

Somerset West and Taunton

Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils.

Issue 38. Week ending 13/12/20

Please remember: #Hands #Face #Space

It is so important to remember the coronavirus basics as we enter autumn and winter:

- **Hands** – Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds
- **Face** – Cover your face in enclosed spaces
- **Space** – Keep 2m apart where possible

SWT Council priorities

Somerset West and Taunton Council's updated priorities during the coronavirus outbreak are as follows:

- Preserve critical services;
- Safeguard the public;
- Ensure our most vulnerable residents are supported; and
- Planning economic resilience and recovery

The situation is being reviewed on a daily basis to ensure that the Council follows the [latest advice from Public Health England](#).

[Click here](#) to read up to date information on how SWT continues to respond to coronavirus.

Key Messages this week

1. Next phase funding approved for flagship regeneration project

SWT has approved funding to support all future phases of the North Taunton Woolaway Project. Members approved the funding to ensure a smooth transition between phases and quicken the pace of the regeneration project, at a special Full Council meeting on Thursday 3 December.

The initial phase of the project, 'Phase A', commenced this year with the demolition of 26 Woolaway homes which the Government has designated as defective; and the building of 47 new homes scheduled for completion by September 2022.

The next phases of the project, 'Phases B to E', will see the demolition of a further 136 defective homes and the building of 180 more homes along with a new community facility, estimated to complete in November 2027. Of the 50 homes in Phase E, 27 are council-owned homes and will be made structurally sound and fully refurbished with better insulation, and 23 homes are privately owned.

The Council has developed a package of financial assistance which private owners can consider if they would like to participate in the refurbishment. This flagship project, which has been submitted for national planning awards, will regenerate one of the most socially deprived areas in Somerset. A total of 227 new homes will be delivered, set at affordable rents.

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

2. Trustees vote against disposal of land to cancer charity

SWT sitting as the board of trustees of Galmington Playing Field Charity has voted against disposing of a parcel of land to accommodate a new cancer support centre. The principle of selling a small part of the playing field adjacent to Musgrove Park Hospital to Maggie's Cancer Charity was agreed by the former Taunton Deane Borough Council Executive in 2011.

SWT considered a motion on Tuesday 8 December, to authorise officers to discuss leasing the land to Maggie's rather than selling it, but the motion was lost by 44 against and five in favour with two abstentions.

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

3. Democracy and Governance

Committee Meetings

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](#). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

A number of Committee meetings are scheduled to take place over the next week, which are as follows:

- Tuesday 15 December – **Full Council**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Thursday 10 December)
- Wednesday 16 December – **Executive**, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Friday 11 December)
- Thursday 17 December – **Special Audit, Governance and Standards Committee** to consider the Statement of Accounts, 6.15pm (deadline for public questions or statements is 4.00pm on Monday 14 December)

The meetings will all be live streamed so that members of the public can watch at home. To watch the live stream when the meeting commences please visit

the SWT website by [clicking here](#). If you are not able to watch the meeting live, you can also watch it after the meeting.

Members of the public are still able to participate in the meeting by submitting their questions or statement to the Governance Team via governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk and these will be read out by an officer at the meeting. Please see the dates listed above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements.

4. Councils back Stronger Somerset proposal which now heads to Government

On the 3 December 2020, all four District Councils in Somerset (Somerset West and Taunton, South Somerset, Mendip and Sedgemoor) voted to endorse the Stronger Somerset business case. Following approval the Stronger Somerset proposal was submitted to the Secretary of State, by 9 December.

5. Council leaders seek Government support on phosphate requirements

The leaders of all four districts councils in Somerset have called on the Government for support following recent Natural England advice concerning unacceptable levels of phosphates in the Somerset Levels and Moors.

Natural England have advised the local authorities that they should undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) before determining planning applications that may give rise to additional phosphates in the Levels and Moors catchment.

