcouncil.org.uk

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC) SCC Highway Maintenance Update

Very hot weather at the beginning of this week has meant that the crews were diverted to safety works such as melting/softening roads, but the cooldown has allowed the teams to get back on track. The lack of rain has a positive effect for us too – the hedges and verges stop growing!

Reported defects have fallen dramatically recently which has enabled the gangs to push the planned works forward in the better weather, however, if you spot any issues on the roads this week please don't hesitate to report it to SCC on www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/ or call **0300 123 2224**

This week SCC Highways have successfully completed 74 Safety Defect repairs in the SWT Area (46 in Taunton and 28 in West Somerset).

The verge maintenance gangs have completed the A and B roads and are now more than halfway through the parish program.

The surface dressing program paused slightly with the extreme heat but has continued to get back to schedule

Works for week commencing 18 July 2022 are: -

- **Continuing:** drainage works at **Weacombe Lane, Bicknoller** (4 weeks temporary road closure, commenced Monday 27 June)
- **Continuing:** installation of 5 new cattle grid gates on **Exmoor**
- **Completed:** Drainage works at **Chilcombe Lane, Bicknoller**

- **Completed:** Drainage works at **Peacehay Lane, Sampford Arundel** (10-day temporary road closure, commenced Monday 27 June)
- **Completed:** Replacing post and rail fencing **Cothelstone Hill, Bishops Lydeard**
- **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.

£8.3m Toneway Project moves into home straight

Taunton’s Toneway Creech Castle junction improvement project is entering the final phase towards completion later this summer.

The multi-million-pound project, designed to increase capacity at the junction and improve cycling and pedestrian connections, started in August 2021 and is progressing well. As part of the essential work to complete this scheme and allow the team full access to the road there will need to be night-time closures of Toneway for about six weeks from **25 July**. Undertaking the work in the evening when the traffic levels are much lower will significantly reduce the impact of the finishing works.

The closures will be in place from **8pm until 6am weekday evenings only from 25 July to 31 August**. The road will be open during the evening at weekends.

This will be a full closure from the Hankridge roundabout to the Asda junction inbound and from the Wickes roundabout to the Hankridge roundabout outbound.

You can read more on the Toneway project here, including plans, videos and FAQs www.travelsomerset.co.uk/Toneway/.

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

Temporary Road Closure

Parish of Corfe – Temporary closure of Honiton Road

[tro070134TD - B3170 Honiton Road, Corfe](#)

Somerset County Council in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along; **Honiton Road - from the junction with The Ford to the junction with Adcombe Hill. A total distance of 415 metres**

This Order will enable Utility Services Ltd to replace poles on behalf of BT Openreach.

The works are expected to take place on **26 July 2022 between the hours of 9:30am - 3:30pm** for a total of 6 hours.

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP)

Proposed Diversion Order, Combeshead, Parish of Cutcombe Highways Act 1980

Public Footpath WL6/12 & WL6/25

Proposed Public Path Diversion Order 2022

Exmoor National Park Authority is proposing to divert part of public footpath WL6/12 and part of public footpath WL6/25 in the parish of Cutcombe. Prior to making a Diversion Order, ENP would like to hear your views on this proposal. Please [click here](#) to see the proposal summary, schedule and plan.

Please return any comments on the proposal by **19 August 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.

HM Coastguard Watchet

Respect the Water

Are you going surfing, kayaking, boating or paddle boarding this weekend? There are many ways to enjoy your time in the sea, but the Coastguard want you to feel the fun not the fear as accidents can happen frighteningly fast

Don't take risks at the coast this weekend and follow the tips below:

- Check the tides

- Keep hydrated, seek shade and be [#WeatherAware](#). Remember alcohol and the sea do not mix
- Have a means of calling for help
- Download the @RoyalYachtingAssociation SafeTrx app
- Ensure you have a lifejacket/PFD
- In more remote locations, carry a 406 Personal Locator Beacon
- Carry a VHF marine band radio (fitted with DSC if possible) and learn how to use it. In an emergency call the Coastguard on channel 16
- Scuba divers: familiarise yourself with new or different gear before planning deep dives and dive within your limits. Never dive alone

Trouble in the water? Lie back and [#FloatToLive](#). If you or someone else is in trouble, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Please [click here](#) for further safety information.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS)

Warning about high-risk wildfires

With the hot and dry weather continuing, the risk of wildfires is high. Please take care in the countryside with flames and cigarettes. Avoid BBQs and always take your litter home.

