

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 116 Weeks ending 31/07/2022**

**SWT Council’s priority strategic themes and outcomes**

Somerset West and Taunton Council’s four strategic themes are as follows:

* Our Environment and Economy
* A Transparent and Customer Focused Council
* Homes and Communities
* An Enterprising Council

[Click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/corporate-strategy/) to view SWT’s expected outcomes.

**Key Messages this week**

1. **Last chance to have your say on proposal to manage flood risk**

SWT’s public consultation on a proposal to create new flood defences between Firepool Lock and Obridge in Taunton is coming to an end on **Sunday 7 August**.

The consultation is seeking views on the proposed scheme which will benefit 219 properties in the Priorswood and Crown Industrial Estates and Bathpool by preventing floodwater from the River Tone entering the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal, reducing the risk of floodwater overspilling into Maiden’s Brook and Allen’s Brook.

Plans to manage the flood risk from the River Tone and its complex network of tributaries were identified in the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme (TSFAIS) approved by SWT in February 2020.

The document sets out a number of improvements to reduce flood risks over the next 30-plus years.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/have-your-say-on-proposal-to-manage-flood-risk/) to read the full press release

1. **Democracy and Governance**

**Committee Meetings**

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all [Committee meetings](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/council-meetings/). Here you can find the agendas and minutes of all meetings, as well as which Councillors sit on each Committee.

* **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 3 August,** in the JMR at 6.15pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Monday 1 August. The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=454&MId=3066).
* **CANCELLED – SWT Executive Committee – Wednesday 17 August.**
* **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 18 August,** in the JMR at 1.00pm. Deadline for public questions is 4pm on Tuesday 16 August.

Meetings will still all be live streamed so that members of the public can watch at home. To watch the live stream when the meeting commences, please visit the SWT website by [clicking here](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx). If you are not able to watch the meeting live, you can also watch it after the meeting.

Please see the dateslisted above re deadlines for submitting questions or statements. Information on speaking at public meetings is available on the SWT [website](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/your-council/speaking-at-a-council-meeting/).

1. **SWT retains Green Flag Awards**

SWT’s parks and open spaces have retained their ranking as some of the very best in the country thanks to the hard work of the Council’s teams and local volunteers.

Seven parks across the district have been recognised with the international mark of quality by the Green Flag Award Scheme this year.

Blenheim Gardens in Minehead and Taunton’s Vivary, Victoria and French Weir Parks have retained their Green Flags, along with Wellington Park which also kept its Green Flag Heritage Award,

Comeytrowe Park, Taunton, managed jointly by the Council and the Friends of Comeytrowe Park, retained its Community Green Flag Award along with Swains Lane Nature Reserve in Wellington, which is managed by the Swains Lane Community Group.

A full list of winning parks and green spaces is available on the [Green Flag Award](https://greenflagaward.org/) website.

Pleas [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-retains-green-flag-awards/) to read the full press release.

1. **Connecting our Garden Communities Consultation**

SWT is holding a public consultation on its plans for a network of walking and cycling routes which would connect key developments (the Garden Communities) across Taunton Garden Town.

The Connecting our Garden Communities consultation runs from today (29 July) for nine weeks until **30 September 2022**.

The plan and more information can be found on the [website](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/consultations/connecting-our-garden-communities/) and via our [consultation portal](https://tauntongardentown.commonplace.is/) where people can view and comment directly on an interactive map, respond to survey questions and review all of the supporting material.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/connecting-our-garden-communities-consultation/) to read the full press release.

1. **Scam Alert!**

SWT was made aware this week that scam callers have been targeting council tenants demanding bank details to pay fictitious rent arrears.

Please note, SWT will never cold call or ask for your bank details. If you receive any calls like this, telephone to report on 101 or online to [Action Fraud](https://www.facebook.com/actionfraud/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWPmOBfwzJ8hD5gk273V1BrDdIHEAlNr6J44g7U_xLomb8_rX3OZ4yOuPXsxaWC-mCz9vXV_m-i3vPq3UcZUWldqq-fe8SjqX1McUboXK8KeY6OGl7l6MsJe1gSInTkpl0ZBKc6kXsVRvGTkr-MQ_iq8jhsQKD5sEKBr2KUUkA6UK_MWnreWdDTL4tL6C9uhD4&__tn__=kK-R).

