

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 135 Weeks ending 08/01/2023

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. Blue Anchor coastal defence work to begin in the spring

Work on the permanent Blue Anchor coastal defence scheme will begin in spring 2023.

SWT carried out emergency works to stabilise the wall and reduce the risk of collapse in 2020.

The permanent scheme which will provide support to the walls and mudstone cliff to protect the B3191 coast road, can begin after SWT secured a vessel to deliver the rock armour.

It will travel to Glensanda Quarry in Western Scotland in April 2023 to collect 4,500 tonnes of granite rock armour to be delivered to Blue Anchor.

The vessel will anchor offshore and transfer the rock to a smaller barge which will deposit the rock on the beach at high tide using a vessel mounted excavator.

Once complete the vessel will return to Glensanda and repeat the process until all 13,500 tonnes are delivered.

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.

- **Exmoor Area Panel Meeting – Thursday 12 January 2023**, at 7.00pm at The Moorland Hall, Cutcombe. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#).
- **SCC Executive Board – Wednesday 18 January 2023**, at 10.00am in the Luttrell Room, County Hall, Taunton. This meeting will make recommendations on the LCN areas and their roles and responsibilities.
- **SWT Executive Committee – Wednesday 18 January 2023**, at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 16 January.
- **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 19 January 2023**, at 10:00am in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on 17 January.
- **SWT Community Scrutiny Meeting – Wednesday 25 January 2023**, at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 23 January.

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. Historic England funding secures next phase of repairs at Tone Works

SWT has secured further grant funding for the next phase of repairs at Tone Works in Wellington.

The grant of £185,596 from Historic England will go towards Phase 3 of works at the nationally significant site which is home to a complex of Grade II* listed buildings and was purchased by the council in 2020.

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

4. Eat fresh in 2023 with Somerset West Lottery

The Somerset West Lottery New Year Bolt-on Prize is now open, offering players a chance to win year's supply of fresh food recipe boxes to eat healthier and save money in 2023.

Anyone buying one or more tickets between now and Saturday, 25 February, could win 12 monthly deliveries of fresh ingredients to plan and cook up to 20 delicious meals from scratch from food recipe box provider, [HelloFresh](#), courtesy of external lottery management company [Gatherwell](#).

HelloFresh is a food recipe box delivery service, developed to help customers plan for their weekly food delivery without the need for a meal planner.

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

5. Meet the Team building Rainbow Way, Minehead

SWT and Classic Builders are hosting a drop-in open event for members of the public to come and learn more about this important zero carbon development.

The event is open to anyone wanting to know more about the project and to meet the team delivering the works. **Doors open at 3pm on Friday 20 January 2023 at Minehead Cricket Club (Luttrell Way, Minehead, TA24 6DF)**, and the team will be there until 6pm.

This ambitious project will provide much needed homes for local people together with high performing properties that are cost efficient to maintain. Demand is expected to be high for these properties so applications should be made via [Homefinder Somerset](#) – with priority being given to people with a local connection or association to the area.

6. Reminder - Crescent car park set for major refurbishment

The Crescent car park in Taunton is set for a major refurbishment this year.

The town centre car park which is popular with shoppers and people attending social events will be upgraded to create 150 car parking spaces all with more room between each bay enabling easier entry and exit to cars.

The refurbishment will increase the number of accessible parking spaces to 12 and there will be dedicated motorcycle parking areas.

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

7. Reminder - Town and Parish Precept Forms 2023/24

SWT emailed all parish councils enclosing Parish/Town Precept Forms for the 2022/23 Financial Year. The form has been amended to be in a consistent format across the county so clerks will notice some changes. The completed forms and any queries should be emailed to parishprecepts@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

If Parish Councils decide to return their precept demand forms using the post, then extra time should be allowed for processing in the digital mailroom. All submissions should be received by **Friday 20 January 2022**.

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.

8. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

No, the Christmas tree cannot stay in the corner forever

This month's charity Christmas tree collection service is available across almost all of Somerset.

