

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 133 Weeks ending 13/12/2022

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. Cold weather alert for the next few days

Low temperatures and potentially severe overnight frosts are forecast across the South West of England for the next few days.

A Level 3 cold weather alert has been issued by the [Met Office](#) for Somerset and other areas of England, warning of severe cold weather/icy conditions until 9:00am on Friday 16 December.

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 Audit and Governance Committee – Monday 12 December** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Thursday 8 December. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).

- **LCN City, Town and Parish Working Group Virtual Meeting – Wednesday 21 December**, 10:30am – 11:00am via MS Teams. An agenda and link to join the meeting will be sent out in advance. 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.
- **SWT Executive Committee – Wednesday 21 December** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Monday 19 December.
- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 4 January 2023**, at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Friday 23 December.
- **SWT Exmoor Area Panel – Thursday 12 January 2023**, at 7pm in the Moorland Hall, Cutcombe.

Meetings in the JMR will 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. Taunton Mayor to host annual carol service

The Mayor of Taunton, [Cllr Sue Lees](#), is once again hosting ‘Carols Around the Bandstand’ in collaboration with the [Taunton Charter Trustees](#), SWT and [Taunton Team Chaplaincy](#).

The ever-popular pre-Christmas event will take place in Taunton’s [Vivary Park](#) on Monday, 12 December, with musical accompaniment from symphonic wind band, [Taunton Concert Band](#).

Taunton-based choirs will support the sing-along, featuring [Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir](#), [The West Somerset Singers](#), [Let’s Sing](#) and in a new addition to this year’s line-up, [Rock Choir’s](#) South West branch for Clevedon, Weston-super-Mare, Burnham-on-Sea, Bridgwater and Taunton.

Admission to the event is free, however, donations made towards the Mayor’s charity, [Taunton Cancer Research UK](#), will be greatly welcomed.

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

4. Taunton Town Council accommodation agreed

Taunton Town Council will be based in office space at Deane House, Taunton, when it is created in April 2023.

Members of the Taunton Shadow Town Council, which was set up to lead and oversee work to establish the new authority, supported a recommendation to agree a one-year lease on the ground floor accommodation starting on 1 April 2023.

The space which has its own external access, will meet initial office and meeting room requirements for the new Town Council without impacting on current working arrangements in Deane House

The 12-month lease will provide stability for Taunton Town Council in the short-term giving the new council time to establish its needs and review the market for alternative accommodation in its first year of operation if necessary.

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

5. Town and Parish Precept Forms sent out

As from 1 April due to the formation of the new Somerset Council replacing the existing four district councils and the county council the process of council tax collection and distribution will change. For this year there will be interim arrangements for the collection of the parish precept information for the 2023/24 financial year.

As one of the county's precepting bodies, parishes are still required to issue a precept demand. Therefore, parishes will be required to complete a Precept Demand Form including their council's bank account details. The form has been amended to be in a consistent format across the county so clerks will notice some changes. **The form was sent out on Thursday 8 December via email and will be required to be returned by Friday 20 January 2023.**

If parishes have any queries or difficulties in submitting the form by the due date, please contact SWT on parishprecepts@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk at your earliest opportunity.

6. Small grants to boost food and drinks sector

SWT is offering small grants to local food and drink producers in collaboration with Sedgemoor District Council and other partners.

Grants of up to £2,500 are available to small and micro-sized businesses with up to 49 employees, to help support improvements or changes that demonstrate a clear impact on future growth and/or viability.

The grant builds upon previous and existing support offered by the councils, comprising free business reviews, industry-expert advice, tailored training, workshops, and webinars.

Examples of projects the grant could be used towards, include replacement of equipment to drive efficiency, new product or service development, marketing, training and professional subscriptions or accreditations.

The grant scheme has been subsidised using EDF's business support funding to mitigate the impact on communities affected by the development of Hinkley Point C. Therefore, applications from businesses within the West Somerset locality of Somerset West and Taunton will be prioritised.

Any Somerset West and Taunton business wishing to apply should check the eligibility criteria and complete the online application form via SWT's [Spotlight on food and drink](#) webpage, which will remain open until **6 January 2023**.

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

7. Free cigarette stub pouches to help fight littering

Environmental enforcement officers patrolling the district as part of the Council's litter enforcement trial are giving away pouches to encourage people to dispose of their cigarette butts responsibly.