1. **Reminder - SWT consulting on new taxi fare cap proposal**

SWT is seeking the public’s views in response to new requests to increase the maximum fares charged by local taxis.

The public is now being consulted on proposals to reduce the initial £2.40 distance charge from 425 yards to 390 yards and similarly, the subsequent 20p distance charge from 145 yards to 135 yards. Note, neither the existing fare cap nor proposed changes apply to private hire vehicles.

Any members of the public wishing to object can have their say via the Council’s [Taxi Fare Increase Proposal](https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/licensing/proposaltoincreasetaxifares/) consultation webpage, which will remain open until 3 August 2022.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-consulting-on-new-taxi-fare-cap-proposal/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - Get prepared for National Tree Planting Week 2022**

SWT is once again offering Parish and Town Councils across the district **free trees** as part of its commitment to work towards carbon neutrality and climate resilience by 2030.  With Tree Planting Season now over SWT is looking ahead to September when the new Season begins.

Councils can choose from a wider variety of bare root trees from last year to the value of £100 which will be delivered on the week commencing 19 November in a pre-arranged timeslot.

The scheme opens on 01 August, and you are invited to place your request ready for National Tree Planting Week.

If you have any queries or questions, please do not hesitate to contact the team via email at freetrees@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

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

**Rescued bookcase wins reuse week honours**

A rescued bookcase upcycled into a plant stand is the winner of the first Somerset Reuse Week competition.

Last week’s awareness event was run by Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP), aiming to raise awareness of reuse as an alternative to buying new, recycling or throwing away.

It saw nearly 200 people get face-to-face advice about local reuse options and throughout the week residents were asked to share their reuse success stories.

The randomly chosen winner was Maggie from Highbridge who found an unwanted bookcase in the yard of a retirement home, destined for a rubbish skip.

After a sanding down and a lick of paint, it is now covered in plants and taking pride of place in Maggie’s back yard.

As her prize, Maggie has chosen a ‘repaired for reuse’ laptop – a prime example of reuse in action.

**Please** [click here](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/rescued-bookcase-wins-reuse-week-honours/) **to read the full press release.**

**New Somerset Council**

**Latest News**

**Consultation on council tax support scheme launched**

A consultation on council tax support for the new unitary Somerset Council was launched this week (25 July 2022).

This is the first major policy consultation for the new council, and it proposes that the lowest income households across Somerset get 100% council tax relief.

Somerset’s four district councils currently offer varying levels of council tax support.

Maximum relief is set at 80% to 85% in most parts of the county, only in South Somerset is 100% relief available.

The proposed changes would harmonise support for working-age people on low incomes across the county and come into effect on 1 April 2023, with the creation of the new Council.

The consultation runs until 19 September and proposes a simplified approach that will be easier to administer.

Under the proposals, a single person with an income below £95 per week, or a couple with two children on a weekly income below £260, would be entitled to the full 100% council tax relief. However, some families with an income below £500 a week could be eligible for some support.

The [consultation is now available](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SomersetCTRLIVE/).

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/consultation-on-council-tax-support-scheme-launched/) to read the full press release.

**Partner Engagement – Key messages from other Public Service Areas**

**Somerset County Council (SCC)**

**SCC Highway Maintenance Update**

Cooler but generally dry weather at the beginning of this week has meant that the gangs have been able to make good progress with safety and scheduled works. The lack of rain has helped us again too – the hedges and verges stop growing! The gangs from SW&T Areas will be helping our neighbouring Somerset Areas this week covering for leave/sickness and will return for any urgent works arising.

Reported defects have fallen dramatically recently which has enabled the gangs to push the planned works forward in the better weather, 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/.](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-problem-on-the-road/)or call **0300 123 2224**

This week SCC Highways have successfully completed 103 Safety Defect repairs in the SWT Area (43 in Taunton and 60 in West Somerset).