A joint letter to the Government from the leaders of Somerset West and Taunton, Sedgemoor, Mendip and South Somerset district councils warns the requirement will adversely impact housing delivery in Somerset and the ability to meet national housing targets; and will have significant economic consequences for local house builders and supply-chain businesses that employ many people in the county.

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

6. Did you know you can now shop locally online?

In October this year, SWT became the first Council in Somerset to team-up with award-winning digital platform, 'ShopAppy', enabling residents to buy goods and services online from their local retailers and businesses.

For residents who are looking to shop safely this Christmas, perhaps because they are isolating or prefer not to shop in person whilst the tier 2 restrictions remain in place, ShopAppy can help maintain contact with their favourite independent shops, all from the safety of their own home.

Conversely, for those who don't have time to visit their high street or tend to shop mostly using online giants and supermarkets, ShopAppy by comparison provides gratification for shoppers wishing to support their local economy.

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

7. **SWT announces further design guide consultation**

SWT is carrying out further consultation on the draft Design Guide to ensure that streets are considered as sustainable places and places for all - not purely roads for vehicles. The Design Guide which seeks to encourage a higher standard of design across the whole Local Planning Authority area went out to public consultation at the start of the year.

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

8. **REMINDER- SWT offers Christmas Parking incentive**

SWT is offering free parking to help support businesses in towns and villages across the district this festive season. The Council is offering free parking all day on Saturdays leading up to Christmas in its car parks at Dulverton, Dunster, Minehead, Porlock, Watchet, Wellington and Williton to support traders, residents and visitors.

In Taunton parking will be free after 3pm on Saturday - **12 and 19 December**. This offer excludes the Kilkenny car park which is a long stay commuter car park.

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

9. **REMINDER- Somerset West Lottery Christmas bonus draw**

SWT is inviting people to support local good causes this festive season and be in with a chance to win a great prize in the Somerset West Lottery. Everyone who signs up to purchase one or more tickets before **19 December 2020** will be in with the chance to win one of five bundles containing an Amazon Echo Show 8, Echo Dot 3rd Gen and a Fire 7 Tablet courtesy of the external lottery management company Gatherwell.

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

10. **Somerset Waste Partnership Services (SWP)**

Don't forget just how much you can do online with SWP these days. Available 24/7, no telephone calls or emails. Go to somersetwaste.gov.uk and click *My Waste Services* drop-down. You can:

- Order a replacement or new recycling box or bin
- Sign up for a garden waste collection
- Report any missed collection after 7pm (within 5 working days for (rubbish, garden waste) or three working days (recycling).
- Request a clinical or assisted collection.
- While you're there, check all your collection days with *My Collection Day*

To keep up to date with recycling sites, sign up for the SWP e-newsletter at www.somersetwaste.gov.uk and follow @Somerssetwaste on Facebook or Twitter

Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas Somerset County Council (SCC)

Highway Maintenance Update

SCC Highways are currently focusing on the routine tasks of gully emptying, safety defect repairs and patching.

Drivers between Taunton and West Somerset over the last week may have been wondering why a set of temporary traffic signals had appeared on the **A358 Minehead Road at Combe Florey**, near the two railway bridges? They have been put in place as a safety measure following the undermining of the road by the adjacent stream. SCC Highways were concerned that the edge of the road and a section of the carriageway could collapse at any time. The damage is currently being assessed and repair work designed and organised. It is likely that this will take place in the New Year. SCC Highways will keep readers posted as to developments and, in the meantime, the traffic lights will remain in place.

Meanwhile, SCC Highways are pleased to report that another hold-up to traffic has been lifted. The new cattle grid on **Hill Road, Minehead** has now been completed and the road either side has been regraded and resurfaced. SCC Highways would like to take this opportunity to thank local residents and people who like to visit North Hill and Selworthy Beacon, with their spectacular views, for their patience and co-operation whilst this major item of road safety work was carried out.

For more information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit our website www.travelsomerset.co.uk or follow @TravelSomerset on Twitter.

