

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 127 Weeks ending 30/10/2022

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. SWT celebrates opening of Coal Orchard

SWT will mark the official opening of its multi-million-pound Coal Orchard regeneration with celebrations bringing together local businesses and organisations.

The town centre development of riverside living, retail, working and leisure space will be declared open at **11am on Saturday 5 November** by the Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Sue Lees; the Chair of SWT, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey; and the Leader of SWT, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts.

Members of the public will have a chance to join in the launch and see the development which incorporates a grand plaza with a stepped terrace to make the most of its position on the river Tone.

The Coal Orchard development retains the character of the unique town centre location in the Cultural Quarter while enhancing the environment. There is a 42-space short stay car park for shoppers and dedicated secure bicycle storage for people living in the apartments.

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.

- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 2 November** at 6.15pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). The deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 31 October.
- **Taunton Shadow Town Council – Thursday 3 November** at 6.00pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). The deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 1 November.
- **SWT Audit and Governance Committee – Monday 7 November** at 6.15pm in the JMR. This is a special meeting to deal with the Statement of Accounts. The deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Thursday 3 November.
- **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 10 November** at 1.00pm in the JMR. The deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 8 November.

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. Future-proofing Firepool

SWT has made significant progress at Firepool this year after its planning committee approved applications for vital infrastructure work along with an initial programme of development.

Work to raise ground levels and divert drainage infrastructure within the site is set to begin in November following the appointment of contractors Montel Civil Engineering.

It will include removal of existing obstructions above and below ground, and construction of new sewer networks and surface water infrastructure together with groundworks to lift the bulk of the site out of the flood plain preparing for future development.

The Council has also worked to support and enable Somerset County Council to

implement its ambitious Digital Innovation Centre proposals with building progressing on site to provide high-quality office, workshop, collaboration, and meeting space as well as specialist collaboration support services targeted at digital economy businesses.

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

4. Cost of living support events comes to West Somerset

SWT's [Community Employment Hubs](#) service has once again teamed up with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to hold another cost-of-living support event for residents, this time in West Somerset.

The free event will be held between 11am and 3.30pm on **Tuesday, 8 November**, at SWT's Council Chamber, [West Somerset House](#), Killick Way, Williton, TA4 4QA.

Anyone concerned about the current 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.

5. Reminder – South West in Bloom success for SWT towns

SWT Council's principal towns have achieved record success in the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) South West in Bloom competition for 2022.

Taunton received a Silver Gilt in the Tesco Cup for a consecutive year, with Minehead and Wellington building on last year's Silver medals to gain Silver Gilts in the Sargent and Portman Cups, respectively.

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

6. Reminder - Somerset West Lottery Christmas 2022 bolt-on prize

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

Anyone purchasing one or more tickets between Monday, 1 November and Saturday, 17 December, could win a £1,000 voucher to spend at [John Lewis](#), courtesy of external lottery management company [Gatherwell](#).

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

7. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

Clocks go back on Sunday – time to check around the house.

As the clocks go back one hour on Sunday morning, it is a great time to stay safe and be prepared by making sure your appliances and power sources are all working.

Check smoke detectors, fire alarms, plugs, sockets, batteries, bulbs - including Christmas lights - and other electricals, including radios and torches for the power cuts and other winter problems to come.

Anything failed, flat or broken? All electrical items, batteries, low-energy bulbs and alarms can be recycled at any recycling site. With your weekly kerbside recycling, you can recycle small electrical items in an untied carrier-size bag (cloth, plastic, compostable) and household batteries in a tied small clear plastic bag (freezer, sandwich or bread bag).

Or you may be able to fix some items at a repair cafe. Full list of upcoming events in and around Somerset, plus where the Fixy reuse van will be, here: somersetwaste.gov.uk/share-and-repair.

New Somerset Council

Latest news

Fair payments for towns and parishes

City, town and parish councils will receive their share of council tax in one simple annual payment, Val Keitch, Somerset County Council, Executive Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) has announced.

City, town and Parish Councils are principally funded by through council tax, their share of which, known as a 'precept', amounts to £17.7million. Under the existing system, council tax is collected by the four district councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West and Taunton, and South Somerset) and the precept is paid to City, town and parish councils, often in twice yearly payments.

With the creation of the new unitary Somerset Council, which launches on 1 April next year, it has been decided that City, towns and parishes should receive all their funds in one payment.

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

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 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 maintenance update

Work has continued well on the major schemes this week such as the resurfacing of the A38 Wellington Rd at Compass Hill, in Taunton – these works are carried out in the evenings to reduce disruption and should be finished (weather permitting) early in the week commencing 31 Oct 2022. SCC Highways thank you for your patience and forbearance during these essential works.

SCC contractor gangs have successfully completed works to repair 133 safety defects this week. (73 in the Taunton Area and 60 in the West Somerset Area).

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 schedule of works is due to take place in SWT during the week commencing Monday 31 October.