The 12-month trial which supports SWT's Litter Strategy to help clean up the district and change attitudes towards littering, is being carried out in partnership with EH Commercial Services (EHCS).

Under the agreement, enforcement officers can issue Fixed Penalty Notices for littering, which is an offence under Section 87(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and includes discarding cigarette butts.

SWT and EHCS have 500 'stub store' pouches to give away to allow smokers to dispose of cigarette butts on the go and help reduce the amount of cigarette litter in our streets and open spaces.

The pouches are small, lightweight and reusable with a fireproof lining to extinguish cigarettes which can then be disposed of at home or in waste bins.

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

8. Royal Mail Industrial Action – further dates added

SWT has been made aware that Royal Mail is taking further strike action on **Friday 9 December, Wednesday 14 December and Thursday 15 December**.

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](#).

9. Free Car Parking in run up to Christmas

SWT is offering free [parking](#) for Christmas shoppers after 3pm in its Taunton car parks (excluding Kilkenny), and all-day parking at its car parks in Wellington and West Somerset on the Saturdays of 10, 17 and 24 December.

10. SWT Climate News - Issue 8 now available

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

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

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

11. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

A most wonderful not wasteful time of the year

SWP is promoting ways to waste less and save more this Christmas.

The festive season generates a huge amount of extra waste, much of which can be avoided by reducing, reusing and recycling wherever possible.

The SWP website somersetwaste.gov.uk is full of useful tips and advice, including ways to cut card and reduce food waste.

It also tells you how to recycle some of your festive favourites:

- Wrapping paper – only paper wrapping can be recycled. Scrunch it and if it stays scrunched it can be recycled.
- Pringles tubes – taken at 12 recycling sites (all but Castle Cary, Cheddar, Dulverton and Somerton) in the skips for cartons/Tetra Pak.
- Metal sweet tins – reuse for storage if you can. Or go in Bright Blue Bag or metal skip at recycling sites.
- Plastic sweet tins – reuse if possible. Or go in the Bright Blue Bag or skip for plastic bottles, pots, tubs, trays at recycling sites.

Collections stay the same up to and including Friday 23 December, but then change to accommodate festive Bank Holidays.

There are no collections on Monday 26 December or Monday 2 January. Both weeks' collections will be a day later than usual, including Saturday collections of waste that would usually be picked-up on the Friday.

All 16 recycling sites are open on their usual winter hours over Christmas and New Year, except all close on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Upcoming Fixy events in SWT

Recycling is good - and Somerset's 56.2% recycle rate is great - but repair-reuse is even better so Fixy is supporting the county's network of repair cafés and groups, with a focus on breathing new life into electricals and electronics. Working electricals and electronics should always be passed on to others or donated to charity if they are no longer needed.

- **Saturday 17 December** 10:00am - 12:00pm – **Wivey Repair Café**, Community Centre, West Street, Wiveliscombe, Taunton TA4 2JP.
- **Saturday 7 January** 10:00am -12:00pm – Fixy reuse van will be in front of the Old Post Office, High Street, Wellington TA21 8QT, to support the nearby **Wellington Repair Café**, collect smart tech and signpost future events.
- **Sunday 15 January** 11:00am - 2:00pm – **Otterford Repair Café**, Parish Hall, Bishopswood TA20 3RS. Fixy will support Repair Café, collect smart tech, signpost future events, promote reuse and encourage volunteers.

For more information on the repair cafés and Fixy reuse van, see: somersetwaste.gov.uk/share-and-repair.

New Somerset Council

Latest news

New branding announced for Somerset Council

Somerset residents got their first sight of the new branding for council services in the county this week as papers were published ahead of Somerset County Council's Executive next week. Documents include proposals for the new branding for Somerset Council to be used to identify public services provided by the new unitary council from April next year.

The new brand, featuring a version of the Somerset Dragon from the county's coat of arms, has been designed by an in-house team at the council and was developed after testing with staff and residents. Council services will be badged by a white dragon's head placed in a teal five-sided shape, representing the five councils that will be replaced by the new council.

As well as keeping costs down by designing the branding with an in-house team made up of designers from Sedgemoor and South Somerset District Councils, working with colleagues from Somerset County Council, the paper also proposes that the new council should avoid a branding "Big Bang", rolling out the new brand over time and accepting that branding from the existing councils will continue to be seen around the county for some years to come.

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?

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)

Learn about Somerset's Road Safety's Fatal Five

SCC's road safety team is warning road users of the Fatal Five behaviours, which are the main causes of serious injuries and deaths on our roads.