The verge maintenance gangs have completed the A and B roads and are now more than halfway through the parish program.

The surface dressing program will be completed within the next few days

**Works for week commencing 1 August 2022 are: -**

* **Completed:** drainage works at **Weacombe Lane, Bicknoller** (Carriageway open – just some minor lining works to complete)
* **Completed**: installation of 5 new cattle grid gates on **Exmoor**
* **Completed:** Drainage works at **Chilcombe Lane, Bicknoller**
* **Completed:** Drainage works at **Peacehay Lane, Sampford Arundel** (10-day temporary road closure, commenced Monday 27June)
* **Completed**: Replacing post and rail fencing **Cothelstone Hill, Bishops Lydeard**
* **Completed:** Resurfacing works at **Cher and Quirke Street, Minehead**
* **Completed:** Verge Works (concrete channel) at **Blackwater Lane, Wiveliscombe**
* **Completed:** Drainage works at **Holywell Lake, Wellington**
* **Completed:** Footway works at **Grange Drive Taunton**
* **Completed:** Works at **Chip Lane and Outer Circle Taunton**
* **Completed:** Footway resurfacing in at **Bradford on Tone Rd, Taunton**
* **Completed:** Carriageway patching at **A396 Bridgetown**

For information on highway maintenance works and to stay up to date visit [www.travelsomerset.co.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk) or follow [@TravelSomerset](https://twitter.com/search?q=%40TravelSomerset&src=recent_search_click) on Twitter.

**£8.3m Toneway Project moves into home straight**

Taunton’s Toneway Creech Castle junction improvement project is entering the final phase towards completion later this summer.

The multi-million-pound project, designed to increase capacity at the junction and improve cycling and pedestrian connections, started in August 2021 and is progressing well. As part of the essential work to complete this scheme and allow the team full access to the road there will need to be night-time closures of Toneway for about six weeks from **25 July.** Undertaking the work in the evening when the traffic levels are much lower will significantly reduce the impact of the finishing works.

The closures will be in place from **8pm until 6am weekday evenings only from 25 July to 31 August. The road will be open during the evening at weekends.**

This will be a full closure from the Hankridge roundabout to the Asda junction inbound and from the Wickes roundabout to the Hankridge roundabout outbound.

You can read more on the Toneway project here, including plans, videos and FAQs [www.travelsomerset.co.uk/Toneway/](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/Toneway/).

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/06/30/8-3m-toneway-project-moves-into-home-straight/?fbclid=IwAR0eAvKPDK5YP9Qk01gpykllXd1qpC5q0ssKUKoPeWbsyYdmkCd2-KdkB10) to read the full press release.

**Major step forward for M5 junction 26 improvements**

A £5.7million scheme to upgrade Junction 26 of the M5 along with a connecting link road has moved closer following the appointment of a contractor.

The scheme will see the ageing concrete surface of Junction 26 near Wellington and the A38 link road to Chelston completely renewed.

The original concrete surface, constructed in 1974, is showing signs of deterioration and the Council is working with contractor Balfour Beatty on the largely government-funded scheme to safely remove the old material and relay the surface.

The project is currently in the design phase, with work expected to commence in the spring of 2023.

**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/.](http://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](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2021/12/13/reporting-a-problem-on-the-road-is-now-a-hole-lot-easier/) to read the full press release.

**Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

**Are you eligible for the Boiler Upgrade Scheme?**

From 23 May 2022 a new grant scheme for homeowners upgrading from gas boilers to either an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) or a biomass boiler may be eligible for a grant of £5,000, or £6,000 if upgrading to a Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP).

The government is providing grants to encourage property owners to install low carbon heating systems such as heat pumps, through the Boiler Upgrade Scheme (BUS). These grants will help property owners overcome the upfront cost of low carbon heating technologies.

The scheme is open to domestic and small non-domestic properties in England and Wales. It is running from 2022 to 2025.

Please [click here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-if-you-may-be-eligible-for-the-boiler-upgrade-scheme-from-april-2022?msclkid=d53e6753af6a11ec8609ab845fd2b2ca) to find out more.