It's a simple, swift way to get your tree recycled and do something good for others at this special time.

Both St Margaret's Hospice and Dorothy House Hospice Care have a small army of volunteers ready to tour Somerset in a single weekend to collect every booked tree.

To book, with a donation, enter your postcode at <https://just-helping.org.uk/register-tree>. Want a collection with donation for a friend, neighbour or relative? Check with them first, then enter their postcode at <https://just-helping.org.uk/register-tree>.

You will get all the instructions about when to put out your tree, and a reminder to remove all the decorations.

Charity collection not for you? Options:

- Garden waste subscription? Put out your tree - under six foot, trunk no more than six inches, no decorations - beside your garden waste bin with your first 2023 collection on or after Monday 9 January.
- No subscription? Take your tree - under six foot, trunk no more than six inches, no decorations - to any recycle site's garden waste skip. All recycle sites are back on their usual schedules. Do not waste that recycle site trip: also take all rubbish and all recycle materials, especially card and wrapping paper.

(All recycle site trees and kerbside-collected trees will be composted in Somerset to create the Revive soil conditioner sold in bags at any recycle site or in bulk - details: somersetwaste.gov.uk/revive-soil-conditioner.)

You can check collection days for now and the rest of the year using the online My Collection Day feature somersetwaste.gov.uk.

Download a calendar for printing or, better still, download it into the calendar on your device and get automatic reminders of your collection days.

Snow, ice and freezing temperatures can disrupt collections so please bear with us in the event of severe weather.

Crews will return as soon as possible for any missed collections. If conditions are bad we may not be able to meet our usual 'return in two days' target.

Check somersetwaste.gov.uk for updates if we are experiencing disruption.

If severe weather is forecast, residents may wish to 'clear the decks' before the festive period so you have room in your recycling boxes and refuse bin.

Recycle everything you can in your next collection. If you are able, you may want to take black bag refuse to a recycling site so your bin is empty when the festive season starts.

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.

- **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

Work underway to review office and customer access buildings for new Somerset Council

With fewer than 100 days to go until the launch of the new unitary Somerset Council on 1 April 2023, work is underway to understand where offices and customer service delivery points might be situated.

Somerset Council is committed to putting the customer at the heart of its services and will have customer hubs all over the county, including face to face access points. At the same time, many services will be available online offering 24/7 access.

A review of the property estate is underway to ensure that customer service delivery points and accommodation for staff and services are in the right place. This review will seek to ensure best value for taxpayers and support Somerset's pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The possible disposal of some buildings by sale or lease is being considered as part of the process. There are a number of activities and reviews to be completed before

any decisions can be made, and no decisions are expected until Spring/Summer 2023.

Phase one of the property review will focus on three projects:

- A review of properties in the West Somerset area
- A feasibility study to inform a potential disposal of Petters House in Yeovil
- A strategy for C Block at County Hall in Taunton

The review in West Somerset will look at a specific group of nine operational sites currently occupied by either Somerset County Council or Somerset West and Taunton Council in Minehead and Williton. The new council will in addition own a variety of other leased assets/landholdings which are not being considered at this time.

All potentially affected staff have been contacted and will be kept informed of the progress of the reviews.

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

LCN development Update

A paper summarising the findings from the autumn consultation went to Somerset County Council's Executive Board on 16 November. The LCN team were grateful to have received a wide range of responses, reflecting many perspectives. Members agreed that it was vital that time was taken to consider these fully.

The report also reflected what has been learned from the LCN pilots in Somerset so far, and from similar arrangements in other Unitary areas.

A set of principles to shape the further development of LCNs was agreed.

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)

Council pushes for urgent landlord action on A358 land slips

SCC is working with a local landowner to ensure work is carried out urgently to prevent any further landslips onto a vital county route.

This week the Council's Highways team is carrying out essential drainage upgrade and clearance works along the A358 at Combe Florey. This key route links Taunton to West Somerset and a number of recent incidents have caused closures and significant disruption.

