

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 120 Weeks ending 11/09/2022

Cabinet Office

National Mourning Guidance

Buckingham Palace has announced the demise of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will be preceded by a period of Lying-in-State. Dates and further details of these events will be announced by the Royal Household in due course.

A period of National Mourning for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has now started. The period of National Mourning will continue until the end of the day of the State Funeral. The Royal Family will undertake a separate period of Royal Mourning, subject to the wishes of The King.

Further information is available from the website [here](#).

Key Messages this week

1. Local Proclamation in Taunton

Union flags are being flown at half-mast across the county to mark the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The National Proclamation, the official announcement of Her Majesty's death and acknowledgement of the commencement of the King's new reign, will take place at 11am on Saturday 10 September at St James Palace.

The Local Proclamation will take place the following day on **Sunday 11 September in Taunton**. The Local Proclamation will be read out by the High Sheriff of Somerset, Jennifer Duke, in front of the Market House in Taunton town centre, at 1pm.

The public are welcome to observe the Local Proclamation.

Floral tributes to HM Queen Elizabeth II can be laid at Taunton Minster, St Mary Magdalene Church. We ask members of the public to please be mindful of the environment and remove wrapping or choose biodegradable items.

The Local Proclamation in Taunton is a short ceremony supported by the five councils - Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Mendip District Council and South Somerset District Council.

Books of Condolence have been opened at all the Council offices including the Somerset West and Taunton Council offices in Deane House, Taunton, and West Somerset House, Williton, and the Somerset County Council offices, County Hall.

There will also be Books of Condolence in libraries across Somerset, and Buckingham Palace has an official [Book of Condolence](#) for people to leave tributes online.

Regular updates will be posted on the SWT website [here](#).

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.

- **SWT Audit and Governance Committee – Monday 12 September**, in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Thursday 8 September. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).
- **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 15 September**, in the JMR at 9.30am. Deadline for public comments or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 13 September. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#)
- **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 15 September**, in the JMR at 2.00pm. Deadline for public comments or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 13 September. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).
- **POSTPONED - SWT Licensing Committee – Monday 19 September**. Please note in agreement with the Chair, the Licensing Committee meeting has been postponed. A new date will follow shortly.

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. Public invited to shape local democracy in Somerset

A public consultation on the development of Local Community Networks (LCNs) has been launched.

People are encouraged to have their say on plans to develop LCNs across the county, to support decision-making at its most local level. Opinions are being sought on a range of aspects, from LCN roles and responsibilities, boundary options, to choosing a suitable name.

The consultation is supported by the County Council and four district councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset) who will be replaced by a single Somerset Council on 1 April 2023.

Check out the interactive map, to see where your parish fits in relation to the three boundary proposals [HERE](#).

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

4. Climate News Issue 5

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.

Please [click here](#) to read the latest newsletter.

5. Taunton Pool re-opening

The team at [Taunton Swimming Pool](#) thanks everyone for their patience while the pool has been closed for maintenance work.

The pool will re-open on Monday 12 September.

Until then, customers are able to use [Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa](#).

6. Reminder - SWT to host cost of living crisis support event

SWT Council's [Community Employment Hubs](#) service is holding a cost of living crisis support event in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The event will be held between **10am and 2pm on Wednesday, 14 September**, at the [Creative Innovation Centre](#), Memorial Hall, Taunton, TA1 3PF.

Anyone concerned about the cost-of-living crisis is welcome to attend this one-stop-shop for comprehensive support and advice, and to ask face-to-face questions from a range of organisations that will be present.

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

7. Reminder - SWT launches new fund for low-income households

This week, SWT launched a short-term Hardship Fund for low-income families struggling to afford household essentials.

This means-tested benefit fund will be administered by [Citizens' Advice Taunton](#) and [West Somerset Advice](#) to provide financial assistance of up to £200 to eligible households across the district.