Wessex Water

Temporary Road Closure: ttro416994TD - Burton Place, Taunton

The works are expected to commence on **11 January 2021** and last for **5 days** to enable Wessex Water to carry out supply separation works.

For any further information about this closure please contact Wessex Water on **0345 600 4 600** quoting reference: ttro416994TD - Burton Place, Taunton. Please [click here](#) to view the road closure.

Please note that should you require to view a closure which is more than two weeks ahead you will need to register for free with www.One.Network

Useful links to report faults

As the clocks have now changed and it's getting dark earlier, there are more queries about overgrown trees, verges or hedges, blocked drains and street lights that don't work.

To report faults in the following areas, please click on the relevant link:-

[Dangerous/Overgrown Tree alongside the public highway](#)
[Report an overgrown verge or hedge on the road](#)

[Street light not working](#)
[Blocked surface water drain on the highway.](#)

Food support for families in need this Christmas

A £1million support package is in place to support Somerset families in need with food this winter. Somerset County Council, the District Councils and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group have been busy working with partners to ensure a robust system is in place so that help can be directed where it is needed.

Through partnership working, a wide network of community food support has already been established in Somerset during the pandemic and the Government's Winter Covid Grant Scheme has bolstered this by providing additional funding to support families. All schools in Somerset will be provided with £30 for every child who receives free school meals for the Christmas Holidays and £15 for February half term. Schools will use this funding to provide vouchers or food and will contact their families accordingly. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2021

The Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children since 2018, will also be expanded across England next year. It will cover Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021, and cost up to £220m.

This funding, made available from the Department of Education, will pay for children and young people who receive Free School Meals to engage in holiday activities which include a healthy meal.

An information session will be held on the **15 December at 10am** on **TEAMS** to let you know further details, and to discuss how to make it happen. To join this live event, please refer to the attached leaflet and [click on the link found within the document](#).

Stay up to date with Clinton Rogers' weekly Covid Catch Up

Somerset County Council has enlisted the help of former BBC television journalist Clinton Rogers for a new weekly series of informative Covid Catch Up videos. The former BBC Points West correspondent will front the new series which aims to help people understand how Covid-19 is affecting Somerset, and what we can all be doing to help beat the virus.

The first [Covid Catch Up video](#) features Clinton reporting from Taunton on what it means for Somerset as we leave lockdown and enter Tier Two restrictions.

HM Coastguard Watchet

What3words mobile app

Street addresses don't always point to precise locations. Mobile app [what3words](#) has given every 3m square in the world a unique three word address. The words are randomly assigned to each square and will always stay the same. Now it's easy to find and share any location with just three words.

HM Coastguard Watchet recommend downloading this app, if you haven't already done so. In the event of emergency time is critical, especially when there is danger to life. If you find yourself at a remote location or on the shoreline and don't know exactly where you are, using a British grid reference or a mobile app such as what3words can help the emergency services know exactly your location and allow them to identify the best access point.

Recently HM Coastguard Watchet were called out to a casualty on the coastline whereby what3words would have been of great assistance. Please [click here](#) to read the full story.

Remember if you are in difficulty on the beach, sea, coast path or see someone in distress to dial 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

#ToSearch #ToRescue #ToSave

Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service

Candles and decorative lights

More than 50 fires a day are started by candles. Candles and decorative lights should be used safely and candles should never be left unattended. Follow these safety tips whenever you use candles and decorative lights at home.

Read our top tips to keep your home safe

- Make sure candles are secured in a fire resistant holder and away from like furniture and curtains.
- Keep loose clothing and hair away from candles/tea lights when they are lit.
- Always leave at least 10cm between burning candles/tea lights and never place them under shelves or other enclosed spaces.
- Put candles out when you leave the room and make sure they're put out completely before you go to bed.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Never burn a candle right down into the holder.
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out when sparks can fly.
- Never use candles in or near a tent.
- You increase the risk of fire or injury if you move a candle while it is lit.
- Always put candles/tea lights out and leave to cool down before you try to move them.
- Keep candles, matches and lighters away from children and pets.
- Consider using flameless candles.

