

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils

Issue 137 Weeks ending 22/01/2023

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. Temporary disruption to council services

Advance notice of significant disruption to Somerset West and Taunton Council's services between **Thursday 19 January and Monday 23 January**.

We will be carrying out major changes to our Information Technology systems in preparation for the transition into Somerset Council in April 2023.

This will affect all customer services between Thursday 19 January and Monday 23 January.

Some of our services will be unavailable:

- Our normal Customer Services will be unavailable.
- On Friday 20 January, Customer Reception at Deane House (Belvedere Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1HE) will be open as usual from 8:30am – 5:00pm for enquiries but support will be limited by what we can do without computer systems.
- On Friday 20 January, Customer Reception at West Somerset House (Killick Way, Williton, Somerset, TA4 4QA) will be open as usual from 8:30am – 4:30pm for enquiries but support will be limited by what we can do without computer systems.

- Services may also be temporarily impacted during the week commencing 23 January.
- Our online services will be disrupted including online forms and systems.

If you have an emergency, we have put in place temporary arrangements to take emergency calls only relating to Homelessness, urgent Environmental Health issues and dangerous structures, which should be reported to [0300 304 8000](tel:03003048000) where your call will be diverted to a third party.

All other non-urgent requests should be submitted by email to enquiries@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk and we will respond to your enquiry as soon as we are able, once services are back online.

If you are unable to use our website and your call is not urgent over this time, please call back in a few days.

Please accept our apologies during this period. We will return to business as usual as soon as possible.

2. Democracy and Governance

Please note that due to the ICT disruption, the Governance team will not be able to respond to e-mails or enquiries over the weekend from 5pm on Thursday 18 January until lunchtime on Monday 23 January. We hope to get our systems operational as quickly as possible, but please bear with us whilst this essential work takes place.

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 Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 25 January 2023**, at 6.15pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 23 January.
- **Taunton Shadow Town Council – Tuesday 31 January 2023**, at 6.00pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 27 January.
- **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 1 February 2023**, at 6.15pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs are available to view on the [website](#). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 30 January.
- **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 2 February 2023**, at 1.00pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Tuesday 31 January.

- **SWT Full Council – Tuesday 7 February 2023**, at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Friday 3 February.

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. Major incident declared over flood risk in Somerset

The Environment Agency and the local authorities in Somerset have declared a major incident because of flood risk in the county.

Enhanced pumping began on Tuesday evening (17 January) at Northmoor to reduce the amount of water being stored until river levels allow pumping to resume at Currymoor, which remains full.

The decision to declare a major incident at this time is a precautionary move and will mean partners become more coordinated and ready to support and take action should the situation worsen.

The agency is currently responding to flooding incidents in Somerset, flood risk in the Bristol Avon area and monitoring rising groundwater levels in Dorset.

The Environment Agency urges residents to check their flood risk by signing up for flood warnings and create a flood plan so they know what action to take and are prepared to act. You can find links at [check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk](https://www.check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk).

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

4. Wellington Place Plan consultation set to begin

The public consultation on the Draft Place Plan for Wellington starts on Monday 23 January 2023 giving residents and businesses a chance to have their say on how they think the town should look in the future.

The Place Plan is being prepared by SWT to inform future decisions about the development, regeneration and conservation of the town.

It will look at potential options for growth to support housing and employment needs; retail and commercial function; transport systems; culture and heritage.

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

5. SWT to unveil spectacular Dragon Sculpture

SWT will be unleashing the “Taunton Dragon” in Taunton High Street on Saturday 11 February 2023.

The spectacular 4-metre-high public art sculpture created by local chainsaw artist [Matthew Crabb](#), will be unveiled by the Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Sue Lees, and the Chair of SWT, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey.

The Taunton Dragon was commissioned by the Council after two trees planted when the High Street was originally pedestrianised in the 1970's were removed having outgrown their brick planters posing a danger to people and properties.

SWT planted three new trees in the district for each tree removed in line with its three-for-one [tree replacement policy](#).

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

6. Tonedale Levelling Up bid unsuccessful

SWT will continue working to bring about the restoration of Wellington's heritage and cultural assets despite being unsuccessful in its bid for Government funding.

The council asked for nearly £20million from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's Levelling Up fund to help realise "A Vision for Tonedale".

The funds would have provided an opportunity for SWT working in partnership with stakeholders and the community, to transform and sustainably regenerate the nationally significant heritage site at Toneworks and enhance associated land for community use.

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

7. Free "Meet the Experts" event for food and drink businesses

SWT and Sedgemoor District Councils have teamed up to organise a series of events specifically designed for businesses in the food and drink sector.