The team will be running a campaign on social media throughout December highlighting these factors in collisions and showing how road users can make sure they are safe when they are travelling.

The Fatal Five are:

- Speeding,
- Careless driving,
- Not wearing seatbelts,
- Using a mobile,
- Drink and drug driving/

Reports by the team have shown that all these factors have led to collisions around the county in the recent past, and that there are simple things that everyone can do to keep others safe also.

Driving at appropriate speeds for the conditions, ensuring drivers and passengers always have seatbelts on and keeping mobiles on silent and out of the reach of drivers are some examples, while a driver's fitness (making sure they aren't under the influence of drugs or alcohol) and ensuring they are able to put 100% of their attention on the road is important too.

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

SCC Highways maintenance update

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**.

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

Reporting a problem on the road

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

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

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

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

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

Temporary Road Closure

ttro102516TD - Holway Road, Taunton

SCC in exercise of its powers under Section 14 (1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as amended, have made an Order prohibiting all traffic from proceeding along; **Holway Road - from the junction with Wordsworth Drive, south eastwards on both sides of the hill. A total distance of 241 metres.**

This Order will enable Openreach to carry out overhead and underground cabling works. The works are expected to commence on **12 December 2022 and last until 16 December 2022** between the hours of 8:00am – 6:00pm for a total of 5 days.

Please [click here](#) for further information on the alternative route.

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

Christmas “Bus It” boost for Taunton

There’s never been a better time to ‘Bus It’ in Taunton as a new £1 fare for any single bus journey in the town came into effect on Monday 5 December.

The major fare cut arrives just in time for the festive season and is part of a radical shake-up of bus services under SCC’s Government-funded Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The aim is to boost bus use while helping passengers to save money as the cost-of-living crisis continues to bite, fuelled in part by high petrol and diesel prices.

The £1 single fare started on Monday and applies to journeys in the Taunton 'zone'. You can check the map here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/busit> to see the area covered by the zone.

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

Council unveils new proposals for evening bus services

Evening bus services on some key routes are set to be introduced as part of a major shake-up aimed at increasing bus use.

SCC has revealed plans to subsidise evening services connecting Taunton with the towns of Minehead, Bridgwater, Wellington and Chard after 8:00pm and running to at least 10:30pm. Currently most of the services stop between 8-8:30pm.

The evening bus proposals are part of Somerset's Government-funded Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which aims to increase bus patronage by radically improving the public transport offer for people in Somerset.

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

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP) Communities for Nature Days – North Hill

North Hill is a great place to explore all year round, with woodlands, fantastic coastal views and amazing wildlife. ENP's activity days offer an ideal way to help with a few light practical conservation tasks (and some heavier ones, if you like), whilst meeting new people, helping the environment and going for a walk.

The team base themselves around the old Radar Station, which provides shelter if the weather turns. Autumn and Winter tasks include clearing small patches of scrub to maintain viewpoints and provide varied wildlife habitats. Summer tasks are likely to focus on wildlife surveying and keeping paths clear. Along the way the team will be happy to help to teach you how to identify wildlife and teach you some practical skills.

ENP thanked all the volunteers who helped them with some sterling work in woodland management tasks and habitat pile building for overwintering small mammals, reptiles and insects on North Hill last week. A video of the day can be viewed [here](#). More activities are planned in the New Year.

Please [click here](#) to view the schedule.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Community Employment Hubs

Hinkley Point C (HPC) – Drop In Events

Hinkley Point Drop ins are coming to the [Somerset West and Taunton Community Employment Hubs](#) in Wellington, Taunton, Stogursey and Minehead on various dates. If you would like to find out more information on the opportunities available at Hinkley Point C then drop in to one of these events.

The next drop in will take place on **Tuesday 13 December**, between 10:00am and 12:00pm, at Stogursey Youth Club, Tower Hill, Stogursey, TA5 1PR.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about Hinkley Point C current vacancies, training offers and how to register for job alerts.

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

SCF raises £500k to support local charities

SCF has raised an incredible £500,000 for vital local charities supporting communities affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

In the four months since SCF first launched their Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal (mid-August 2022), thanks to the incredible support of local donors, family trusts, businesses, district councils and the county council, more than £500,000 has been raised for Somerset. With household essentials like food and energy bills rocketing, thousands of Somerset households are already starting to feel the pinch as, overall, the cost of housing and household services rose 11.7% in the 12 months to October 2022 (ONS, October 2022).