The above safety advice can also apply to joss sticks, oil and incense burners.

Tea lights

Tea lights present a high risk. They have a foil outer container; however this is not a suitable holder. This foil container can get extremely hot and melt surfaces on which it is placed such as the side of a bath. Ensure tea lights are placed in proper holders

Decorative lights and decorations during celebrations

- Fairy lights and Christmas tree lights often only get dusted off and use for special occasions. You'll need to make sure they are in good working order before using them.
- Check that the fuse in the plug is the right size
- Replace any blown bulbs
- Don't leave lights on when you got to bed or leave the house
- Don't let the bulbs touch anything that can burn easily such as paper, fabrics or other Christmas tree decorations.

Please find attached a candle safety leaflet for your ease of reference.

Community Support – What help is out there?

Voluntary and Community Sector Support

Connect to a care home and fight loneliness this Christmas

Somerset County Council and the NHS are encouraging organisations across Somerset to connect to their local care home with a new digital campaign, #ConnectACareHome.

Organisations are being asked to send video messages to their local care homes, to help combat the loneliness and isolation experienced by residents and staff who may have been unable to see their loved ones due to Covid restrictions. Please [click here](#) to find out more information.

Coronavirus Helpline passes 10,000 calls since start of lockdown

Somerset's Coronavirus Helpline has received more than **10,000 calls** since its launch in April, signposting residents to a huge range of vital support such as emergency food parcels, prescription collections and hospital transport.

Set up by Somerset's local councils working together with partner organisations such as Mindline, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Community Council for Somerset (CCS) Village Agents, the Coronavirus Helpline has provided a single point of contact for anyone in need of Covid-19 related support over the past eight months and counting.

The Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline

If you are self-isolating or need extra help, a single phone number is available for anyone in Somerset who needs coronavirus-related support from their councils. The **0300 790 6275** number is available seven days per week 8am – 6pm.

Anyone who can't find help within their own local networks and volunteers, can use this number to get help and advice around:

- Personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions
- Support for the homeless
- Emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious
- Transport to medical appointments
- Waste collection and disposal
- Financial support

This number won't cover medical advice, for which people will need to continue to use the 111 NHS phone number if they cannot get help online.

If you would like to find out more about the Corona helpers, offer assistance, or need support please [click here](#).

Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)

Somerset Fund awards further community grants.

Grants worth **£72,886** have been awarded to 37 smaller, grassroots charities and community groups in the latest round of The Somerset Fund, managed by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF). Groups that have benefitted from these grants which were awarded in mid-November, include:-

- Accelerate Trampoline Club, Wellington: £1,014 for equipment for a new trampoline club
- Apple FM, Taunton: £2,500 towards running costs for a community radio station
- Clowns, Minehead: £2,500 for care packages for vulnerable families in West Somerset
- Huish Tigers RFC, Taunton: £2,500 for pitch maintenance equipment
- Limelight Theatre, Taunton: £2,500 for staff and venue costs
- New Horizons Somerset CIC, Wellington: £2,201 towards advocacy, empowerment and upskilling for ethnic minority women in Wellington
- Wiveliscombe Community Centre: £2,500 for improvements to the centre and increasing storage space
- Wiveliscombe Town Band: £900 for new instruments
- Wivey Cares, Wiveliscombe: £2,500 towards database and co-ordinator costs

If you are involved in a local, grassroots community project and would like to find out more about how to apply for funding, please visit

www.somersetcf.org.uk/somersetfund or call Somerset Community Foundation on **01749 344949**.

To read the full press release please [click here](#).

EDF

Community Bus Service

The Hinkley Point C Community Bus Service between Bridgwater and Minehead has started again, initially operating for two weeks between **Monday 7 and Friday 18 December**. After the Christmas holiday period, the service will then re-commence on **Monday 4 January**.

