

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 125 Weeks ending 16/10/2022

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. Council led jobs fair comes to Wellington

Following the recent success of Taunton's Jobs Fair, SWT's [Community Employment Hubs](#) service has partnered with the [Department for Work and Pensions \(DWP\)](#) to host another recruitment event, this time in Wellington.

Wellington Jobs Fair will be held next **Wednesday, 19 October**, between 10.00am and 12.30pm, with support for the venue being provided by [Wellington Baptist Church](#) on South Street, Wellington, TA21 8NS.

Over 14 local and national employers will be exhibiting a range of vacancies across multiple sectors, providing a fantastic opportunity for job seekers to talk to the recruitment teams about the positions, training and apprenticeships available.

A Ukrainian translator will also be available on the day, as well as employment support organisations including SWT's [Community Employment Hubs](#) service, [Step Up Somerset](#), [Skill Up Somerset](#) and the [National Careers Service](#).

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 19 October 2022.**
- **SWT Special Full Council – Tuesday 25 October** at 6.15pm in the JMR, to consider the adoption of the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Development Plan. The agenda and report packs are now available to view on the [website](#). The deadline for public questions and statements is 4pm on Friday 21 October 2022
- **SWT Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 26 October** at 6.15pm in the JMR.
- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 2 November** at 6.15pm in the JMR.
- **Taunton Shadow Town Council – Thursday 3 November** at 6.00pm in the JMR.

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. Green Flags raised in award-winning council parks

Accreditation flags have now been raised at seven of So SWT's parks and open spaces in recognition for being ranked as some of the very best in the country.

Green Award Flags were raised at Blenheim Gardens in Minehead; French Weir, Victoria and Vivary Parks in Taunton; and Wellington Park in Wellington, which also received a Green Heritage Award Flag.

Green Community Award Flags were also raised at Comeytrove Park in Taunton and Swains Lane Nature Reserve in Wellington.

The flags were awarded to the Council and local volunteer groups through the [Green Flag Award Scheme](#) where judging of the parks, which was carried out earlier this year, found they have the highest possible environmental standards, are beautifully maintained and have excellent visitor facilities.

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

4. Councils offer boost to food and drinks sector

Local food and drink businesses are set to benefit from industry-expert advice, tailored training and financial assistance from SWT and [Sedgemoor District \(SDC\)](#) Councils.

The support offered has been organised between the councils in response to recent research highlighting challenges for businesses concerning labelling, food safety regulations, training and supply chain disruptions.

Any businesses signing up to receive the free support comprising a review meeting, one-to-one advice and attendance to at least one expert workshop, will be eligible to apply for a grant of up to £2,500 available from December on a 'first come, first served' basis.

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

5. Enfield Car Park closed due to Taunton Carnival

Enfield car park will be closed all day on Saturday 15 October for [Taunton Carnival](#). Please [click here](#) for alternative parking in the area.

6. Reminder - Preparing a Place Plan for Wellington

SWT is preparing a Place Plan for Wellington to inform future decisions about the development, regeneration and conservation of the town.

The Place Plan will look at potential options for future growth to support housing and employment needs: retail and commercial function; transport systems; culture and heritage.

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

7. Reminder - Somerset Councils seek your views on trees

A consultation has been launched to help influence what Somerset's future landscapes will look like.

Residents and communities across Somerset are being asked to take part in the consultation process and to share the survey link as widely as possible - [Somerset Tree Consultation](#).

The survey remains open until 21 October 2022 should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete.

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

8. Reminder - Free Trees 2022

SWT is delighted to be offering Parish, Town Councils and community groups free trees for National Tree Planting Week, 26 November to 4 December 2022.

We are offering you the opportunity to order trees, stakes, ties, and guards to the value of £100.00 per organisation, free of charge.

You can choose bare root trees available in several varieties and these will be ready for collection only from our local nursery situated at Taunton Deane Nurseries, Stoke Road, Stoke St Mary, Taunton, TA3 5DG, week commencing 21 November 2022.

The closing date for requests will be Thursday, 20 October 2022 at 6pm.

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

9. Reminder – - Royal Mail – Further Industrial Action planned

SWT has been made aware that Royal Mail is taking further strike action on **Thursday 20 October** and **Tuesday 25 October**.