Two flooding incidents in August (and September just weeks apart, occurred after heavy rain produced run-off from fields which saw tonnes of soil slurry and potatoes run onto the road at Combe Florey. A closure and major clear-up operation was needed on both occasions.

On 20 December another smaller incident occurred in the same location, which also resulted in a closure.

At the time of the first incidents a local tenant farmer was asked by the Council to carry out remedial measures to prevent another incident. Although some works were undertaken, they proved to be insufficient to stop the slip on 20 December. The Council is now in negotiation with the Landowner and will require further remedial measures.

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

SCC Highways maintenance update

Reported defects are still relatively 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.

“Bus It” for £2 on single bus journeys across Somerset

Bus users in Somerset will be able to travel on most routes in the county for just £2 from January.

The major fare cut is part of an initiative funded by the Government aimed at boosting 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 £2 single fare is available from all participating operators from 1 January to 31 March. The initiative will apply to the majority of routes in Somerset. You can check here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/busit> to see find out more about the scheme.

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

Think Travel Can Help

A one-stop travel information website has been launched by Somerset County Council to support more local people to access public and community transport.

If you don't own a car - or want to leave it at home and travel more sustainably, Think Travel can help you with your transport options. Whether it's getting to the doctors, shops, travelling to work, college, or school, or just into town to meet friends or family, the new travel planner shows you what's available. It covers public transport, community transport, the Slinky demand responsive transport service and car sharing.

To start your search, all you need to do is enter your journey start point and destination in the planner and Think Travel will find the available options for you. As well as information on train and bus services, there's also a dedicated car sharing notice board you can sign up to, where offers or requests for car sharing journeys can be posted.

The aim is to grow this facility and encourage local car sharing networks to evolve. You can check out “Think Travel” here: <https://somerset.thinktravel.info>.

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 17 January**, between 10:00am and 12:00pm, at CHARIS, 16-17 Hammet Street, Taunton TA1 1RZ

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

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

Village Halls to see major revamp as Platinum Jubilee fund opens

Village halls across England can now apply for grants to improve and modernise their facilities, as the Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund is now open for applications.

Launched to mark the occasion of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022, the fund recognises the important role that village halls play in supporting rural communities.

Village halls are key cornerstones in the fabric of rural life, providing essential services and bringing people together through social and recreational activities.

The fund is managed by the charity Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). It is anticipated that the fund will support around 125 village halls over a three-year period creating bigger, better and brighter village halls for communities to enjoy.

The application window will close on **20 January 2023**, with successful applicants being able to draw on the funding from April 2023.

For further information, including how to apply for the fund visit: <https://acre.org.uk/platinum-jubilee-village-halls-fund/>.

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

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!

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.

Lendology

Council-funded loans help homeowners towards net zero

With the current climate emergency, homeowners may be wondering what they can do to support a reduction in carbon emissions. The rising costs of energy also means many are wondering how to cut their utility bills.

Many homes in the UK struggle to retain heat because of their age and poor energy efficiency, as well as how they are heated. Whether looking to invest in renewable technologies such as solar or heat pumps, or to install energy-saving measures,

homeowners may be eligible for an energy efficiency loan to help fund the upfront cost.

Working in partnership with Social Enterprise lender, [Lendology](#), SWT provides accessible finance in the form of low interest loans to homeowners wishing to increase their energy efficiency.

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

Health and Welfare

SCC Public Health

Clintons Public Health Video - Mindline

In his latest Public Health catch up film, Clinton visits Mindline - the confidential listening service that provides a safe place to talk if you, or someone you know, is in distress.

Please [click here](#) to watch the video. Clinton speaks to Mark from MIND about how the service can provide support to those who need it and hears from Amy Maggs, Somerset County Council's Health Promotion Manager for Mental Health about the importance of talking to someone if you're struggling.

You can also access online support at www.mindinsomerset.org.uk.

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.

Healthy Start Vouchers

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

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

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

You can also use your card to collect:

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

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

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

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)

Reminder - Be sure to take care on the roads

Frosty and icy conditions mean 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.

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).