Buses used on the service have been modified to allow for social distancing. These measures include the installation of Perspex screens and a clear indication of which seats can be used.

In line with Government guidance, a face covering must be worn by all passengers.

The latest timetables can be viewed if you [click here](#).

Health and Welfare

Somerset's first patient receives the Covid-19 vaccine, as NHS vaccination programme is launched

Following the very first deliveries of the approved Pfizer vaccine, the Somerset-wide Covid-19 vaccination programme for those in the highest priority groups, has begun at Yeovil Hospital, as part of the biggest vaccination programme in history.

The hospital is part of the initial wave of 50 hospital hubs, announced last weekend that is providing the first vaccinations across the country. On 9 December, it began vaccinating people from the most vulnerable groups which includes patients aged 80 and above, who are already attending hospital as an outpatient, those who are being discharged home after a hospital stay, and care home staff who look after some of the most vulnerable people in Somerset. Any appointments not used for the initial groups at the hospital will be used for healthcare workers who are at highest risk of serious illness from Covid-19.

Since the Pfizer vaccine was given the green light from regulators last week, Somerset health and care organisations have been working around the clock to manage the huge logistical challenge of deploying the vaccine.

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

Get vitamin D supplements

You can get free daily vitamin D supplements if you're at high risk (clinically extremely vulnerable) from Coronavirus (Covid-19). To make one application for vitamin D supplements you will need to be in receipt of your letter that confirms you are on the shielded patients list of people at high risk from Coronavirus. You need to apply before **4 January 2021**. Please [click here](#) for more information and to apply.

Making a childcare bubble with another household

Childcare bubbles are now allowed in all tiers. A childcare bubble is where one household links with one other household to provide informal childcare to a child or children under 14.

All adults in both households must agree to this arrangement. You can now change your childcare bubble provided that:

- At least one person in the proposed new childcare bubble is under the age of 14.
- Neither household is part of a separate childcare bubble which they intend to remain a part of.

REMINDER- Mind in Somerset Online Wellbeing

In response to what is likely to be a very challenging Christmas this year Mind in Somerset have put together this free event. This will be an opportunity for people to find out what's available, and to share that with others in their community who may not be able to access the internet.

Conversations will be facilitated about how to influence and shape some Mental Health services as well as information around Open Mental Health. They have commissioned BBC Somerset Poet of the year Liv Torc to write a poem about the challenges of Christmas, and she will be delivering a workshop too. In addition 'Mental Resilience' with trainer Pete Bearder from Tough Cookie.
Date for your calendar: **Friday 18 December 2pm – 4pm** on Zoom.

To find out more and to register for this free event visit
<https://www.somersetmentalhealthhub.org.uk/christmas-not-your-cup-tea>

Please Download the NHS Test and Trace app

You can now [download the NHS Test and Trace app](#) and help control the spread of coronavirus and protect yourself and your loved ones as case numbers rise. The more people who download the app and contribute to the data will assist with monitoring and tracking the spread of the virus; this will enable Public Health England to allocate resources accordingly. The app will also advise you to self-isolate if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case. It will also enable you to check symptoms, book a free test if needed and get your test results.

Travel Restrictions

The guidance for travelling abroad is constantly being updated by Government. Please [click here](#) to read the latest information relating to the travel corridors.

Christmas travel measures

Travel safely this Christmas is the message as the Government announced measures to minimise disruption and help people travel in the festive season. The plan for the Christmas travel window between **23 and 27 December** includes lifting road works, enhancing rail services, postponing and accelerating rail engineering works and cutting ticket charges. The Government is also urging passengers to plan their journeys carefully, consider quieter routes and, where possible, to book ahead.

Travel between different tiers is permitted however, you must stick to the advice of only making journeys for essential reasons, and travel to Tier 3 areas is particularly advised against. Once you are in another tier, you should stick to the guidance of your own tier if you have come from a higher one, or act under the guidance of the higher tier if you are 'moving up' into it.

