

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 118 Weeks ending 14/08/2022

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 Planning Officer meet with RTPI President

Planning Officers from SWT were invited to meet with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) President, Tim Crawshaw, as part of his tour of the UK to find out more about the challenges and opportunities faced by local council planners.

The meeting took place at Somerset County Cricket Ground, where Mr Crawshaw received a presentation featuring plans to drive quality design in Taunton Garden Town, guidance on tackling the Climate Emergency, and the impact of recent guidance over unacceptable amounts of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors on local development, where it is hoped the RTPI can help lobby central government to unlock much needed housing in the district. Discussions were also held about the new Unitary Council for Somerset, resourcing, skills and budgets.

The invitation followed a commendation awarded at this year's RTPI South West Awards for the Council's work in producing new planning and placemaking guidance in response to the climate emergency.

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 SWT [Committee meetings](#). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

- **CANCELLED – SWT Executive Committee – Wednesday 17 August.**
- **CANCELLED SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 18 August.**
- **Local Government Reorganisation Joint Scrutiny Committee – Friday 19 August**, in the JMR at 10am. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).
- **SWT Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 31 August**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 26 August.
- **SWT Full Council – Tuesday 6 September**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Friday 2 September.
- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 7 September**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 5 September.

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 - SWT launches Covid Additional Relief Fund

SWT has been allocated Government funding to help businesses which did not benefit from any form of Covid relief in the last financial year.

The Council has identified businesses across the district that could meet the criteria and is writing to them.

Anyone who thinks they are eligible should visit the [website](#) where details of the scheme and how to apply are available.

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

4. Reminder - SWT Climate News 4 (August)

The Climate Change Team has published its latest 'Climate News' which gets sent to SWT residents and businesses who sign up to receive a copy.

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

View all editions of the SWT Climate Newsletter [here](#). Each new edition is circulated to all subscribers at the beginning of every month, and the August issue is available to read now.

5. 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 opened 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

6. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Put your waste out the night before due to heatwave!

Residents are asked to put their rubbish and recycling out the night before collection as waste crews across Somerset continue to work in the intense heat.

Crews could be starting collections as early as 5.30am to avoid the worst of the sweltering heat, and having boxes, bags and bins out the night before is the best way to make sure they are ready to go when the crews arrive.

SWP and SUEZ are also urging people to be extra patient and take extra care to sort recycling into the right containers to help hard-pressed crews.

Extreme heat makes that tough job even harder and that could mean some delayed collections.

SWP and its collections contractor SUEZ are asking for the public's patience and a little bit of help in the extreme conditions.

How to prevent a high-risk blaze in your refuse bin

Adding the wrong items to rubbish bins and black sacks could put lives at risk by starting a fire.

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.

Among the danger items that should never be added to the rubbish bin are:

- Hot ash or part-burned materials from domestic or garden fires or barbecues
- Used portable barbecues whose charcoal may not be completely cold.
- Household or vehicle batteries as these may short out or cause sparks.
- Broken glass not carefully wrapped or bagged as it could act as a magnifying lens.
- Aerosols as they may get hot or be pierced during the collection and landfill process.

The advice is simple in each case:

- Let ash and portable barbecues completely cool, or drench with water.
- Recycle vehicle batteries through any one of [Somerset's 16 recycling sites](#).
- Add household batteries to your kerbside recycling in a tied – ideally clear – bag (freezer, sandwich, bread bag etc). Or drop off at any recycle site, supermarket or high street electrical store.
- Carefully wrap and bag broken glass, which should also never go in recycling boxes.
- Use up aerosols completely, do not squash, and then add them to recycling boxes.

New Somerset Council

Customer Panel

Would you like to help the new Somerset Council by taking part in a customer panel? From April 2023 Somerset's five councils will be replaced by a single council delivering all council services to communities in the county.

The New Council wants to provide the highest quality services that meet the needs of people living and working in the county and wants you to help shape these services.

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

Reminder - Consultation on council tax support scheme launched

A consultation on council tax support for the new unitary Somerset Council was launched on the 25 July 2022.

This is the first major policy consultation for the new council, and it proposes that the lowest income households across Somerset get 100% council tax relief.

The consultation runs until 19 September and proposes a simplified approach that will be easier to administer.

The [consultation is now available](#).