This fund is not available for emergency food, fuel or energy payments, as this support is available via foodbanks and Central Government support.

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

8. Reminder - Have your say on Minehead's e-scooter trial

SWT is seeking the views of residents, businesses and visitors to Minehead in response to the town's e-scooter trial.

Any residents, businesses, and visitors to Minehead are welcome to complete the survey using the following link:

<https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/fd6608b5/>

The survey will stay open until **30 September** and the information obtained will help inform SWT and [Zipp Mobility](#) on how the scheme can be enhanced.

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

9. Public Notice – Amenity Land known as Wellington Square, Minehead

Local Government Act 1972 Section 123(2A)

Amenity land known as: Wellington Square, Minehead

Notice is hereby given that Somerset West and Taunton Council (the Council) intends to dispose by way of Freehold Transfer the following land situated at Wellington Square, Minehead (Land Registry Title Number ST289547) which forms part of the public open spaces held by the Council:

The Freehold Transfer will be granted to Minehead Town Council.

Please [click here](#) to read the full public notice.

10. Reminder - Somerset West Lottery autumn 2022 bolt-on prize

The Somerset West Lottery is now running the autumn 2022 bolt-on prize draw.

Anyone purchasing one or more tickets between Monday, 5 September and Saturday, 29 October, will automatically be in with a chance of winning a £1,000 voucher to spend at [The Bike Factory](#), courtesy of external lottery management company [Gatherwell](#).

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

11. 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.

12. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Disappearing labels can help you waste less and save more

Supermarkets - including Aldi as the latest - are dropping some of their "best-before" dates from food, leaving it up to shoppers to judge the quality, while retaining the safety-based "use-by" details.

The idea is that it will lead to far less waste, as some consumers have been discarding perfectly edible foods at the best-before dates when they could have been safely eaten for many more days or weeks.

If you have unavoidable food waste, all foods - fresh, "off", raw, cooked, meat and fish, bread and bones - can be added to your food waste bin. Remove and recycle or discard all packaging first. PS: yes, you can add solid fats to your food waste bin, but liquid oils can only be recycled at all recycle sites.

Sunday 11 September – Fixy's Wivey Festival Date

Festival goes in Wiveliscombe and across the 10 Parishes can find out more about repair and reuse this weekend when the Fixy initiative rolls into town - and they can donate their unused smart tech, from laptops to phones.

The SWP initiative will be at the 10 Parishes Street Market and Carnival in Wiveliscombe on Sunday 11 September from 10am to 5pm.

As well as speaking to the Fixy team, visitors will be able to chat with representatives from the popular Wivey Repair Café. Together they can tell you about local opportunities for getting things fixed and volunteering with the café that usually meets in the community centre on the last Saturday of every month.

Parking outside the Wivey Larder, Fixy will also be running one of its popular "tech amnesties" at the event – taking donations of broken or unwanted smart tech.

Thanks to Somerset-based DonateIT, donated items will be securely data-wiped and repaired if necessary, before being passed on to schools, community groups and people who need them. If they cannot be fixed, they will be responsibly recycled.

The following items can be donated: laptops, tablets, mobile phone/smart phones, iPhones, iPads, smart watches, digital cameras, games consoles and accessories, hard drives/external hard drives, routers.

Drop in to the Fixy stand for the chance to win a laptop or tablet. Complete a short survey and your name will be entered into the monthly draw and one lucky winner can choose a "repaired for reuse" laptop or tablet as a prize. Recycling is good, but repair and reuse is even better and Fixy is all about helping the tech you love to live again.

The Fixy van is travelling the county promoting repair and reuse and supporting Somerset's thriving network of repair cafes and related groups.

Check somersetwaste.gov.uk/share-and-repair for the latest of where Fixy will be and when, as well as details of Somerset's repair cafes and how you can volunteer with them.

Working electricals and electronics should always be passed on to others or donated to charity shops if they are no longer needed.