**Exmoor National Park Authority (ENP)**

**Farming in Protected Landscapes Fund**

To support farmers and land managers protecting the special and unique places that are our National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Defra have launched the Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.  The programme will provide funding to farmers and land managers for projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to engage with the landscape and cultural heritage and support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses.

The programme will run from 1 July 2021 and close on 31 March 2024 and applications can be for single year or across more than one year as long as all works will be completed by 31 March 2024.  This funding is open to all farmers and land managers within the Exmoor National Park and projects outside the boundary if they can be shown to bring benefit to the area.

Please [click here](https://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/living-and-working/farming-in-protected-landscapes-scheme) for more information, full application guidance and links to the application forms.

**Maritime and Coastguard Agency**

**Don’t risk your life for ‘likes’.**

HM Coastguard is urging people to stay away from cliff edges, as cliffs along our coastline are continually eroding and cliff falls can happen at any moment and without warning.

Putting your life on the line for the ‘perfect’ selfie or photo is not worth it. Please follow the tips below:

* Stay away from cliff edges
* Stick to signposted coastal paths
* Take note of local warning signs
* Make sure you’re back before dark

The dangers of standing near cliff edges should not be underestimated nor taken lightly. Cliff tops are often unstable and can crumble at any moment and take you with them when they fall.

Photographs including selfies are not worth risking your life for. It might be the best picture you ever take, but it also might be your last.

If you see anyone in trouble at the coast or you yourself are in trouble, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

**Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue (DSFRS)**

**Water safety demonstrations in Vivary Park, Taunton**

This week, DSFRS were in Vivary Park, Taunton showing people how to use a throwline to rescue someone from water.

Never jump into the water to rescue someone.

Stay on land and call 999.

If there is a throwline use it to pull the person to safety:

* Hold the end of the line in one hand and the bag in the other
* Throw the bag so that it lands beyond the casualty.
* Shout to the casualty to grab hold of the line, not the bag.
* Once they have a good grip, stabilise yourself and pull them to safety.
* Wait for assistance before trying to lift the casualty from the water

A short video demonstration on how to use a throwline can be viewed [here](https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/safety/outdoors/how-use-throwline?utm_source=Facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Orlo&utm_content=water+safety).

**Community Support – What help is out there?**

**Voluntary and Community Sector Support**

**Somerset Community Foundation (SCF)**

**New Hub brings two communities together thanks to grant from HPC Community Fund**

St Peter's Church, in Stolford, has undergone a major refurbishment after being awarded over £37,000 from the Hinkley Point C Community Fund, which is administered by Somerset Community Foundation.

Stogursey Parochial Church Council was awarded the grant in August 2020 to help improve the facilities of the building to enable it to become the Stolford & Wick Community Hub, providing a much-needed resource for two rural communities which until recently had no space where the community could come together.

The HPC Community Fund’s Open Grants Programme is for larger applications, typically over £10,000, and the Small Grants Programme awards grants of up to £5,000 - or up to £10,000 over three years - for charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises that normally operate on less than £100,000 per year.

Visit [www.hpcfunds.co.uk](http://www.hpcfunds.co.uk/) for more details.

The HPC Community Fund is part of a wider £20 million commitment of funding, provided by EDF through Section 106 agreements, for communities that are affected by the development of the new nuclear power station, to promote their social, economic and environmental wellbeing and enhance their quality of life. Hundreds of projects have benefitted, and in total almost £13.3 million in grants have been awarded to date.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/news/465/73/New-hub-brings-two-rural-communities-together-thanks-to-grant-from-HPC-Community-Fund) to read the full press release.

**EDF Energy**

**Hinkley Point C - Community Fund Drop-In Events**

Are you part of a small charity or a community group, and have an idea for a project that will benefit your local area?

Somerset Community Foundation has two drop-in sessions coming up. It's a great opportunity to meet Pete from the grants team and find out if the Hinkley Point C (HPC) Community Fund can give you money and support your idea.