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

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highway Maintenance Update

Very hot and dry weather at the beginning of this week has meant that the gangs have been able to make good progress with safety and scheduled works. We have not had the feared issues of roads melting in the heat, but the gangs are still on standby with the gritter lorries to dust any areas that are affected by the extreme heat. If you spot any areas that need attention please let SCC know on the numbers/links below.

The lack of rain is again helping us in one regard – the hedges and verges stop growing! The gangs from SWT areas will be helping our neighbouring Somerset districts this week covering for leave/sickness and will return for any urgent works arising.

This week SCC Highways have successfully completed 85 Safety Defect repairs in SWT (62 in Taunton and 23 in West Somerset).

The verge maintenance gangs have completed the A and B roads and are now coming towards the end of the parish program.

The surface dressing program is now completed for this Financial Year.

Works for week commencing 15 August 2022 are: -

- **Completed:** Drainage works at **Weacombe Lane, Bicknoller** (Carriageway open – just some minor lining works to complete)
- **Completed:** 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 and Outer Circle Taunton**
- **Completed:** Footway resurfacing in at **Bradford on Tone Rd, Taunton**
- **Completed:** Carriageway patching at **A396 Bridgetown**

Reported defects are still low 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**

For information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk or follow [@TravelSomerset](https://twitter.com/TravelSomerset) on Twitter.

Reporting a problem on the road

Alerting SCC to potholes or a host of other problems on the road is now easier and quicker – and you can track its progress after you've reported it.

Gone is the need to make phone calls or send emails - thanks to a new upgraded online system with an improved interactive map, members of the public can report a problem 24/7 and the Highways team will get on the case. From potholes, blocked drains and broken manhole covers, to overgrown vegetation, damaged pavements or cycle paths, faulty traffic lights or missing markings - they can all be reported in just minutes from a smartphone, tablet or computer.

The full range and how to report is available here www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/.

The new development means that if you're reporting a fault, you can now track its progress. If it's safe to pull over, all you need to do is take a quick picture of the fault, then visit the Report It site on your phone, answer a few simple questions and upload your picture. You'll be sent a link which enables you to track its progress.

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

Temporary Road Closure: Trenchard Way, Taunton

SCC 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 Trenchard Way - 110 metres from the junction with Station Road in an easterly direction for a total distance of 180 metres.

This Order will enable SCC to carry out resurfacing works. The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site **is not permitted** on this occasion.

For any further information about this closure please contact **Somerset County Council** on **0300 123 2224**, quoting reference: **ttro451413**.

The Order becomes effective on 4 August 2022 and will remain in force for eighteen months. **The works are commenced on 8 August 2022 until 20 August 2022 between the hours of (6.30pm and 11.00pm) for a total of 10 working nights.**

Temporary Road Closure: Tower Street, Taunton

Please follow the link [ttro480862TD](#) to view the above road closure.

The works are expected to commence on **15 August 2022** and last for **2 days** to enable **Wessex Water to carry out new connection works**.

The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site is **not permitted** on this occasion.

For any further information about this closure please contact **Wessex Water** on **0345 600 4600**, quoting reference: **ttro480862TD**.

Urgent / Emergency Road Closure: Upper Holway Road, Taunton

Please be aware that we have received a notification of a TTRN (urgent / emergency) road closure at **Upper Holway Road, Taunton**, will commence on **15 August 2022** and is expected to last until **19 August 2022**.

The contractor SCC - Major Improvement Scheme has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site is **not permitted** on this occasion.

For any further information about this closure please contact **SCC - Major Improvement Scheme** on **0300 123 2224** quoting reference: ttro122548TD.

Somerset Bus Partnership

Bus it! You know it makes sense

As fuel prices spiral during the ongoing cost-of-living crisis SCC and Somerset Bus Partnership are joining forces to encourage people to 'BUS IT'.

The campaign aims to highlight that with households under financial pressure buses have never been more relevant, offering a cheaper travel alternative and the chance to save on fuel and vehicle maintenance costs, while at the same time protecting the environment by helping to cut congestion and reducing your carbon footprint.

Many bus pass holders aren't making the most of their free travel. Concessionary passes provide free off-peak travel to all users across Somerset and England. To find out how to apply for your bus pass, head here: [Concessionary bus passes \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/concessionary-bus-passes).

Visit <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/busit> to find out about ticket deals and calculate how much you could save.