What this means for SWT and our customers:

- Incoming mail – there will be no deliveries during these dates.
- Outgoing mail – there will be no collections during these dates. The local Sorting Office will be closed. We are unable to dispatch our business mail via a Royal Mail post box. Therefore, **outgoing mail will be delayed.**
- Significant disruption should be expected, even once strike action has finished.

The advice from Royal Mail is to post your items as early as possible in advance of the strike dates. For more information regarding the Industrial Action please visit [Royal Mail strike updates | Royal Mail Group Ltd.](#)

10. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Fixy is on its way to Wivey!

The SWP Fixy project is on its way to Wiveliscombe this weekend.

The striking blue and white van will be in the town square, outside the Co-op supermarket, on **Saturday 15 October from 9.30am to 12noon.**

It is promoting the repair and reuse of electricals and supporting the [Wivey Repair Café](#) which will be running 10am-12noon in the nearby Wiveliscombe Community Centre.

Some of the café's volunteer fixers will be working from the van throughout the morning.

If you have something electrical that needs fixing – from a hair dryer to a child's toy - bring it to the van or the café and they will do their best get it working again.

The café, which usually runs on the third Saturday each month, can also fix wooden items, textiles and clothing, from broken furniture to teddy bears and damaged clothing.

Items can be left with the team to be repaired, or a volunteer can help you undertake the fix yourself to learn new skills.

Recycling is good, but repair and reuse is even better. The Fixy team can discuss the benefits of reuse, local opportunities to get things fixed, and ideas for volunteering.

They will also be running one of Fixy's popular 'tech amnesties' – taking donations of broken or unwanted tech items.

Thanks to Somerset-based DonateIT, donated items will be repaired if possible and 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.

Anyone visiting Fixy can enter a free monthly draw to win a laptop or tablet. Just complete a short survey and you could be the lucky winner choosing between a 'repaired for reuse' laptop or tablet as a prize.

Check somersetwaste.gov.uk/fixy for the latest info on where Fixy will be, along with 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.

The Fixy project is being delivered by SWP in partnership with [Resource Futures](#) and [Donate-IT](#) with grant funding from [Ecosurety Exploration Fund](#).

New Somerset Council

Latest news

Hundreds sign up to help shape council services

More than 300 people have signed up to help shape the future of council services in Somerset.

From April 2023, Somerset's five councils will be replaced by the new unitary Somerset Council which will deliver all council services to all communities – from waste collection and adult social care to housing, benefits and parks.

A new Customer Panel has been established to ensure residents are at the heart of those services.

Since launching in August, more than 300 people have stepped forward – with members already providing valuable feedback on important work like the development of a new council brand.

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

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 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 Council Working Group – You are welcome to attend!

Did you know that the LCN Team hold fortnightly catchups exclusively for Clerks and Chairs from across Somerset?

Meetings take place every other Wednesday on MS Teams at 10.30am until 11am.

Each session features an update on the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Programme, plus there’s news about Local Community Networks (LCNs), occasional guest speakers, and a question-and-answer session.

LGR Programme Director, Alyn Jones, attends the Working Group, alongside colleagues from the LCN workstream.

Register today, and the LCN Team will send you the Teams invitation.

Simply drop an email to LCN@somerset.gov.uk with your name and contact details, placing ‘C, T&PC Working Group’ in the subject title.

The team understand the timing won’t suit everyone all of the time, so they will distribute the meeting minutes to you, once you are signed-up.

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas

Somerset County Council (SCC)

SCC Highways

This week the contactors gangs successfully repaired 125 Safety Defects on the roads and footways in the Taunton and West Somerset Areas with 67 in the Taunton area and 58 in West Somerset.

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**.

The following table shows planned SCC works in the Taunton and West Somerset areas for the **week commencing 17 October 2022**.