The next event is "Meet the Experts food and drink workshops" at J25 Holiday Inn on **Thursday, 9 February 2023, between 10am and 1pm on a drop-in basis.**

Businesses will have the opportunity to attend expert and industry specialist workshops – Photography, Intellectual Property, Allergens Food Labelling and procurement – but these need to be booked in advance via the councils [Eventbrite](#) page.

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

8. Reminder - Climate Change Newsletter Issue 9

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

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

Please [click here](#) to view the latest issue and subscribe to Climate News.

9. Reminder - Cultural Strategy lends boost to creative economy

Progress of SWT's [Cultural Strategy](#) has been revealed with the completion of a 12-month impact report.

With a £200,000 budget dedicated to arts and culture, the Cultural Strategy has made a significant impact to the creative economy.

For more details about the achievements made, the 12-month impact report has been summarised in a presentation video available at youtu.be/wgMLItZEaak.

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

10. Town/Parish Councillors and Clerks Training

Three free sessions have been scheduled for Town/Parish Councillors and Clerks to attend for training on:

- Standards Regime including Code of Conduct & Interests
- Somerset Code of Conduct
- Social Media and pitfalls to avoid
- Recording of Council meetings
- Confidentiality
- Being a Councillor versus being an individual
- Disrespect versus freedom of speech
- Public perception and risk

The sessions will take place online and the dates are:-

Thursday 26 January at 6pm

Thursday 9 February at 6pm

Wednesday 8 March at 6pm

Please circulate this information to all your Parish Councillors.

To book a place, and to be sent the link to the session please email monitoringofficer@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk.

11. Reminder - 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.

12. 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.

13. Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)

New Soft seating skips at Somerset sites

Saying “so long” to an old sofa? Somerset’s recycling sites now have a separate skip for disposal of upholstered home furniture.

New government regulations mean that recycling sites across the UK have to handle ‘upholstered household seating’ separately from other waste.

This includes sofas, sofa beds, armchairs, kitchen and dining room chairs, stools and foot stools, home office chairs, futons, bean bags, floor and sofa cushions.

It also includes any upholstery – filling and covers – that may have been removed from furniture.

The new skips are sign-posted ‘upholstered household seating’. They will be staffed, so if you are not sure, please ask.

The change aims to reduce the environmental risk posed by the possible presence of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in these items.

POPs were historically used in some fire retardants applied to soft household seating.

Although the quantities that could be present in the home are not thought to be hazardous, POPs can be released into the environment when items are broken up.

The new arrangements are in line with Environment Agency advice and guidance.

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

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.

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

New Somerset Council

Latest news

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)

Cliff-top B3191 Cleeve Hill closed

The B3191 Cleeve Hill, near Watchet, remains closed to all road users in the interests of public safety.

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

SCC Highways maintenance update

A very busy couple of weeks for the gangs, ranging from flood works on the Somerset Levels to very low temperatures. Whilst there is still a lot of water seepage from fields and hedgerows, SCC gritters have been out salting the roads on the Primary Network up to 3 times per day. Sometimes there is still some inevitable ice on the roads, so SCC are reiterating their request for road users to only travel when necessary (particularly at night) until the water seepage and low temperatures stabilise.

SCC Safety Defects numbers are rising fast due to the freeze/thaw actions on the road causing potholes, therefore the planned work programmes may be pushed back slightly this week whilst the teams catch up.

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.

The current planned SCC Highways works programmed for the week commencing **23 January 2023** (subject to change due to weather) are as follows:

23 January 2023

- **Bircham Road, Minehead** 20 days Works to improve walking and cycling facilities from West Somerset Community College to Marsh Street including: carriageway narrowing, bus stop reconfiguration, the introduction of tactile crossings and drainage, construction of a new traffic island, relocation of street lighting columns, installation of new signage/lining along the entire length.
- **Bishops Lydeard Bypass** 15 days Removal of dangerous trees
- **Whitmore Lane, Staplegrove** 5 days Clear 8.5m ditch and construct new manhole chamber.
- **High Street, Taunton** 3 days Jetting works
- **Slade Way, Williton** 2 days Replacement of street lighting columns (PL1 & 2)
- **Ford Street, Wellington Without** 1 day Jetting works
- **Wiveliscombe Road, Preston Bowyer** 1 day Jetting works

24 January 2023

- **Barnsmead Road, Wellington** 2 days Replacement of street lighting unit (PL12)
- **Penny Close, Wellington** 2 days Replacement of street lighting unit (PL6)
- **Castle Lane, Wiveliscombe** 1 day Jetting to clear flooding
- **Haydon Lane, Taunton** 1 day Jetting works

25 January 2023

- **Downlands Lane, Churchstanton** 3 days Patching
- **Owl Street, Stocklinch** 3 days Depot patching
- **Priorswood Roundabout, Taunton** 3 days Jetting to clear flooding

26 January 2023

- **Priory Roundabout, Taunton** 2 days Jetting works.