If you spot a fire, call 999 and use [what3words](#) to help the fire service locate the incident.

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

Somerset County Council (SCC)

Food vouchers return for Summer Holidays

Schools will once again provide food vouchers to families eligible for Free School Meals to combat holiday hunger over the summer holidays.

SCC is distributing approximately £1.2m from the Government's Household Support Fund directly to schools to help fund food vouchers for children eligible for Free School Meals over the summer holidays.

The allocation for this summer provides vouchers worth £10 per pupil each week of the holidays. Schools will automatically provide food vouchers to eligible students.

Eligible families who are in urgent need can also apply for extra short term financial help by searching [Somerset Household Support Fund](#) online. The quickest way to get help is online, but if access to the internet is difficult or support is needed to apply, families can call **0300 123 2224** and SCC will help find an organisation who will support families to make an application.

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

Somerset Jobs

Taunton Jobs Fair

Wednesday 28 September 10.30am – 4.00pm

Somerset County Cricket Club

In partnership with Somerset Jobs, SWT and JobCentre Plus:

There will be a wide range of employers and job opportunities, along with training and support offers for everyone to explore. All welcome.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Hinkley Point C Community Fund Drop-In Events

Are you part of a small charity or a community group, and have an idea for a project that will benefit your local area?

Somerset Community Foundation has two drop-in sessions coming up. It's a great opportunity to meet Pete from the grants team and find out if the Hinkley Point C (HPC) Community Fund can give you money and support your idea.

There are two drop-ins coming up, and there's no need to book in advance:

- Bridgwater: **Tuesday 2 August**, 5pm - 8pm at [Bridgwater Arts Centre](#), Castle Street, TA6 3DD
- Williton: **Thursday 4 August**, 10am - 3pm at Williton Library, Killick Way, TA4 4PY

Find out more about funding opportunities at: www.hpcfunds.co.uk

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Help with food

During the Pandemic, the Village and Community Agents supported many people and community groups by supplying premade meals, or food boxes to stock larders and fridges.

While they have stepped back from directly supplying the food, the Agents can still help you find local sources if you are struggling financially, or if you are a Carer and just need a break from cooking. They also do not want anyone to have to choose between food and energy bills.

Check out this [short film](#) on what was achieved with the support of countless organisations, partners and colleagues over the past two years – the CCS are immensely proud of everyone involved!

Thank you in particular to [Somerset County Council](#) and [FareShare](#) for the food funding and supplies.

Re-home your old mobile phone

The Village Agents are still collecting old, unused, but working mobile phones! Could you REHOME your old phone? They are still looking for donations!

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

The Village Agents will :

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

Check your 'bits and bobs' drawer where old devices lurk waiting to be loved again!

To donate, please contact Village Agent Wayne Stokes on: Email: waynes@somersettrcc.org.uk Mob: 07538 316526

Find out more here: <https://somersetagents.org/re-home-a-phone/>

Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)

New 60 minutes a day challenge in celebration of United by Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will demonstrate the very best of Global Britain to the world, showcasing the region's strengths of: being connected and accessible; youth and inclusivity; and a focus on regeneration and rejuvenation. The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is perfectly positioned, sitting at the heart of the UK and standing for the diversity of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Games take place on Thursday 28 July until Monday 8 August.

In celebration of United by Birmingham 2022, SASP have created a challenge for children and families to be physically active for 60x minutes each day and earn points for a draw prize!

All players taking part will be entered into the prize draw on 9 August. Winners will be picked at random and notified by email.

Head to www.saspchallenges.co.uk and sign up for free!

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

Spark

Open Mental Health Grants

Grants of up to £40,000 available to support projects to improve mental health and wellbeing in Somerset.

Open Mental Health Community Grants are being delivered by the Somerset Mental Health Alliance.