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

New £1 fare for Taunton and more evening buses in Somerset

Bus users will soon be able to travel anywhere in the Taunton area for just £1. The new fare structure is part of an £11.9 million package of measures being introduced by SCC as part of Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan and includes proposals for new evening and weekend services on some routes.

The new £1 fares will be introduced from the beginning of September, starting with the Taunton Park and ride service, followed in the Autumn by £1 fares on other Taunton area-based bus services and offers all paying passengers a flat rate single fare or £2 for a return, to any destination in the greater Taunton area.

The fare zone is currently being finalised with operators.

The initiative is part of a longer-term goal to secure further funding to deliver similar fare initiatives in other areas of the county.

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

Somerset Education Business Partnership

Building the Workforce of the Future

A Level and T Level results day: Thursday 18 August 2022

GCSE results day: Thursday 25 August 2022

Many young people will receive exam results in the coming weeks. Whilst some will be celebrating, it might not have gone as planned for others. There's lots of support available to help you figure out the options after results day.

Somerset Education Business Partnership connects employers with education providers so that young people are aware of local career opportunities and develop the skills needed to thrive at work.

Research has shown that young people who have contact with employers whilst at school are significantly less likely to become NEET – not in education, employment or training – and can expect to earn money once they are in full time employment.

Please [click here](#) to visit the website and find out more information.

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA)

Annual Report 2021-22 published

Flooding in Somerset is a constant threat. The terrible 2013-14 floods drove the creation of the SRA. 2021's run-off flood damage in Chard and other places reminds us that the climate can strike harm at any moment. We still have much work to do.

In 2021-22, the SRA spent £2.8 million on extra flood protection and resilience work. Across the county, from Dulverton to Frome, hundreds of places have benefited from the SRA's investment in activities designed to protect people, properties, businesses and roads, while enhancing local environments.

The annual report features Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan, which was produced during the floods of 2013-14 and is overseen by the SRA. The SRA and its partners have begun to review that Plan, because most of the actions it recommended have been achieved since 2014, and a lot has changed. £13 million of Growth Deal funding that was allocated by the government in 2014 for Flood Action Plan projects has all been spent, and next year Somerset is getting a new single Somerset Council. Now is a good time to review, revitalise and relaunch the Plan. The SRA will be asking you for your views about it this autumn.

Please [click here](#) to visit the website and read the report.

Somerset Prepared Partnership

Nominations open for Somerset's Community Resilience Award

Do you know someone who has helped their community be prepared for emergencies?

A new award has been launched to celebrate people or groups that have made their communities more resilient. The winner will be announced at the 2022 Somerset Community Resilience Day on **October 13, at West Monkton Village Hall.**

Nominations are invited from Somerset residents, for groups or individuals that have made a difference in helping their community: for example, local flood groups, parish or town councillors who can be counted on to think ahead, or someone who has helped to make sure vulnerable people can get help in an emergency.

The event is being organised by the Somerset Prepared partnership, which includes the Somerset Local Authorities' Civil Contingencies Unit, Environment Agency, Avon and Somerset Police, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue, Somerset Rivers Authority, Somerset Rotary, SWAST, Spark, Red Cross and Safe South West.

The event will run from 10am - 4pm, with presentations in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. Participants can come for the whole or part of the day, with registration on [Eventbrite](#).

To find out more or nominate someone for the Somerset Community Resilience Award, see the Somerset Prepared website <http://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/> or get in touch at info@somersetprepared.org.uk.

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

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP)

Seed to Sawmill Event – Thursday 18 August

Join ENP on Thursday 18 August for a celebration of Exmoor's trees and woodlands at the Seed to Sawmill event in Exford. Centred around the newly established tree nursery and long-standing Field Services Team yard, you'll be able to see where ENP are growing trees to supply Exmoor's future woodlands and explore where the iconic footpath signs are handmade.

The team are delighted to be joined by several groups and organisations whose livelihood and passion is in our trees and the timber products that come from them. There will be a number of stalls for you to visit in the meadow beside the tree nursery.

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

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.

Exmoor Dark Skies Festival 13 – 30 October

Exmoor's dark skies are some of the best in the UK. They have minimal light pollution and on a cloudless night you can see literally thousands of stars and astronomical sights such as the Milky Way with the naked eye. In 2011 Exmoor was designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve by the International Dark Sky Association.