There are two drop-ins coming up, and there’s no need to book in advance:

* Bridgwater: **Tuesday 2 August**, 5pm - 8pm at [Bridgwater Arts Centre](https://www.facebook.com/BridgwaterArtsCentre?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZVzb3cBTFQLPviCNNfdXe-3fnRrtRJOrgk0Z5bvdu9fecCUc633Fybqzr9jz2KYCGzbjikF4cvRJ27wQYqmUMhLyPa22vbQe02DIU8IQ0tiQGSzoxrFIDyE2pnIw5Y-g31keg277tfRrRhXmt5wmfoxJHGXvQfSYouJub27pGjFKu5P1oaSa_ZqAwwenJcxzHo&__tn__=-%5dK-R), Castle Street, TA6 3DD
* Williton: **Thursday 4 August**, 10am - 3pm at Williton Library, Killick Way, TA4 4PY

Find out more about funding opportunities at: [www.hpcfunds.co.uk](http://www.hpcfunds.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR2ZYDvG08efZKJgriq2YbrhBpRtVDi7dDBGLjHtfFphiKHbsz0bWfz4KAg)

**Hinkley Point C – Job Services Drop in Event**

Do you want to know more about the fantastic opportunities available on the project?

The Jobs Services Team will be at The Hub, Hopcott Road, Alcombe, Minehead TA24 6DJ on **Tuesday 9 and 23 August from 9.00am until 12.00pm.**

Register online:

[www.edfenergy.com/hpcjobs or just drop in.](http://www.edfenergy.com/hpcjobs%20or%20just%20drop%20in.)

**Somerset Activity Sports Partnership (SASP)**

**New 60 minutes a day challenge in celebration of United by Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games**

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will demonstrate the very best of Global Britain to the world, showcasing the region's strengths of: being connected and accessible; youth and inclusivity; and a focus on regeneration and rejuvenation.

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is perfectly positioned, sitting at the heart of the UK and standing for the diversity of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Games take place on Thursday 28 July until Monday 8 August.

In celebration of United by Birmingham 2022, SASP have created a challenge for children and families to be physically active for 60x minutes each day and earn points for a draw prize!

All players taking part will be entered into the prize draw on 9 August. Winners will be picked at random and notified by email.

Head to [www.saspchallenges.co.uk](http://www.saspchallenges.co.uk/) and sign up for free!

Please [click here](https://www.sasp.co.uk/news/2022/07/sasps-new-60-minutes-a-day-challenge-in-celebration-of-united-by-birmingham-2022) to read the full press release.

**Spark**

**Automate your business processes with Microsoft 365**

**Wednesday 3 August, Online via zoom from 10.00am – 12.00pm**

Learn how Microsoft 365 can help you banish those repetitive tasks and automate processes so that you can use your time more effectively. Delivered by Velocity.

Please [click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/automate-your-business-processes-with-microsoft-365-tickets-342983411617?aff=ebdsoporgprofile) to register and find out more information.

**Community Employment Hubs**

**Free employment support service**

The Employment Hubs are a free employment support service covering Taunton, West Somerset and Wellington. They will help support you towards work; Free IT access; updating and writing CV's; Job searching and completing application forms.

They are now meeting face to face, so please visit the [website](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/hinkley-point-c/community-employment-hubs/) to make an appointment and find out more information.

**Volunteers Needed**

Could you help and support people in your local community towards work? If the answer is yes, you will need the desire to help others, have general life experiences, as well as the enthusiasm to motivate people and raise their confidence and self-esteem.

The Employment Hubs focus on offering one to one practical support such as CV writing, searching and applying for work, how to deal with online application forms, help with interviews and signposting to other agencies for further help and support.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/hinkley-point-c/community-employment-hubs/) to find out more information.

**Citizens Advice West Somerset**

**Opportunity Boost Scheme**

As part of the Somerset Recovery Fund, the Opportunity Boost Scheme project, is still open for applications.

To qualify you must be a resident in Somerset and over 16. Not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking activities via your local Job Centre, and if you are working you should have a pre-Covid salary of less than £25,000.

The purpose of the Opportunity Boost Scheme is to assist with, accessing work training or learning and or to improve the employment opportunities of applicants

The grant can cover travel, work equipment, workwear, childcare, or learning materials. Please [click here](https://www.westsomersetadvice.org.uk/?p=1380) for more information.