The Somerset Cost-of-Living Fund, supported by the funds raised by the Somerset Cost-of-Living Crisis Appeal, has now been launched to help community groups and local charities that are experiencing financial challenges. Grants (money that does not need to be paid back) from £1,000 to £10,000 are now available to help reduce the additional financial impacts of the cost-of-living crisis.

Examples of what the Somerset Cost-of-Living Fund will support, includes:

- helping local charities and groups meet rising demand for their services from people experiencing poverty,
- covering increased running costs incurred by groups caused by inflation, like heating a building or providing community transport,
- subsidising the services that groups or charities might usually charge for, in order to remove barriers to people who are struggling to afford or access them.

Groups can apply to the Somerset Cost-of-Living Fund for a grant from now until **Wednesday 21 December**.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS)

December's Talking Cafes Live

Watch LIVE every Wednesday at 1pm and ask questions in the comments for instant answers!

- **14 December** - Fire Safety - Home safety checks & winter safety Advice with [Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service](#).
- **21 December** - [Citizens Advice](#) Bureau - how they can help!
- **28 December** - [The Bluebirds](#) Theatre Company - therapy through the arts.

Want to take part and shout about the organisation or community project you are passionate about? Contact christineb@somersetccc.org.uk or message the Talking Cafe page! <https://somersetagents.org/talking-cafes-live>.

Community Buildings - Become a warm space this winter!

If your facility or group would like to host a warm space for anyone who will struggle to keep their heating on this Winter. Please [click here](#) to view the new Warm Spaces funding list.

Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)

How to save energy in your community building

If you run, lease or own a community building like a scout hut, village hall, community association building, or even a local church, you're probably thinking about the rising cost of energy bills and how this is going to impact how your building is used.

At the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), we're already hearing of communities forced to make [difficult decisions to close buildings or limit activities](#) because they can't afford energy bills. These community hubs are important places where local people come together to socialise, learn, access key services, stay warm and access affordable food.

We're facing a tough winter across the UK with the rising cost of living and spiralling cost of energy. And [even with new financial support from central government](#), this isn't enough to keep some community buildings warm.

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

Spark

The Warm Welcome Somerset Map is now live!

As many of you will know, Spark Somerset has been working with community partners to develop a network and online map of Warm Welcome spaces for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Spark are delighted to announce that the Warm Welcome map is now live and you can view it at

http://warmwelcomesomerset.org.uk?mc_cid=1293684b4e&mc_eid=UNIQID.

You can use the map to locate a Warm Welcome space, find out when it's open and what facilities are on offer. Please share it far and wide so that even more people can find the warmth, company and support they need this winter, and beyond.

If you would like to add your group or venue to the map, please visit https://sparksomerset.org.uk/warm-welcome?mc_cid=1293684b4e&mc_eid=UNIQID where you will find the registration form and a whole host of information to help you set up, run or fund your Warm Welcome space. Spark are continuously updating this page so please return regularly to see what's new!

Finally, Spark would like to say like to say a big thank you to everyone who has signed up to offer a Warm Welcome so far - over 70 spaces and counting!

Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership (SASP)

Happy Healthy Holidays Somerset (HHHS)

More free, fun activities are on offer this December for Somerset children eligible for free school meals.

The Happy Healthy Holidays Somerset (HHHS) project is once again being delivered by SCC and SASP as part of a Government initiative to help tackle inequalities in holiday hunger, physical inactivity and social isolation for children who are eligible for free school meals. The winter programme features football skills workshops, Christmas craft sessions, nerf games and much more, and every child receives healthy food and some nutrition advice.

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

The Tree Council

Branching Out Fund – deadline extended to 15 January 2023

Grants of between £200 and £2,000 are available to a range of not-for-profit organisations, including town and parish councils, for tree planting projects across the UK. Project proposals should assist schools and community groups with tree and hedge planting initiatives that involve and educate children and young people aged 21 and under. The deadline for Branching Out has been extended from Sunday 4 December 2022.

The new deadline is Sunday 15 January 2023.

More information on this fund can be found on the [website](#).

Health and Welfare

SCC Public Health

Stay safe and warm during cold weather this winter

With low temperatures and potentially severe overnight frosts forecast across the South West from Wednesday, SCC's public health team are encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

A cold weather alert has been issued by the [Met Office](#) for Somerset and other areas of England. The 'Level 3' alert was put in place from 6pm on Wednesday 7 December, until 9am on Monday 12 December.