Commencing 17 October

- **Ruishton Lane, Ruishton (5 days)** Vegetation clearance, installation of illuminated signs and other associated works.
- **Marsh Lane, Dunster (10 days)** Works to improve walking and cycling facilities from West Somerset Community College to Marsh Street including: carriageway narrowing, bus stop reconfiguration, the introduction of tactile crossings and drainage, construction of a new traffic island, relocation of street lighting columns, installation of new signage/lining along the entire length.
- **Tangier Way, Taunton (5 days)** Improved access arrangement to the development site. Overlay of surfacing and realigned footways.
- **Danesborough View, Williton (3 days)** Replacement of 7 x streetlighting units.
- **Lime Close, Minehead (3 days)** Micro Resurfacing/overlay works.
- **Northcroft Williton (3 days)** Micro Resurfacing/overlay works.
- **The Meadows, Porlock (3 days)** Micro Resurfacing/overlay works.
- **Egrove Way, Williton (2 days)** Replacement of Street Lighting unit.
- **High Street, Monksilver (2 days)** Jetting and CCTV.
- **Shutewater Hill, Bishops Hull (2 days)** Jetting works.
- **Washford Cross and Smithyard Cottage (2 days)** Additional jetting and CCTV survey works.
- **Highlands and Princess Road, Taunton (1 day)** Jetting Works
- **Red Lane, Churchinford (1 day)** Signing works
- **Wellinsford Manor Road, Langford Budville (1 day)** Salt bag placement

Commencing 18 October

- **Stoneleigh Close, Staplegrove (3 days)** Micro Resurfacing/overlay works.
- **Glenmore Road, vehicular access (2 days)** Signpost replacement

- **Mart Road, Minehead (2 days)** Replacement of 2 x street lighting units (PL8 & 15)
- **Monkton Heathfield Road, Monkton Heathfield (1 day)** Jetting works, works vehicle parked in village hall car park with permission from parish council. Jetting carriageway drainage from outfall.
- **South Molton Road, Chipstable (1 day)** Jetting Works.

Commencing 19 October

- **Larviscombe Road, Williton – (3 days)** Replacement of 3 x streetlighting units (PL1-3).
- **Longfield Close, Williton (3 days)** Replacement of 3 x streetlighting units (PL1-3)
- **Malvern Terrace, Taunton (3 days)** Micro Resurfacing/overlay works.
- **Plais Street, Taunton (3 days)** Micro Resurfacing/overlay works.
- **Pyles Thorne Road, Wellington (1 day)** Jetting works to clear blocked drainage that caused the footway to blow up forcing the footway closure. Once drains cleared the footpath can be programmed to be resurfaced.

Commencing 20 October

- **Butts Close, Williton (2 days)** Replacement of 4 x streetlighting units (PL1-4).
- **Ford Road, Wiveliscombe (1 day)** Jetting Works.

Commencing 21 October

- **Kebbys Farm Close, Williton (1 day)** Replacement of 3 x streetlighting units (PL1,2 & 3)
- **Periton Road, Minehead (1 day)** Replacement of street lighting unit (PL8)

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.

A358 Taunton to Southfields Community Update Community Forum

The invitations have now gone out for the next A358 Community Forum which will take place at Taunton Rugby Football Club, Veritas Park, Hyde Lane, Taunton TA2 8BU from **6.00pm on 19 October 2022**.

This meeting will update the community before the Development Consent Order (DCO) application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The main purpose of this meeting is to have an in-depth conversation about the DCO process and how you can become involved once the application is submitted, as the team are still working on the technical information at this stage.

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

British Telecom and Openreach Updates on Industrial Action

The Communications Workers Union (CWU) has called for more days of strike action against British Telecom (BT), which will take place on:

- Thursday 20 October
- Monday 24 October

Those expected to walk out are largely BT Openreach engineers and call centre workers, but, unlike the previous actions in July and August – these strikes will also include BT Group's 999 emergency call handlers.

The impact of this strike action is being monitored closely by the Blue Light services, who are liaising with each other to gauge whether 999 calls are affected.

Anyone working from home who gets their Wi-Fi directly from BT, or from a provider that uses the Openreach network, should be aware that in the event of an issue, they are unlikely to receive any immediate technical support on a strike day.

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA) Countdown to Exmoor Dark Skies Festival

The thousands of stars and bright planets in the October sky will form the perfect backdrop for over fifty events during this year's Exmoor Dark Skies Festival. From sessions in a mobile planetarium at Dunster and Barnstaple, and space-themed painting activities for children at Lynmouth, to walking under the stars with an astronomy expert, there are events to appeal to all ages.