**Health and Welfare**

**SCC Public Health**

**World Breastfeeding Awareness Week (1-7 August)**

SCC Public Health Team are encouraging people to nominate public places that are ‘positive about breastfeeding.’

As part of World Breastfeeding Awareness Week, 1 to 7 August, the Council is promoting its ‘Positive About Breastfeeding’ scheme. The scheme aims to strengthen the support for breastfeeding in commercial, health and community settings, creating more positive environments for breastfeeding in Somerset.

Many shops, cafés, community spaces and other public places have already signed up to the ‘Positive About Breastfeeding’ scheme to demonstrate that they are a safe supportive environment for breastfeeding mothers.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/07/25/nominate-a-positive-public-place-to-breastfeed/) to read the full press release.

**New COVID-19 Dashboard**

As a result of recent changes to policy, the number of detected cases alone no longer provides an accurate or consistent indication of the prevalence of COVID-19 in our community.

As a result of this, detailed cases data such as the map and district level figures have been removed from the SCC and NHS in Somerset Dashboard. Cases are still shown on the chart; however, it now includes additional information (ONS Prevalence\*) that may give a better indication of the actual number of people with COVID. Testing data has also been added to provide further context.

The hospital admissions data also now includes mechanical ventilation bed patients who are positive as a better indicator of serious illness being treated. The OPEL level on this page provides a snapshot of how the health and care system overall is managing.

Everyone in Somerset is being asked to get up to date with the [COVID-19 vaccinations they are eligible for](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI2NjM2IiwidHRzeGVycTFtamtrY29nMGtvOGcwZ2trODRvZ2t3YzAiLCIxNTM5IiwiM2ZkNTZjNjJjZDRiIixmYWxzZV0). These remain the best form of defence against the COVID-19 and influenza viruses. It’s not too late to catch up if you or someone you know has missed boosters or even first doses for the COVID-19 vaccine.

**Vaccinations**

COVID-19 rates are rising across Somerset. If you are not up to date with your jabs you can still get one this summer to protect you for autumn and winter. There are several clinics open in July for walk-ins and appointments offering the Spring Booster and all other jabs.

[Bookings](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/?fbclid=IwAR02RTM42KjAhziRYQFTersQ3hMqRALX_WfdfmAg7zMCSz7k1lLQulDVSw8) can be made at a wide number of clinics across Somerset.

[Walk-in appointments](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site?fbclid=IwAR1680EqtAbeFjLUOgcsmTkETb8rHRoOQKURkaMT86viae01v_U2grjfjEA) are additionally being offered at Tower Vaccination Centre in Taunton on specific days.

[The vaccination page](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-vaccinations/) 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](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/covid-19-dashboard/).

**Living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19**

The [Government has published important advice](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io/?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI2NjM2IiwidHRzeGVycTFtamtrY29nMGtvOGcwZ2trODRvZ2t3YzAiLCIxNDE5IiwiMTA5MGQ5NzhlMTg5IixmYWxzZV0) 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](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI1MjEiLCIxbWRhbWxvZnRhbjRnb2d3ODRrZ2s0azhzOHdzd3c0YyIsIjE0MTciLCI3MDMyNWYxYzNmODEiLGZhbHNlXQ)
* 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](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19#what-to-do-if-you-have-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19-and-have-not-taken-a-covid-19-test) to read the guidance on what to do if you have symptoms but have not taken a test.

**Need to seek help?**

If you, or someone you know are feeling like things are too much, please know that you / they don’t have to be alone. Here are some numbers of organisations that can help:

* Samaritans - 116 123
* CALM - 0800 58 58 58
* ChildLine - 0800 1111
* Anxiety UK - 03444 775 774
* Mind - 0300 123 3393
* Somerset Domestic Abuse helpline - 0800 69 49 999

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**Trading Standards**

**Large amount of illicit tobacco seized**

Trading Standards seized illegal tobacco estimated to be worth more than £200,000 in raids in Devon and Somerset on Friday.