Links to the most up to date Covid-19 guidance can be found here

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
[Public Health England](#)
[NHS – Help and Advice](#)

FAQS

- Q. Where can I find more information about the Pfizer vaccine?**
A. You can find out more information about the coronavirus vaccine that will be offered in the UK from this week, how it works, why it is safe and when to

have it by clicking [here](#). Please [click here](#) to watch a short Oxford University video about the safety of the vaccine.

Q. Where can I find information I can follow to keep my family safe over Christmas and New Year?

A. The Government has released guidance for the **Christmas period (23 and 27 December)**. Please [click here](#) to read what you can and cannot do during this time. From **28 December**, you must follow the guidance for the tier in your area. Christmas bubbles will no longer apply. You must follow the rules on where you can go and who you can meet, including on New Year's Eve. Your Christmas bubble will no longer apply.

Crime / Safeguarding

Fifteen ways to lock down your tech

Technology has massive benefits, particularly in a year where we have seen lockdowns and self-isolation, but for people experiencing domestic abuse there is a risk it can be used to make their situation worse and increase harm.

Modern technology has entertained us in a time of isolation, kept us in touch with friends and family and up to date with the pandemic. It can give perpetrators of domestic abuse, however, a way to stalk, isolate and control their victims further.

You can find a guide which provides top tips on how you can keep your technology secure, stay safe online and reduce the risk of technological facilitated abuse. The advice will help you stay safe online and protect your passwords to stop anyone accessing your emails, mobile phone, social media or other online accounts.

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

Avon & Somerset Police (A&SP)

At home shouldn't mean at risk

A senior Police Officer and a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) from Avon and Somerset Police have shared moving accounts of how they found themselves trapped in situations of domestic abuse.

By breaking the silence that often surrounds abuse in the home, they hope to deliver clear messages that no-one is exempt from finding themselves in an abusive relationship and if you do, there is no shame in reaching out for help and support.

To find out more, please [click here](#).

REMINDER- A&SP Drink Driving Campaign, Op Tonic Underway

Avon and Somerset Police are part of a nationwide operation targeting motorists who choose to drink/drug drive throughout December as Op Tonic, the annual Christmas roads policing operation, started on 1 December. The activity comes as research shows over a fifth of people in the UK admitting to drinking more since lockdown began.

The public are being called on to play their part and report if they see someone getting behind the wheel having been drinking or taking drugs, with police reminding people that they could save lives by doing so. Last year police received 218 reports from the public with 73% of these attended or resolved, with the remainder informing patrol plans.

If someone is habitually drinking or abusing drugs and driving this can be reported [online](#) or by calling 101. If someone is currently driving under the influence of drink or drugs, call 999.

Independent alcohol advice, information and tools to help people make better choices about their drinking can be found at www.drinkaware.co.uk.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) launch Race Disparity in Focus

As the APCC lead on Criminal Justice efficiency and effectiveness, race disparity in the journey and outcome of people going through the criminal justice system is particularly concerning to Avon and Somerset PCC Sue Mountstevens.

Please [click here](#) to read the report that showcases how Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are tackling concerns raised by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME) across England and Wales.

Would you pay more council tax to support A&SP?

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Sue Mountstevens is encouraging local people to fill out a survey to share your opinion on an increase in the policing part of the council tax. Have your say by taking part in the short survey by clicking [here](#).

Latest Facebook Live

PCC Sue Mountstevens put your questions about Coronavirus, policing the pandemic and Christmas rules to Avon and Somerset Police Chief Constable Andy Marsh live on Facebook this week. Please [click here](#) to watch the replay.

Finally

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)

Please see our dedicated [webpage](#) for updates.

If you have concerns about your own health and coronavirus please visit the [NHS](#) website.

#StayAtHome

#ProtectTheNHS

#SaveLives

Attachments:

Schools Christmas Support, Holiday Activities & Food Programme and Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Candle Safety