The Mental Health Alliance is a group of charities working alongside the NHS to ensure that people in Somerset get the support they need, when they need it. Spark deliver the [Open Mental Health](#) service, and are looking to expand the provision of support in Somerset by inviting local organisations to apply for a grant of up to £40,000.

Applications for grants of £2,000 and under can be submitted at any time.

Applications for the next round grants over £2,000 will need to be submitted by 12pm on 31 July 2022. These will be assessed by a panel and applicants will notified of the outcome within 7 days of the panel date.

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

Health and Welfare

NHS Health Check

Dementia is one of the biggest health challenges facing the UK.

It is estimated that 4,992 people (53.8%) over 65 years of age are living with dementia in England.

The NHS Health Check can help reduce your risk of developing certain dementias by encouraging a healthy, active lifestyle: <https://somersethealthchecks.co.uk/>

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.

Everyone in Somerset is being asked to get up to date with the [COVID-19 vaccinations they are eligible for](#). These remain the best form of defence against the COVID-19 and influenza viruses. It's not too late to catch up if you or someone you know has missed boosters or even first doses for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccinations

COVID-19 rates are rising across Somerset. If you are not up to date with your jabs you can still get one this summer to protect you for autumn and winter. There are

several clinics open in July for walk-ins and appointments offering the Spring Booster and all other jabs.

[Bookings](#) can be made at a wide number of clinics across Somerset.

[Walk-in appointments](#) are additionally being offered at Tower Vaccination Centre in Taunton on specific days.

[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

Action Fraud

Over £1.5million lost to WhatsApp scam messages

A convincing WhatsApp scam where criminals pose as a friend or family member in need has cost victims over £1.5 million this year.

New data from Action Fraud, the national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime, reveals the continued threat posed by a scam that involves criminals contacting victims on WhatsApp and pretending to be their friend or a family member.

The scam has been reported to Action Fraud 1,235 times between 3 February and 21 June this year and has cost users a total of £1.5m.

Criminals will typically claim to be a family member and will usually begin the conversation with "Hello Mum" or "Hello Dad".

They will say that they are texting from a new mobile number as their phone was lost or damaged and will go on to ask for money to purchase a new phone, or claim that they need money urgently to pay a bill.

The criminal will supply their bank details for payment, with some coming back on multiple occasions until the victim realises, they've been scammed.

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

Stop Scams UK Ltd / Global Cyber Alliance

The 159-telephone service

Consumers wanting to avoid financial fraud now have a secure and easy-to-remember phone number to contact their banks on to avoid painful scams. It could prove to be the safest way for many to contact their provider if they have suspicions and concerns about their accounts, or even if they're struggling to find a customer services number.

Stop Scams UK and Global Cyber Alliance have launched, the UK-wide 159 call service, which is designed to guarantee consumers a safe route to contacting their banks.

The scheme is urging people to "stop, hang up and call 159" to check calls are for real. The idea is to help those who believe they have been contacted by scammers claiming to be their bank, or by fraudsters who encourage them to transfer money. 159 works in the same way as 101 for the police or 111 for the NHS. It's the number you can trust to get you through to your bank, every time

Please [click here](#) to find out more about "159".

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Anti-social behaviour awareness week

This week marks Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) week – a week of raising awareness of anti-social behaviour and the vital role that the wider public can have in helping the police tackle it.

ASP are launching a new ASB Service Standard to ensure they are delivering a service that supports victims of anti-social behaviour and deals robustly with perpetrators.

Anti-social behaviour can have a devastating effect on our communities and individuals within them. Many people who report anti-social behaviour don't realise they have also been a victim of a crime.

As part of the new service standard, ASP will be tackling anti-social behaviour in a way that:

- Reduces its impact on victims and communities
- Develops learning and resolution for perpetrators
- Reduces harm
- Manages repeat perpetrators through appropriate justice resolutions

Whilst safeguarding the victims is the priority, working with the offenders to prevent reoffending and any further harm on the individual or communities involved is also a vital part of the work that Avon and Somerset are involved in.

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.

Attachments (PDF)

Exmoor Policing Newsletter

Minehead and West Somerset Policing Newsletter