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

ttro513279TD - Castle Street, Taunton

Please [click here](#) to view the above road closure; and the link for the **Notice 2** can be found [here](#).

The works are expected to commence on **22 January 2023** and last for **2 days** to enable **Wessex Water to conduct critical maintenance to the foul sewer using CCTV and Jetvac tanker units..**

The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site is **not permitted** on this occasion.

For any further information about this closure please contact **Wessex Water** on **0345 600 4600**, quoting reference: **ttro513279TD**.

ttro109276TD - WW - Wilton Street, Taunton

We have received a notification of a TTRN (urgent) road closure at **Wilton Street, Taunton**, that will commence on **23 - 27 January 2023 from 0:00 to 11:59pm for a total of 5 days**.

This will enable **Wessex Water to carry out service repair works**.

The contractor has indicated that access for Emergency Services through the site **is not permitted** on this occasion.

For any further information about this closure please contact **Wessex Water** on **0345 600 4600**, quoting reference: **ttro109276TD**.

Please visit one.network <https://one.network/?tm=132522353> where you will see the map of the affected area (in red), together with the supplied diversion route (in blue).

Met Office

Prepare a winter kit for your car

It's worth packing a few essential items in your car's boot to make sure you're ready in case of getting stuck in cold and wintry weather.

Please [click here](#) as RAC experts give the lowdown on what to put in your car winter kit.

Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)

Proposed Section 119, Highways Act 1980: Footpath Diversion Order 2023 (Hantons)

Public Bridleway DU4/5 (Part) – Parish of Exford

The above order, made on 13 January 2023 under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, will divert part of public bridleway DU4/5 from a line running between points A-B-C to a line running between points A-D-C as shown on the order plan.

A copy of the [order and the order map](#) have been placed and may be seen free of charge at Exmoor House, Dulverton, Somerset, TA22 9HL from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday or viewed on the Exmoor National Park Authority website – search for '[Changes to the Path Network](#)'.

Quantock Hills (AONB)

Winter Newsletter – Issue 18 now available

The latest Quantock Hill newsletter is now available to view [online](#).

Please [click here](#) to visit the website and subscribe for future issues.

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS)

Safety in severe weather conditions

Stay safe by following DSFRS advice where there are floods or power cuts in your area. Please [click here](#) to visit the website and learn how to prepare for stormy weather.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Stay safe at the coast

With yellow and amber weather warnings issued by the [Met Office](#) across the UK, please take care if you're travelling or visiting the shoreline, especially along cliffs, sea fronts and piers.

- Exercise extreme caution if walking near cliffs – be aware of ice and frost, plan your route and always keep dogs on a lead.
- Check the weather forecast and tide times before you set off.
- Take a fully charged mobile with you.

If you're planning to undertake a water sport, check you have all the equipment you need and consider downloading the [Royal Yachting Association SafeTrx](#) app

In a coastal emergency call 999 and ask for the Coastguard

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

Taunton Chamber of Commerce

Young Business Group Launches for 2023

Wednesday 1 February 6:30 – 8:30pm at CICCIC

Do you work at a Taunton business, run your own local business or study in Taunton? Are you under 30? Then this relaxed launch event for a brand-new local business group for young people is for you!

This is a FREE event, including your first drink at the bar, but everyone is asked to book a ticket so the organisers have an understanding of numbers. The event is open to all and you don't need to have any association with Taunton Chamber.

Please [click here](#) to register your place.

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.

Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP) Community Sport Warm Spaces Fund

This funding has been made available by Somerset County Council to enable local community organisations providing physical activity and sport, grant support to open up warm spaces to children and young people in Somerset.

Funding is available from January - March 2023 to support with the increasing energy costs for indoor facilities.

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

Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Talking Cafes Live – every Wednesday at 1pm

COMING UP on January's [Talking Cafe](#) Live Streaming Sessions, available on: [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

- **25 January - [Street Baptist Church](#)** - find out about the facilities / courses available at the church, and the fantastic work they do in the community

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

Want to take part and SHOUT about the organisation or community project you are passionate about? Contact debis@somersetcc.org.uk or message the Talking Cafe page.

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.

Health and Welfare

SCC Public Health

Somerset: Get talking to beat the January blues

January can be a difficult month for many people, with cold weather and shorter days bringing feelings of anxiety, sadness and depression, especially after the festive period which can be challenging for some. It is no wonder that the term 'January blues' exists.