Monday 31 October

- **Canal Road, Taunton** – 1 day - Corrective works 7.00pm to 10:30pm. Long delay boards to be used.
- **Mountfields Avenue, Taunton** – 1 day – signing works.
- **Wellington Road, West Buckland** – 1 day – Jetting works.
- **Robbery Gate to Sperry Cross, Upton** – 10 days – Ditch and grip clearance.
- **Aginhills Roundabout, Monkton Heathfield** – 5 days - Remedial work to lighting columns prior to the asset becoming publicly maintained.
- **Swains Lane, Wellington** – 5 days – Traffic management in place.
- **Wellington Relief Road** – 5 days – Drainage works.

Tuesday 1 November

- **Mountfields Road, Taunton** – 1 day – Signing works
- **Wellington Road, West Buckland** – 4 days - Locate damaged drain line and replace 3.0 meters of 225mm pipe.

Wednesday 2 November

- **Staple Fitzpaine Road, Staple Fitzpaine** – 3 days - Thrust mole only from gateway to opposite field for WPD cable duct.
- **Slade Way, Williton** – 3 days - Replacement of streetlighting units (PL1-5).

- **Greenlands, Taunton** – 1 day – signing works.

Thursday 3 November

- **Gordons Close, Taunton** – signing works.

Friday 4 November

- **Fremantle Road, Taunton** – 1 day – signing works.
- **Egrove Way, Williton** – 1 day - Replacement of street lighting unit (PL2)

For information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk or follow [@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 Closures

ttr994597TD - Honiton Road, Taunton

Somerset County Council in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along; **Honiton Road - 331 metres southwards from the junction with Gatchell Meadow for a total distance of 16 metres.**

The works are expected to commence on **6 November 2022** and last for **9 hours (8:00am - 5:00pm)** to enable **Jurassic Fibre to carry out works to install a duct.**

The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site **is permitted** on this occasion.

Please [click here](#) to view the map, and alternative routes.

Great Western Railway (GWR)

Updates on Industrial Action

The RMT, TSSA and Unite trades unions have announced industrial action at Network Rail and a number of train operators, including GWR.

Industrial action will take place on **Saturday 5, Monday 7 and Wednesday 9 November**. This means services will be severely disrupted from Saturday 5 November up to and including Wednesday 9 November.

On strike days train services will be severely disrupted and some parts of the GWR network will have no service at all. Where trains are running, it will be an extremely limited service, operating from 7:30am with all journeys having to be completed before 6.30pm.

Train services on the days following the industrial action will also be disrupted.

Where services do run, they are expected to be extremely busy and GWR will not be able to provide bus replacement services. Online journey planners will be updated with the latest information as soon as possible.

Passengers are advised to find alternative ways to travel on those days. Only travel by train if absolutely necessary.

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

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)

Section 119, Highways Act 1980

Proposed diversion of public bridleway DU4/5 (Part) Parish of Exford

The ENPA is proposing to divert part of public bridleway DU4/5 in the parish of Exford. Prior to making an Order they would like to hear your views on the proposal.

[Click here](#) to find a summary of the proposal, schedule and proposal plan.

Please return any comments on the proposal by **18 November 2022** to sapplegate@exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk or by post to Sue Applegate, Public Rights of Way and Access 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 make contact on 01398 322292.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS)

Be safe, be seen – this Halloween

Stay fire safe this Halloween:

- Use battery-powered candles in your pumpkins
- Take care with your fancy dress around heat and flames - costumes are highly flammable
- Be safe, be seen on the roads - now that it's dark outside in the evenings, wear bright clothing so that drivers can see you.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) Festive Fund for Somerset

The festive season can be difficult for some, and this year many of our neighbours are facing extremely tough times ahead. Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) want to support groups that can help to reduce loneliness and spread warmth and cheer through food and activities around the festive period with grants of up to £400.

You will need to think about how you can safely prepare and deliver food and gifts or think creatively about how you can bring people together to create happy festive memories. Your work can support people of all ages who may experience loneliness or disadvantage.

The money can be used towards the cost of providing food and/or activities for isolated people between December and January.

Please apply before Friday 18 November.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

Somerset Diverse Communities

Tree Planting Family Fun Day!

Saturday 19 November, 11.00am – 4.00pm.

Somerset Diverse Communities is partnering with Exmoor coast project in a family conservation day event at Holnicote Estate, Minehead.

The team are planting trees across Exmoor and are welcoming communities to help plant trees for the future, making a positive contribution for many years to come.

Visit: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/holnicote-estate>.

The day is being sponsored Exmoor coast project: The National Trust aims to ensure future generations have access to nature, beauty, and history, forever. Exmoor is a beautiful part of the world, with fresh air from temperate rainforests, open moorland, ancient woodlands, meadows, and coastline to enjoy.

Limited spaces are available, and the booking deadline is **Thursday 3 November**.