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

Exmoor Day Celebrations

Exmoor Day is fast approaching. **Wednesday 19 October** marks an annual celebration of Exmoor, established as a means of showcasing the National Park's special and unique area. The 19 October is the anniversary of the area's designation as a National Park in 1954. Over recent years the date has become a particularly important online event for Visit Exmoor, the National Park Authority and the many businesses and residents that call Exmoor home.

To find out more about Exmoor Day 2022 and to watch a short film visit www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/exmoor-day.

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

Porlock Parish Council

Require a clerk / Proper officer to the Council

The appointment is initially for 35 hours per week (some home based) and the successful applicant will be responsible for all aspects of local government administration.

Previous experience of local government would be an advantage. There is also an expectation that the applicant would be willing to work towards gaining their CiLCA qualification (Certificate in Local Council Administration).

For job specification and application form please contact by email: clerk@porlockparishcouncil.gov.uk. More information can be obtained from the Porlock Parish Council [website](#).

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS)

Think fire safety when saving money on energy bills

As the weather starts to get cooler, DSFRS are asking you to think about fire safety when saving money on your energy bills.

They are concerned that people may put themselves at additional risk as the cost-of-living increases. As part of a new campaign called '[save safely](#)', they are asking people to think now about preparing for winter, by doing three checks:

1. Check your smoke and carbon monoxide detection
2. If you're going to use a portable heater – check it over first
3. Complete an online fire safety check.

The fire service is offering safety advice and signposting to support available in relation to staying warm and saving money this winter. Find out [how to stay warm safely this winter](#).

HM Coastguard Watchet

Annual Seafarers Service – Esplanade, Watchet

Subject to favourable weather, the annual Seafarers Service will take place on **Sunday 23 October at 10:30am on the Esplanade, Watchet**, outside of HM Coastguard Watchet Station.

This annual service not only celebrates all those involved in working on the sea and those who use the waters around the world for trade, fishing or pleasure; but this year also celebrates the 200th Birthday of HM Coastguard.

The service will be led by the National Coastguard Chaplain Revd Tom Ebbens. Everyone is welcome to attend the service on the day. In the event of poor weather, it will take place in the nearby Methodist Chapel.

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

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Somerset Cost of Living Crisis Appeal

The Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal, run by SCF, has raised over £100,000 since its launch just over a month ago.

The appeal is raising money to fund local charities and community organisations supporting those in most urgent need during the cost-of-living crisis. Donations have come from local individuals, charitable trusts and businesses, including £50,000 from Somerset County Council.

The charity is now offering grants to local charities with the funds raised to date and has launched the Warm Somerset Spaces Fund. Charities and community groups across the county offering 'warm spaces' to people experiencing fuel poverty this winter are invited to apply for a grant of up to £1,000. Grants will help fund dozens of community spaces to stay open longer over the winter months, helping to keep vulnerable people warm, safe and well. Funding will be awarded weekly to help charities respond rapidly to the cost-of-living crisis.

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

Wessex Water Foundation Community Fund

SCF is proud to be working alongside [Wessex Water](#) Foundation to help deliver the Community Fund.

This fund aims to support community-based activities or projects that meet a local need and seek to improve the lives of local people who are most in need of support.

Grants are available up to £3,000 for a project/activity covering a period of up to 12 months. **The closing date for applications is 24 October 2022.**

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

Somerset Community Food

Somerset Food Conference

Saturday 22 October at 10:00am

Elim Connect Centre, Wells BA5 2BE

This is a free event for those involved in food and growing projects across Somerset, e.g., community gardens, food banks, pantries and fridges, community cooking clubs etc. We are working in challenging and changing times, by joining together we can share good ideas, and support each other to keep going and sustain what we do.

Please [click here](#) to find out more information and book your place.

Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP)

Getting outside Photo Competition 2022 and Calendar 2023

The Photo Competition that will eventually result in next year's Getting Outside in Somerset Calendar is now open! Entry is open to all, pictures taken on your walks with smartphones are perfect and photos taken earlier in the year are welcome. The only rules are:

- Photos must feature Somerset and its outdoor environment
- The photo must be yours
- Any person identifiable in the photo must have given permission for its entry and possible publication.

Happy snapping, and most importantly enjoy your walks and encourage others to come with you!

Deadline for entries: Midnight Sunday 20 November.