Broken items that cannot be repaired for reuse can be recycled from the kerbside as part of Recycle More collections. Items must be small enough to fit into a carrier bag (not a black sack) which should be left untied next to your other recycling (excludes TVs and monitors, which can be taken to any recycle site).

New Somerset Council

Latest news

Local Community Network (LCN) Consultation

Local Community Networks (LCNs) will be part of the new Somerset Unitary Council, with formal power as 'Committees of the council', that listen to and are influenced by local communities.

LCNs bring Somerset Unitary Councillors and Officers together with key partners such as Town, City and Parish Councils, Health, Police, the Voluntary Sector and local groups,

The consultation on LCN boundaries went live on the 5 of September and will run for 6 weeks (**17 October**). In-person and online engagement events are taking place across the county.

- **NEW DATE: - Friday 16 September – 10am-3pm, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton.**
- Thursday 22 September – 10am-4pm, Mendip District Council, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5BT

- Thursday 29 September – 10am-4pm, South Somerset District Council, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset BA20 2HT
- Friday 7 October – 10am-4pm, Sedgemoor District Council, Bridgwater House, King Square, Bridgwater TA6 3AR
- **Monday 10 October – 10am-4pm, West Somerset House, Killick Way, Williton, Somerset, TA4 4QA**

The team will be consulting City, Town and Parishes, key stakeholders and the staff at all five councils, throughout the six-week period too.

The public consultation is about gathering views from the public and key stakeholders about how LCNs should develop and work in practice. It will explore how many LCNs the new Somerset Council will have, the role they will undertake and their name; exploring whether Local Community Networks is the right title for this Committee.

You can find out more information about the consultation [here](#).

City, Town and Parish Conference – Tuesday 4 October 2022

The Local Community Network (LCN) Project Team are inviting Parish Clerks and Chairs to join them at the City, Town and Parish Conference on **Tuesday 4 October at Westlands in Yeovil**.

It promises to be a day packed with inspiration, information and opportunities to inform the way we work together over the coming months.

There will be a particular focus on the development of Local Community Networks (LCNs), and discussion on how Parishes can influence and support the delivery of place-based services in Somerset. Full agenda to follow.

To find out more and book your place, please visit Eventbrite here:

[City, Town and Parish conference Tickets, Tue 4 Oct 2022 at 09:30 | Eventbrite](#)

The project team look forward to seeing you there.

Reminder – Last chance to consult on council tax support scheme

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

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

More good weather this week has meant that the gangs have been able to make good progress with safety and scheduled works. SCC Highways have still not had the feared issues of roads melting in the heat and the extreme temperatures are probably unlikely to return now, but the gangs are still on standby with the gritter lorries to dust any affected areas. If you spot any areas that need attention, please let the team, know on the numbers/links below.

The Toneway at Creech Castle in Taunton is now fully open and running smoothly with only minor works outstanding to complete the scheme

The torrential rain again caused multiple flooding issues with run-off from adjacent fields – the highway drains are only designed to deal with the water that actual falls on the carriageway and can quickly become overwhelmed when there is a large amount of water from adjacent property entering the highway. This happened on the evening of 5 September on the A358 at Combe Florey near Taunton and left the road covered in tonnes of slurry-like mud and even potatoes. This forced the closure of the road for the second time in a month and SCC thank the travelling public for their forbearance as they cleared the debris. SCC is in discussion with the farmer regarding an engineered solution to this issue as it cannot accept another repeat of this event in heavy rain.

The new gates have now been installed at Cleeve Hill in Watchet and will be deployed to close the road if there is a risk to the public due to a landslide or potential landslide.

Reported defects are still low recently which has enabled the gangs to push the planned works forward, 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 148 Safety Defect repairs in SWT (61 in Taunton and 87 in West Somerset).

The bird nesting season has now come to an end so we can expect to see the farmers and other hedge owners begin to cut their roadside hedges.