Booking for all events of the popular Exmoor Dark Skies Festival is now open. Returning for its sixth year, the late October festival, sponsored by SBA (Somerset Business Agency) CIC, is set to be the biggest ever with over fifty events taking place all over the National Park.

The programme of events has been released online at www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/stargazing.

As well as details online (www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/darkskiesfestival) a free printed programme with details of all events is now available from National Park Centres at Lynmouth, Dunster and Dulverton which are open 7 days a week.

Planetarium sessions inside a huge inflatable dome are returning to the festival line-up after a 2- year break. The sessions can inspire all ages with a 360-degree immersive space experience but particularly capture the imagination of children.

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

HM Coastguard Watchet Beware of the Mud!

On the morning of Monday 8 August, HM Coastguard Watchet's mud rescue team were tasked to attend Blue Anchor Beach following a 999 call reporting a female stranded in the mud in a specialist mobility wheelchair.

Due to the immediate danger that the female faced from the entrapment in the mud and the flooding tide, a request was made for support from [Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service](#) for additional personnel, and also a backup mud rescue team from [Weston-Super-Mare Coastguard Rescue Team](#).

Coastguards were soon on scene where upon seeing the wheel chair already being flooded by the tide, a request was made for support from [Minehead RNLI Lifeboat](#)

[Station](#) and the Search and Rescue Helicopter at St Athan across the water in South Wales.

As that call was being made however, the stranded occupant of the wheelchair was lifted out of the chair by two members of the public and brought out of the water.

The coastguard teams made their way down across the beach and around a large patch of soft sand mud, where they were then able to carefully stretcher the uninjured female off the beach back to the roadside and to a waiting vehicle. No medical treatment was required.

The request for the lifeboat and Helicopter alongside the support which had arrived from [Minehead Fire Station](#) and [Williton Fire Station](#) was then stood down.

Unfortunately, the specialist mobility wheelchair was lost to the tide due to the depth of mud it was stuck in and recovery was arranged for the next low tide.

The Coastguard would like to remind anyone visiting our local beaches along the [Bristol Channel](#) that the soft sand and mud can be treacherous and not to attempt to cross it, to take notice of the warning signs and where anyone becomes stuck to spread their weight and not struggle.

A 999 call to the coastguard will then allow a rescue response to be initiated.

Don't encourage anyone to go into the mud as they may also become entrapped.

HM Coastguard
To Search, To Rescue, To Save.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS) Reducing the risk of wildfires during dry and hot weather

In recent weeks we have seen dramatic scenes as firefighters from across the country have battled wildfires and worked to protect homes and businesses nearby. DSFRS have also had a busy time (although not to the same levels as elsewhere in the country). DSFRS attended a high number of 'fires in the open' in July attending 195 (compared to an average of 148 for the same period over the past four years).

The devastating aftermath of the London fires you may have seen in the media brings a stark reminder of the power of fire. It doesn't discriminate, it just burns whatever's in its path, whether that is grass, trees, cars, homes or businesses.

Although the fire service is well trained and resourced to deal with wildfires, they need your help to reduce the likelihood of them happening. They have had a number of people getting in touch this week concerned about wildfires.

Most wildfires are started by human behaviour – a BBQ, campfire, discarded cigarette, or glass lying on dry ground magnifying the sun's rays. They can also sometimes start due to a bonfire (which was intended to be controlled) getting out of control.

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

Help DSFRS to recruit on-call firefighters

Most fire stations are crewed by on-call firefighters. On-call firefighters do the same emergency work as wholetime firefighters, but they can also have other jobs too.

DSFRS urgently need to recruit more on-call firefighters in certain places across Devon and Somerset as they sometimes do not have enough to crew a fire engine in that town.

It can be difficult as people must be within five minutes of the fire station when they are on-duty. These days people often need to work in a different place to where they live or have other commitments on their time.

DSFRS has done a lot to make the role more attractive for people, such as introducing a new pay scheme which means firefighters get paid for being available rather than just when they attend an incident.

They would be really grateful if you could take a few minutes to fill out [this survey](#) so that they can better understand peoples' perceptions of the on-call firefighter role.