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

Somerset Skills and Learning (SS&L)

Learning for your communities

SS&L are trying to support communities in Somerset grow, learn, develop, improve and live better lives. Somerset skills and learning have a diverse range of courses and workshops from health and wellbeing to maths, English, languages, arts and crafts, neurodiversity, employability and much more which they know all have a positive impact on individuals and communities.

People can gain confidence, enjoy learning, learn new skills, meet others, develop personal skills, gain employability skills etc.

Please do share and recommend SS&L community learning. The team area also interested to work directly with you, to arrange bespoke learning for groups that you or your organisations support. More information can be found here at www.sslcourses.co.uk

A new free magazine has been launched which will be issued three times a year. More information about this can be found [here](#).

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

Want to be an award-winning business?

Entries are open for the free FSB Celebrating Small Business Awards 2023. Whether you're an innovative start-up, a forward-thinking sustainable business, or running a successful larger small business, the FSB want to hear from you!

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

Health and Welfare

SCC Public Health

Orange Button Scheme launched at Walk for Life Event

More than 50 people walked through the streets of Taunton to raise awareness of suicide across Somerset.

Many of those taking part in SCC's inaugural 'Walk for a Life' event were walking in memory of loved ones or because of their own experiences. The groups paused for reflection at Vivary Park's bandstand before laying flowers at a bench donated by Ricky Gervais' Netflix programme 'After Life'.

The walk finished at the Somerset County Cricket Club, where a number of partners were on hand to offer information and advice including [Somerset Foundation Trust](#), [Open Mental Health](#) and [Stepladder](#).

The event also marked the launch of Somerset County Council's new '[Orange Button](#)' scheme: a community-based suicide awareness scheme.

People who are having thoughts of suicide, or who are worried about a friend or family member, can now "push the button" when they see someone wearing a distinctive orange badge, and ask them for information and support.

The Orange Button is worn by people in Somerset who have undergone quality assured Mental Health or Suicide Prevention training: whilst they are not able to counsel people, they can help people to find relevant services locally.

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

Blood pressure checks

Half of all adults with high blood pressure don't know they have it - that's why it's so important to check regularly. It is a major risk factor for Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) and significantly increases the risk of having a heart attack or stroke, but early detection and treatment can help people live longer, healthier lives.

More than two hundred blood pressure monitor kits are available for loan from libraries in the county to raise awareness of high blood pressure.

The blood pressure monitor kits include an information leaflet that explains how to check your blood pressure at home and what to do with the results – measuring blood pressure at home can be very useful to give a more accurate picture of what a

person's blood pressure is like. The monitors can also detect an irregular heartbeat which is another risk for CVD.

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

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.

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

Hacked social media accounts used to post indecent images of children

Social media accounts are being hacked and flooded with indecent images of children, potentially causing distress and reputational damage to the account holder. Since January 2022, 325 people have reported falling victim to this type of hack.

Analysis of crime reports by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau indicates that criminals may be targeting social media accounts registered with email addresses that use custom domain names which have expired. Some victims also reported receiving suspicious emails from social media platforms asking them to “verify their account”, with the links in the emails leading to genuine-looking websites that were designed to steal login details.

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

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Taunton man handed life sentence for “horrific” rape and assault offences

A Taunton man has been handed a life sentence for carrying out a series of rape and sexual assault offences.

Elias Arberry, of Moorland Road, was sentenced today (Friday 14 October) at Taunton Crown Court to a life sentence, with a minimum term of 15 and a half years, after he pleaded guilty to seven offences, including four counts of rape, two of sexual assault and one of wounding with intent.

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

Eighteen arrests made during County Lines Intensification Week

Last week, ASP joined colleagues from across the UK in focusing efforts on dismantling and disrupting criminal gangs running drugs into local towns and villages, as part of National County Lines Intensification Week (3-9 October) led by the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC).

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs out of bigger cities into smaller UK towns and rural communities, often using dedicated mobile phone lines or other ‘deal lines’. County line gangs recruit children, young people, and vulnerable adults to move and store drugs and money, often exposing them to a world of coercion, intimidation, violence, and weapons. Dealers may also take over the home of a vulnerable person as a base for drug dealing, a situation commonly referred to as “cuckooing”.

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

For further 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).