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

Works for week commencing 5 September 2022 are: -

- **Continuing:** installation of new cattle grid at **Staple Plain, West Quantoxhead** (Road closure with pedestrian access via the bridleway. Emergency vehicle access will be maintained)
- **Continuing:** resurfacing of urban footway at **Crufts Meadow/Tristram Drive/Arundells Way Creech St Michael, Taunton**

- **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**

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.

Discounted fare set to be introduced on Park and Ride

A new £1 bus fare becomes effective on Taunton's Park and Ride service from the beginning of September to coincide with the expected reopening of the Toneway junction.

The service will cost just £1 for a single and £2 for a return from Monday 5 September in line with a new fare structure to be introduced for the whole of Taunton later this year as part of SCC's Bus Service Improvement Plan. Children (5-16) will be able to travel half price and concessionary bus pass holders can travel free after 9.30am weekdays and all day on Saturday.

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

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)

Exmoor's Rights of Way show resilience to winter storms

97% of public paths on Exmoor were judged through a nationally recognised methodology to be 'open and easy to use' this year, according to the National Park Authority's latest annual rights of way report.

The top result comes despite the storms of late February leaving a trail of destruction across the Exmoor rights of way network. ENP Field Services Team cleared a record 330 trees over 8 weeks and the storm also caused longer-term damage to several major routes including the South West Coast Path and Coleridge Way.

As well as paths being blocked by fallen trees, in many cases path surfaces were badly damaged by lifting root balls. The major surface issues were resolved with support from great local contractors and all paths reopened within 10 weeks. Nevertheless, the investments ENPA has made in bridges, drainage, staff skills and equipment over many years allowed them to respond and keep the network open and safe for all users to enjoy.

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

Heritage brought to life on Exmoor

Two Heritage Open Day events held will unpack medieval and World War Two history on Exmoor in September.

Wednesday 14 September, 2.00pm - 4.30pm

St Nicholas' Priory at Barlynch lies in a remote and beautiful wooded valley beside the River Exe, some 1.5kms north-east of Dulverton. The remains of three monastic buildings survive. A leaflet, guides and temporary interpretation panels will help visitors learn more about this historic asset.

Saturday 17 September, from 10:30am – 3.00pm

The popular 'North Hill on the Radar' event will help people to discover the vital role North Hill played in World War II when the area was closed to civilians and brought under military control. It became one of country's five new tank training ranges for British, American and Canadian troops. Tucked down the coastal slopes lay a top-

secret Radar Station, one of 244 across the country and part of a coastal defensive chain to identify shipping and low flying aircraft.

A convoy of military vehicles will make its way from Minehead to North Hill at 10.30am and throughout the day until 3pm there will be an opportunity to discover more about this incredible period of history from displays at the Radar Station, and through self-guided walks of the training grounds.

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

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS)

Chimneys, open fires and log burners

Log burners and open fires are a great way to stay warm and create a cosy atmosphere at home. But if you don't know how to enjoy them safely, they can quickly get out of control. [Read DSFRS advice to make sure you avoid having a chimney fire.](#)

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Somerset Cost of Living Crisis Appeal Launched

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) has launched their Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal with an urgent call for donations which will help fund local charities helping local people living in poverty through the cost-of-living crisis.

With inflation at a 40-year high and energy bills rocketing, thousands of Somerset households are facing incredibly tough times ahead. The Somerset Cost-of-Living Fund, which will open for applications from local charities soon, will provide rapid support to local charities and community organisations across the county of Somerset, many of whom are already experiencing record numbers of people seeking help.

SCF is pleased to announce that the appeal has already been boosted with an initial donation of £50,000 from Somerset County Council.

The charity is now inviting local people, businesses and organisations who can and wish to help, to donate to the Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal today to help SCF provide funding to vital local charities supporting local people in poverty.

Visit: www.somersetcf.org.uk/costofliving or call 01749 344949.