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

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Main Grants Fund deadline looms

SCF have created Main Grants so local groups can provide the extra support that some people need in our community. That means you can ask SCF for money from Main Grants if you work or volunteer for a group that supports:

- children and young people to reach their potential and address the challenges they face
- adults with mental health problems to maintain their own health and wellbeing
- older people to age well and reduce isolation and loneliness

Whatever you ask for, it must provide **targeted support** to people who face bigger challenges than most, so that they have:

- more choice and control over their own lives
- stronger personal support networks

You can ask for £1,000 to £5,000 from Main Grants. Most grants are for about £3,000. SCF have around £300,000 available to give out this year in total.

You can apply for this money at any time, but decisions are only made at 4 panel meetings a year. You must apply by the deadline below for your application to be considered at the next meeting:

- apply by 5pm on **Friday 2 September** to be considered at a meeting in October 2022

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

Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP) Move More Together

SASP is pleased to announce the launch of Move More Together, a programme designed to encourage inactive adults over 50 to become more active. They will be matched with a volunteer who they will meet with regularly on a one-to-one basis, and who will support them to take their first steps towards being more active and enjoying a healthy lifestyle.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the UK population has never been less active. In 2019, a quarter of UK adults were already classed as inactive (source: ukactive), a number which has since increased, as the pandemic forced millions to work from home and options for exercise were limited. As restrictions have eased, many older adults are keen to become more active again, but access and confidence remain significant barriers.

Move More Together volunteers can accompany participants with various activities, such as home-based exercise, going for a walk locally or trying out an exercise class. Activities can vary from week to week, and volunteers will be aware that flexibility is key to finding an activity that is suitable for sometimes unpredictable health conditions.

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

Life Cycle UK Get Somerset Cycling Project

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

Life Cycle UK have joined with local community organisations across Somerset to develop and deliver projects that support local people to get cycling and make the benefits of cycling more accessible. They will also strengthen the 'cycling sector' by giving professional training to bicycle mechanics and cycling instructors. The aim is for everyone in Somerset to be able to access to this healthy, green and low-cost form of transport if they want to.

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

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

Spark Training Programme 2022

There are some exciting training opportunities coming up in the next few months, not only from Spark Somerset, but their partners and other local organisations.

Please [click here](#) to view an affordable programme of online and classroom-based training sessions for Somerset charities and community groups.

Minehead and Coast Development Trust Minehead Bay Festival – Saturday 3 September

The Trust is looking for friendly volunteer marshals to help with their brand-new arts and culture festival on Minehead Seafront.

Minehead Bay Festival will be celebrating Minehead's local art, culture and wellness scene, featuring activities for all the family from circus performances and entertainment, live music, dance performances, street artists, pro skaters, art and craft activities, sand sculpting workshops and much more.

You can expect a fun day out engaging with the local community and enjoying a great day packed with art and culture!

If you would like to volunteer please [click here](#) for more information.

EDF Energy Hinkley Point C – Job Services Drop in Event

Do you want to know more about the fantastic opportunities available on the project?

The Jobs Services Team will be at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Alcombe, Minehead TA24 6DJ on **23 August from 9.00am until 12.00pm.**

Register online: www.edfenergy.com/hpcjobs or just drop in.

Community Employment Hubs Free employment support service

The Employment Hubs are a free employment support service covering Taunton, West Somerset, and Wellington. They will help support you towards work; Free IT access; updating and writing CV's; Job searching and completing application forms.

They are now meeting face to face, so please visit the [website](#) to make an appointment and find out more information.

Volunteers Needed

Could you help and support people in your local community towards work? If the answer is yes, you will need the desire to help others, have general life experiences, as well as the enthusiasm to motivate people and raise their confidence and self-esteem.

The Employment Hubs focus on offering one to one practical support such as CV writing, searching and applying for work, how to deal with online application forms, help with interviews and signposting to other agencies for further help and support.

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

Citizens Advice West Somerset Opportunity Boost Scheme

As part of the Somerset Recovery Fund, the Opportunity Boost Scheme project, is still open for applications.

To qualify you must be a resident in Somerset and over 16. Not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking activities via your local Job Centre, and if you are working you should have a pre-Covid salary of less than £25,000.

The purpose of the Opportunity Boost Scheme is to assist with, accessing work training or learning and or to improve the employment opportunities of applicants

The grant can cover travel, work equipment, workwear, childcare, or learning materials. Please [click here](#) for more information.