At this time of year, it's more important than ever to talk more with family and friends and share how you're feeling.

Starting conversations that seem 'deep' or potentially emotional can be daunting for people, so Somerset's Public Health team have five tips to help you get started.

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

It may be a New Year, but flu hasn't gone away.

In Somerset, we are seeing an increase in hospitalisations from flu, and lots are younger than you might think. Many people do not realise that they're at risk of catching flu and being affected by complications such as pneumonia, so it really is important to get your jab to protect yourself and those around you.

The pressure from flu on our NHS continues to grow with the latest figures showing that cases in hospital are now more than seven times higher than last month.

You can help the NHS this winter by getting your flu vaccine. It is effective in stopping you getting seriously ill from the flu and means the NHS can stay focussed on helping people with other illnesses. If you get the flu vaccine, it can stop you from getting ill from flu meaning that you can keep doing the things you enjoy like going out and seeing friends.

[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.

Somerset Public Health Video

Influenza

[In this week's film](#), Clinton speaks to Dr Bernie Marsden, Chief Medical Officer at NHS Somerset about the impact the flu season is having on NHS services. He also hears from Jonathan Wood, a Somerset pharmacist, about the importance of getting the flu jab to protect yourself and those around you.

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

National Crime Agency

Don't be a money mule

Fraud is now the most likely type of crime to affect all of us, after overtaking theft. Young people are increasingly the major victims of fraud. Fraudsters' tactics can be highly sophisticated and even the financially aware can easily be duped.

Victims don't only lose their money. They can lose their family's savings, their businesses, their trust in other people, and can impact on their mental health. One of the most important enablers of fraud are money mules. This is where you let someone else use your bank account to send criminal money.

Fraudsters and other criminals will use lots of mule accounts to make it harder for banks and police to track them down. Most mules enabling these crimes are young.

Around 6 in 10 mules are under the age of 30. They can be recruited online and in person. By using mules, criminals try to ensure that the consequences hit the mule, instead of them. This is financial exploitation – both of the mule and of the original victim.

But mules usually get recruited because they get a cut of the stolen money. This means they are involved in money laundering. This is a serious criminal offence, with a maximum sentence of 14 years in prison for the worst offenders.

Please [click here](#) to find out more about money laundering.

Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) Multi- agency statement following road traffic collision on A39 – Bridgwater

At 6am on Tuesday 17 January, ASP were called to the A39 Quantock Road, in Bridgwater, following a report of a road-related incident involving a double decker bus and a motorcyclist.

The double decker bus was carrying 70 Hinkley Point C workers and the bus driver when it overturned.

The incident was initially declared a major incident due to the number of people involved and the resources required, but later this was stood down. Emergency services were on the scene from receiving the first 999 call and the police confirmed there have been no fatalities at the time.

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

Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) Reminder - Precept survey online

The Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is responsible for setting the amount of money you contribute to local policing through your council tax bill (known as the 'precept').

The precept accounts for 41% of police funding and the rest is from central Government grants. The Government also determines the maximum amount by which PCCs can increase the precept each year.

For next year, the Government has allowed PCCs to increase the precept by £15 for a band D household (equivalent to 6%). The Government assume that PCCs will ask for the maximum allowed and use this assumption in their budget setting.

[Complete this survey](#) to let the PCC know your thoughts on increasing the amount of money which goes towards policing through your council tax.

Volunteer Recruitment deadline extended to 31 January

The role of a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is to scrutinise, review and improve policing practices. To help do this, the team work with local people as volunteers to get independent views and feedback on a range of policing issues.

The PCC is looking for people of all backgrounds, ages, and experience across the Avon and Somerset area to volunteer and act as independent advisors..

Please note, the application deadline has been extended to 31 January.

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

PCC's Councillor Forum – Somerset West and Taunton

Tuesday 24 January 2023, 5:00pm – 7:00pm

Trull Village Memorial Hall, 21 Church Road, Trull TA3 7JZ

ASP PCC Mark Shelford invites you to a Councillor Forum in Somerset West and Taunton, part of a series of forums happening around Avon and Somerset.

Relevant to all local councillors in the Somerset West and Taunton constituency, this session is designed to offer an overview into the PCC's Police and Crime Plan priorities, a chance to ask questions and discuss local issues affecting your communities.

The PCC will also outline his focus areas of tackling crime, anti-social behaviour as well as reduction and prevention strategies for violence against women and girls. This is your chance to hear from the PCC directly, raise local issues and offer feedback.

Please [click here](#) to reserve your place.

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).