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

Local Pantry Project

Update on the local pantry network

Local Pantries are community-run projects that buy or collect surplus food to prevent it going to waste, and then make it available to residents for a weekly fee of £3.50. As the food is 'surplus', due to a seasonal glut or change in branding for example,

the Local Pantry does not choose or know what it will be offered, so members receive a 'mystery parcel' each week. The number of items and value of the food varies and but always represents excellent value. Members usually receive a mix of fresh, chilled and ambient goods.

SWT now has three Local Pantries in the district: the first opened in March 2021 in Rowbarton, Taunton; then in May this year the Minehead Area Local Pantry opened, and from September the Best Before Food Store will operate to serve members in Rockwell Green and Wellington.

Already the Local Pantries are making a significant difference both to local people and to the environment, so much so that the Rowbarton Local Pantry has been shortlisted for a BBC Somerset 'Making a Difference' award. They have over 30 members and since opening they have shared the equivalent of over 23,000 meals and saved nearly 4 tonnes of CO2 being emitted.

Minehead Area Local Pantry is run by the [West Somerset Food Cupboard](http://www.wsfoodcupboard.org.uk) and is open to members every Tuesday afternoon between 2pm and 5.15pm. Like all Local Pantries, their members live within 15 minutes travel time of the Pantry, which is based at the Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Alcombe. They are fully subscribed currently and holding a waiting list. They have also had wonderful feedback, including "You always make me feel very welcome. It isn't just about the food".

To apply for a place or find out more use their website [wsfoodcupboard.org.uk/pantry](http://www.wsfoodcupboard.org.uk/pantry) or email foodcupboardws@outlook.com.

The local pantry in Wellington will be called the Best Before Food Store and based in the Rockwell Green Christian Fellowship building. They will be launching with two types of membership, full and associate. Full membership costs £4 and includes food as well as access to their café and the other services on offer. For more details email: wellingtonpantry@gmail.com

SWT is keen to talk to other groups interested in opening a Local Pantry, as support is available to do this. If you would like more details, please contact Helen Phillips by email: thelocalpantry@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

Community Council for Somerset (CCS) September's Talking Café Facebook Live Events

Watch LIVE every Wednesday at 1.00pm and ask questions in the comments for instant answers.

14 September Somerset Micro Enterprise Support
Helping people to become self-employed Micro-Providers.

21 September [Somerset Waste Partnership](#)
Somerset Recycling Week – Get involved.

28 September

[Somerset Carers](#)

What to expect from going to a Carers Group and how to find them in Somerset.

Don't forget you can search for previous live recordings by subject here:

<https://somersetagents.org/talking-cafes-live> - just select the topic that interests you from the drop-down menu and all relevant Talking Cafe recordings will be available!

Health and Welfare

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Final chance to have your say....

Somerset County Council, NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and Somerset Parent Carer Forum are keen to hear from children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), their families, professionals and health colleagues to help shape Somerset's SEND services going forward.

Anyone who has been in contact with Somerset SEND services (for whatever reason) over the past year is invited to share their views and experiences in the annual SEND survey

The anonymous survey runs until **Monday 19 September and can be found here:**

[Annual SEND Survey \(somerset.gov.uk\)](#) Visit www.somerset.gov.uk/localoffer for more information.

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

SCC Public Health

Preparing for Winter

This Autumn and Winter we expect to see both flu and Covid viruses circulating. With the UK experiencing its first flu season since 2019, the population will have less immunity than previous flu seasons. Preparations for the potential impact of this on the population's health and well-being, centre on vaccination for both flu and COVID-19, targeted to at risk groups.

The best way to protect ourselves our friends and our families, is by taking up all the vaccinations that we are eligible for.

Vaccinations

COVID-19

The COVID-19 Autumn Booster vaccination programme started on the 5 September and all clinics are likely to become very busy. If you have yet to have your 1st, 2nd or initial booster, please consider getting it now.