Please [click here](#) for more information.

Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP)

Getting outside photo competition 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.

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

Spark

Call out for festive volunteering opportunities

It may seem a bit early to talk about Christmas, but the season of good will is just around the corner and Spark have already been approached by people looking for opportunities to volunteer on and around the big day.

So, if you have any suitable roles, be sure to advertise them on Spark's volunteering website, [Spark a Change](#). As the saying goes, volunteering is not just for Christmas. Once your new volunteer realises how good it feels, they might just make it a life-long habit!

Please [click here](#) or email info@sparkachange.org.uk to get started.

Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)

Safe and Warm Somerset

Everyone deserves a home which is warm, comfortable and affordable to heat. Safe and Warm Somerset supports anyone in Somerset who may need help with energy bills or keeping warm at home.

If you live in Somerset and any of the following apply to you, the CSE can help with free, impartial advice and support:

- Struggling with energy bills.
- A cold home.
- Broken heating system or boiler.
- Damp and mould in the home.
- Unsure about how to use your heating system.
- No gas central heating and high electricity bills.

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

Clinton's Public Health Film

How we can stay warm this winter

In this [week's video](#), Clinton Rogers looks ahead to how we can stay warm this winter. He speaks to Kate Thomas from the Centre for Sustainable Energy about the support they offer, including giving advice and offering grants to those who need to make changes to their homes.

Clinton also hears from Public Health Consultant, Alice Munro about the health dangers that cold weather brings, and why it is so important for people to stay warm

during the winter months. He also visits St George's Church in Taunton to hear about how they are providing a warm space within their local community.

Health and Welfare

SCC Public Health

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.

Winter Readiness Webinar

Thursday 10 November between 11.00am – 12.30pm

SCC are holding an online 'Winter Readiness' webinar for health and care professionals, paid and unpaid carers and volunteers working with people and communities who may be more vulnerable this winter. The event will give an overview of who is more vulnerable in winter and how to signpost to the range of support available in Somerset, with a view to helping communities stay well in the context of rising costs this winter.

This online event will give you an overview of who is more vulnerable this winter and how to signpost to the range of support available in Somerset.

Learn more about:

- Keeping warm – places and help available to keep warm this winter
- Keeping well – immunisations and emotional wellbeing and support
- Financial wellness – how to manage finances when costs are rising
- Essentials – support with food and other essentials
- Planning for cold and extreme weather.

Please [click here](#) to register for this free event.

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

People aged 50 and over are now able to book their autumn booster and flu vaccines, as the NHS Covid-19 and flu programmes continue to protect the country ahead of winter. Appointments are available to people aged 50 and over, pregnant women, clinically vulnerable / immunosuppressed individuals, health and social care workers and paid and unpaid carers.

Anyone who falls into these groups are able to book now [online](#) or by calling 119. Calls to 119 are **free** from mobiles and landlines. 119 provides support in 200 languages.

Please look out for older relatives, friends and neighbours who may need help and support to book their vaccination appointments.

[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

Cases of flu have climbed quickly in the past week, indicating that the season has started earlier than normal.

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.

Please [click here](#) for more information about the Flu vaccination.

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

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Stay safe this Halloween

- ASP want everyone to enjoy a safe and happy Halloween, but they also recognise this time of year can be stressful for people who are elderly, vulnerable or live alone. This can mean they are at a higher risk of becoming victims of crime if they feel isolated or alone.
- **But there are lots of things you can do to help your neighbours feel safe:**
- Start by just saying ‘hello.’
- Ask if they would like you to check if they are ok on Halloween with a visit or a call.
- Ask if they would like you to download and print the [‘Sorry, no trick or treaters here’ poster](#)
- so they can display it in their window.
- Let neighbours know if you’re planning a party, so they won’t be alarmed.
- Remind children to respect others’ property and not to call on homes that have the ‘Sorry, no trick or treaters here’ poster.

ASP expect to receive an increase in 101 and 999 calls during Halloween and need to make sure that we can deal with your needs in the quickest and most appropriate way. If your report does not require an urgent response, you can report a crime online at avonandsomerset.police.uk/report or by calling 101. In an emergency, call 999.

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

Courts grant closure order on Taunton property

A property linked to criminal damage, public disturbances and anti-social behaviour has been closed in Taunton.

A house in Kershaw Close had become a hub for anti-social and violent behaviour, but combined efforts from police officers and colleagues from LiveWest has seen the property placed under a closure order for three months.

The order was granted at Taunton Magistrates' Court on Wednesday 12 October. Residents lived in fear due to the intimidating and fearful behaviour of those who loitered around the property. They would often be verbally abused and threatened and would regularly witness fights outside the address.

Disturbances and arguments were often heard coming from the house, and neighbours found their property being damaged by those linked to the address.

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

Don't forget the clocks go back by 1 hour at 1.00am on Sunday 30 October.

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).