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

Protecting yourself and others during a heatwave

With temperatures again set to exceed 30C this week, SCC Public Health is asking people to keep an eye out for themselves, vulnerable family, friends and neighbours.

Whilst many of us look forward to enjoying the hot weather, it is worth remembering that sunny spells can pose health risks to some people and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has issued a Level 3 Heat Health Warning for the South West.

It's important to protect yourself and others from too much sun or heat, to carry water when travelling, and to think of those, such as young children or older people, who may feel the heat more than others.

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

Spreading hope on World Suicide Prevention Day

In preparation for this year's World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September, SCC's Public Health team are asking members of the public to share quotes, lyrics or poems that have helped them to get through difficult times in their lives.

Contributions will then be compiled in to a digital 'Book of Hope', together with signposting to local mental health services and support. The project will be unveiled at an event '[Walk For A Life](#)' at Somerset County Cricket Ground on Saturday 10 September.

The event aims to raise awareness of suicide in Somerset and is supported by partners including [Somerset Foundation Trust](#), [Open Mental Health](#) and [Stepladder](#). On the day, attendees will walk a route through Taunton Town Centre in memory of all those impacted by suicide within the County. They will then end the walk at the Somerset County Cricket Ground, where a number of local partners and stakeholders will be on hand to offer information and advice.

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

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 high 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](#).

Public Health catch-up film

In last week's Public Health catch-up film, Clinton sets out the steps you should take if you suspect you may have the virus, and how you can play your part in protecting our vulnerable population. Please [click here](#) to watch the video.

Living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19

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

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

Things you can choose to do are:

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

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

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

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

Protect yourself from phishing emails

Phishing is a cybercrime in which scammers try to lure sensitive information or data from you, by disguising themselves as a trustworthy source. Phishers use multiple platforms, which include text messages, emails and phone calls. The ultimate goal no matter what method is used is to obtain your personal information in order to access bank accounts, credit cards or perpetuate further fraud such as identity theft.

Some phishing emails or texts might look unprofessional to you, using poor grammar or asking you to click on links with odd-looking URLs. But phishers don't have to be sophisticated. These cybercriminals work in volume, and only need to trick a small number of victims to consider their work a success.

- **Be aware and pro-active:** When responding to emails or phone calls, never give your login or personal details. If you receive an email from a company that claims to be legitimate but is requesting these details, or a contact number tell them you will call them back. Use a contact number for the organisation that you have sourced reputable. Speak to them directly to confirm that the message is genuine.
- **Use your spam filter:** If you detect a phishing email, mark the message as spam and delete it. This ensures that the message cannot reach your inbox in future.
- **Know your source:** Never respond to a message from an unknown source. Take care not to click any embedded links. Phishing emails are sent to a vast number of randomly generated addresses. However, clicking embedded links can provide verification of your active e-mail address. Once this occurs it may facilitate the targeting of further malicious emails. Even "unsubscribe" links can be malicious. Ensure that the e-mail is from a trusted source and you are, in fact, subscribed to the service.
- **Remember that the email address that appears in the 'from' field of an email is not a guarantee that the email came from the person or organisation that it claims to have originated from.**
- **Fraudsters are unlikely to know your real name, so the email may address you in vague terms, for example 'Dear Valued Customer'.**
- **Phishing emails will probably contain odd 'spe11ings' or 'cApitALs in the 'subject' box and contain spelling or grammatical errors in the email – this is an attempt to get around spam filters and into your inbox.**

Suspicious emails can be forwarded to report@phishing.gov.uk.

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Take care on the roads

There is an amber weather warning for extreme heat until Saturday. With people travelling on their summer holidays, here are a few pieces of advice if you are hitting the road:

- Plan ahead
- Bring plenty of water
- Bring a suitable snack
- Check your tyres
- Check your oil
- Fuel/charge up
- Dress appropriately for the weather (but have layers)
- Make sure your phone is charged

Finally, if you are travelling with a furry friend, make sure you have water for them. If you have a comfort stop, please take them with you and avoid leaving them in the car, but where you must - ensure someone stays with them, opens the window and you're parked in a shaded area.

Stay safe out there everyone, enjoy the sunshine and please take a moment to read our shared posts around fire safety from our colleagues at the fire service!

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

Summer Break

Due to annual leave commitments, there will be no newsletter for the next two weeks. Publication will resume for week ending 4 September 2022.

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).