[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](#).

Influenza

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) have widened the offer of the [free flu vaccine](#) to more eligible groups.

These additional groups will only be eligible once the most vulnerable, including previously announced pre-school and primary school children, those aged 65 years and over and those in clinical risk groups, have been offered the jab.

The additional groups set to be offered the free flu vaccine in England will be:

- all adults aged 50 to 64 years (including those who turn 50 by 31 March 2023)
- secondary school children in years 7, 8 and 9, who will be offered the vaccine in order of school year (starting with the youngest first)

[If you're eligible for a free flu vaccine](#), you can book an appointment at your GP surgery or a pharmacy that offers it on the NHS. You may also get an invitation to get the vaccine, but you do not have to wait for this before booking an appointment. Everyone who is eligible for the free flu vaccine will be able to get it. If you have an appointment for a Covid-19 booster vaccine at a GP surgery or pharmacy, you may also be offered a flu vaccine at the same time.

Do not delay booking your flu vaccine appointment so that you can get both vaccines together. Only some people will be offered both vaccines at the same time.

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.

Healthy Start Vouchers

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk.

Check if you're eligible by applying today. If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops. Pre-payment will be uploaded onto this card every 4 weeks. You can use your card to buy:

- plain liquid cow's milk
- fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables
- fresh, dried, and tinned pulses
- infant formula milk based on cow's milk

You can also use your card to collect:

- Healthy Start vitamins – these support you during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Vitamin drops for babies and young children – these are suitable from birth to 4 years old

Information on how to apply for the scheme and for anyone who wants to check if they're eligible to apply can be found at www.healthystart.nhs.uk.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Childcare Choices

As children return to school after summer holidays, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding families who may be missing out on Tax-Free Childcare to register.

Families receive up to £500 every three months (£2,000 a year) per child, or £1,000 (£4,000 a year) if their child is disabled, helping towards the cost of before and after-school clubs, childminders and nurseries, holiday clubs and other approved childcare schemes.

More than one million families in the UK are entitled to some form of government childcare support and the government is encouraging those eligible to not miss out on their entitlements.

Please [click here](#) find out more from the Child Care Choices website.

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)

Teens handed injunction to reduce youth crime in Taunton

Three teenagers have been handed civil injunctions in a bid to reduce youth crime in Taunton.

Two 14-year-old and one 15-year-old boy appeared in Taunton Magistrates Court on Tuesday 6 September where they were issued with civil injunctions which will remain in place for the next year.

Two of the teenagers have also been issued with a curfew which will be monitored by a tag for the next six weeks.

The civil injunctions were applied for by officers after consultation with ASP partner agencies such as the Youth Offending Team and Child Social Care.

This was sought following several anti-social behaviour incidents taking place in Taunton which included theft of electric scooters, violence, and public order offences. Investigations continue into a number of these incidents and these injunctions do not preclude prosecution or any other criminal justice outcomes.

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

Make sure you spot courier fraud warning signs

Thousands of pounds have been lost by victims of courier fraud scams in recent weeks and ASP are urging people to make friends and family aware of the risks. Unsuspecting victims have reported receiving calls from criminals claiming to be from the police or their bank, asking them to withdraw cash and to leave it for a courier to collect.

In one courier fraud scam, the criminal pretends to work for the victim's bank and says they are investigating counterfeit notes at their local branch. They get the victim to go to the bank to withdraw money but order them not tell the bank they have been asked to do this. The caller says they will send someone around to the victim's house to collect the notes so they can be taken away to see if they are counterfeit – in reality they just drive off with the victim's money.

Another common tactic ASP has seen recently is for the fraudster to claim to work for the police – often in another part of the country – and say they are investigating or have arrested someone for using a cloned bank or credit card belonging to the victim.

The understandably concerned victim then is urged to withdraw money as part of the investigation, but again is simply giving the fraudster their hard-earned cash.

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).