If you are unable to keep your home warm, please do take advantage of the [Warm Welcome spaces](#) that have been set up across Somerset. These venues offer a warm and friendly environment where people can socialise, stay warm and access information and support for their wellbeing.

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

Make sure you get your winter vaccinations

With winter upon us, Somerset residents are being reminded to protect their health and the health of people around them by getting their flu and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Covid and flu vaccinations are safe and effective ways to prevent serious illness. If you're 50 and over, a frontline health or social care worker, pregnant, have a long-term health condition, or are a paid or unpaid carer, you are eligible for the free flu vaccine, and you can likely get the COVID-19 seasonal booster. Children aged 2-15 years old are also eligible for free flu vaccination, which is delivered through either their GP for pre-school and school for school age children – parents need to sign a consent form.

Vaccinations

COVID-19

If you are eligible, you can book your seasonal COVID-19 vaccine using the [online booking service](#) by calling 119 or finding a [local vaccination walk-in site](#).

If you have not yet had your earlier doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, it's not too late to come forward and you can get these at any time.

Getting both vaccines is important because more people are likely to get the flu this winter, and you're more likely to be seriously ill if you get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

A number of clinics across Somerset are also open for walk-ins. More details can be found at [COVID-19 and Flu vaccinations in Somerset - NHS Somerset](#).

[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.

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
- Mindline Somerset – 01823 276892
- Somerset Domestic Abuse helpline - 0800 69 49 999

Crime / Safeguarding

Action Fraud

Criminals are using the cost-of-living crisis to scam the public – don't be a victim

Law enforcement, government and private sectors partners are working together to encourage members of the public to be more vigilant against fraud, particularly about sharing their financial and personal information, as criminals seek to capitalise on the cost-of-living crisis.

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police.

- **Stop:** Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **Challenge:** Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **Protect:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud*.
- **Report:** Suspicious emails can be reported by forwarding them to: report@phishing.gov.uk. You can also report suspicious text message by forwarding them to 7726 (it's free of charge).

Your reports help Action Fraud to remove the emails and websites used to perpetrate fraud and cybercrime.

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

Somerset County Council (SCC)

Domestic abuse expected to increase during the World Cup

SCC is urging people experiencing domestic abuse to seek help, at a time when incidents of domestic abuse are expected to rise.

Data published by the [National Centre for Domestic Violence](#) highlights that incidents of Domestic Abuse increase by 26 percent if England play, 38 percent if England lose, and 11 percent the next day, win or lose.

As the England football team progress in the tournament, with another intense game expected on Saturday (10 December), the domestic abuse service is expecting an increase in incidents – often being fuelled by emotional stress, drinking alcohol and betting before and during matches.

Domestic abuse is defined as 'any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over

who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality’.

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

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Be sure to take care on the roads

Frosty and icy conditions are forecast overnight and for the next few days, which means that car windscreens, windows and mirrors are likely to be iced over by morning.

Learn from [this driver](#) who didn't take the time to defrost their windows before setting off, and whose view of the road was hampered by ice, and a poorly placed SatNav. They were reported for driving without due care and attention.

It's an offence to not maintain a clear unobstructed windscreen so please take an extra 5 minutes to fully defrost your windows in the morning

Operation Tonic Underway

ASP have now made 110 arrests as part of their annual winter anti-drink and drug drive operation, [#OpTonic](#).

They are sharing a message to the public that drink/drug driving will not be tolerated and if caught driving over the limit you can get a prison sentence, a hefty fine and a driving ban.

Do not drink or drug drive - and do not let anyone you know do so either. Your reaction time will be slower, you are more of a risk to yourself and others.

Plan travel arrangements in advance and arrange a designated driver who takes the responsibility for getting everyone home safely.

Be aware of the risks of getting behind the wheel, not just on the evening of drinking, but also the morning after.

Don't chance it - you could lose your job, car insurance costs increase significantly, larges fines will dent your finances, and you will have a criminal record.

If someone is habitually drinking or abusing drugs and driving, then the public can report this online or by calling 101. Alternatively reports can be made anonymously to Crimestoppers. If someone is currently driving under the influence of drink or drugs, the advice is always to call 999.

The risk posed by drink/drug drivers is significant and this work will continue.

There is no safe way to drink or drug drive.

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).