The raids were conducted by officers from the Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service and supported by Avon & Somerset Police, Devon & Cornwall Police, and HM Revenue and Customs.

The seizure is one of the largest of its kind by the service.

Using specialist detection dogs officers executed five warrants. They raided two stores, a residential address and a storage container in Taunton, two business addresses in each of Exeter and Yeovil and a business and residential premise in Tiverton. Two commercial vehicles were also searched. A coordinated raid took place on a linked business premises in Northampton by Northamptonshire Trading Standards.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2022/07/26/trading-standards-seizes-large-amounts-of-illicit-tobacco/) to read the full press release.

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**Annual Report of the ASP and Crime Panel**

Stop and search, the management of protests, and the appointment of a new Chief Constable are among the challenges and achievements covered in the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel’s Annual Report for 2021/22.

The report highlights the ongoing spotlight on policing in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and notes the four key aims of the Police and Crime Plan for 2021-25.

It is crucial the public continues to have confidence in the police service and the scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner, carried out by the panel, remains of utmost importance.

You can read the report and find out more about the panel’s work at [http://www.avonandsomersetpoliceandcrimepanel.org.uk/](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.avonandsomersetpoliceandcrimepanel.org.uk%2F&data=05%7C01%7CPElliott%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cd8fe931de5844ce6f2ae08da6edc8f10%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637944190807807550%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=0gs2h4R8ArSKCQDAV9GCK4Bjot0FGyuTiYZEOAbnKwk%3D&reserved=0).

**Phone users urged to beware of fake WhatsApp message scam**

ASP are asking people to be wary and report an increasingly common scam where fraudsters use WhatsApp to dupe victims into transferring money by pretending to be their child.

Typically, the fraudster will send a message from a mobile phone number that the victim doesn’t recognise and begin a conversation by saying something non-specific, such as ‘Hi Mum’ or ‘Hi Dad’. They then go on to claim they have lost their phone or it has been damaged and are now using a different number.

The victim, concerned for their child’s welfare, often responds by asking if the person at the other end is really their son or daughter and inadvertently tells the fraudster what their child’s name is, who in turn texts back to confirm that it is them.

The fraudster will then claim there is a time-critical emergency and that they need funds – such as they have a problem with their bank account and urgently need to pay a bill – so they ask the victim to transfer money to a different account to the one they would normally use.

In the first two months of this year more than 75 people in Avon and Somerset reported financial losses totalling more than £80,000 through this scam to Action Fraud, but it is likely that the true cost is much higher.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2022/03/phone-users-urged-to-be-aware-of-fake-whatsapp-message-scam/) to read the full press release.

**Community Speed Watch**

Community SpeedWatch is a partnership between the Community, the Police and Local Authorities. It gives local people the ability to actively get involved in road safety.

The aim of Community SpeedWatch is to make motorists who speed through residential neighbourhoods aware of the impact their actions have on residents, or the danger they pose to other road users and pedestrians. This is something ASP are working with communities to address.

Watch the [video](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/apply/community-speedwatch/) to find out more about Community SpeedWatch:

A Community SpeedWatch can be set up in any village, small town, or urban area,

governed by either a 20, 30 or 40 miles per hour speed limit.

A team of residents who are willing to volunteer a small amount of time each week are trained and issued with speed detection equipment to monitor speeds.

To find out if there is a Community SpeedWatch Scheme in your area, or request to set one up, email CommunitySpeedWatch@avonandsomerset.police.uk.

**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](https://www.facebook.com/aspmineheadwestsomerset)
* [Wellington Neighbourhood Policing](https://www.facebook.com/aspwellington)
* [Taunton Neighbourhood Policing](https://www.facebook.com/ASPTaunton)
* [Sedgemoor and Hinkley Point Neighbourhood Policing](https://www.facebook.com/aspsedgemoor)
* [Rural Affairs Unit – Avon and Somerset Police.](https://www.facebook.com/aspruralaffairsunit)

**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.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public)

For quick up to date information regarding SWT services please follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/SWTCouncil/ or Twitter @swtcouncil.

If you have concerns about your own health and coronavirus please visit the [NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/) website.