

**Newsletter to SWT Councillors and Parish Councils**

**Issue 141 Weeks ending 19/02/2023**

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

**Key Messages this week**

1. **Democracy and Governance**

**Committee Meetings**

You can search by Committee or by the monthly calendar for details of all SWT [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.

* **SCC Annual Budget Meeting – Wednesday 22 February 2023,** at the Canalside Conference Centre, Marsh Lane, Nr Bridgwater TA6 6LQ. The updated agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=1629).
* **SWT Community Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 22 February 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=453&MId=3062). Deadline for public questions or statements is 4pm on Monday 20 February.
* **SWT Planning Committee – Thursday 23 February 2023,** at 1.00pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=3174&x=1). Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Tuesday 21 February.
* **SWT Standards Committee – Thursday 23 February 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. The agenda and report packs can be viewed on the [website](https://democracy.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=456&MId=3176). Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Tuesday 21 February.
* **Taunton Shadow Town Council – Tuesday 28 February 2023,** at 6.00pm in the JMR. Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Friday 24 February.
* **SWT Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 1 March 2023,** at 6.15pm in the JMR. Deadline for public statements or questions is 4pm on Monday 27 February.
* **Taunton Parish/Town Council Information Event – Thursday 6 March,** at 6.00pm in the JMR. More details are in Item 3 below.

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](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. **Becoming a Councillor Event – Taunton Parish Council**

Local people are being encouraged to find out more about becoming a councillor for the new Taunton Parish/Town Council at an information event. The new council will be formed on 1st April. Elections to the new Council will be held on 4 May 2023, with 20 councillors representing 14 wards. In preparation for this SWT is hosting an event open to anyone interested in becoming a councillor, regardless of experience.

The event will focus on the practicalities of being a councillor and give an opportunity for members of the public to discover exactly what that entails.

Newly appointed Town Clerk Donna Ford will be at the event which will also be attended by key council officers including staff from the governance team. Attendees will also have the opportunity to ask any questions they have about what the role of a councillor involves and how to stand for election.

1. **SWT unveils spectacular Dragon Sculpture**

SWT unleashed 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](https://en-gb.facebook.com/matthewcrabbsculpturestudio/), was unveiled by the Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Sue Lees, and the Chair of SWT, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey.

Please [click here](https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=564224289079860&set=pcb.564225452413077) to view the photographs of the unveiling ceremony.

1. **Reminder - Eat fresh in 2023 with Somerset West Lottery**

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

Anyone buying one or more tickets between now and Saturday, 25 February, could win 12 monthly deliveries of fresh ingredients to plan and cook up to 20 delicious meals from scratch from food recipe box provider, [HelloFresh](https://www.hellofresh.co.uk/), courtesy of external lottery management company [Gatherwell](https://gatherwell.co.uk/" \o "Gatherwell).

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

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/eat-fresh-in-2023-with-somerset-west-lottery/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - Climate Change Newsletter Issue 10**

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](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/climate-change-newsletter/) to subscribe to Climate News.

1. **Reminder - Register to vote in Taunton Town Council elections**

Voters in the Taunton area are being reminded to make sure they are registered to vote so they can take part in electing the new Taunton Town Council on 4 May.

It’s quick and easy to register to vote, but after the deadline of 17 April, it will be too late for the 4 May election.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/register-to-vote-in-taunton-town-council-elections/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - Check your Voter ID for Taunton Town Council elections**

Elections for the new Taunton Town Council take place in May – and, for the first time, residents in Taunton will need to show accepted photographic ID to vote in person at a polling station.

Taunton Town Council will come into being on 1 April 2023. This is an historic moment for the town and Somerset as a whole.

The election coincides with the national introduction of Voter ID. This means people will need to show photo ID before they can be given their ballot paper if voting at a polling station.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/check-your-voter-id-for-taunton-town-council-elections/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - SWT homes to benefit from Neighbourhood Energy Efficiency Project**

Hundreds of homes could benefit from a new Neighbourhood Energy Efficiency Project to help make them warmer and cheaper to heat.

The new project, which is designed to improve neighbourhoods with a large proportion of Council-owned homes, launched on Thursday, 9 February, and is being delivered by Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) Council over the next four years in partnership with [E.ON](https://www.eonenergy.com/) and its installer, [JJ Crump](https://www.jjcrump.com/).

Eligible households within the first project area will receive letters from 9 February, explaining how to get involved.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/swt-homes-to-benefit-from-neighbourhood-energy-efficiency-project/) to read the full press release.

1. **Reminder - Planning a street party for the King’s Coronation?**

Neighbours and community groups looking to hold street parties in May to celebrate the King’s Coronation should check whether they may need a temporary road closure.

The Council requires six weeks to process road closure applications for street parties on no-through roads, and twelve weeks for closures for special events.

This means that time is running out for planned celebrations in early May.

There is no charge to apply, and full details can be found at  [Holding a street party (somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/licensing/street-licensing/holding-a-street-party/).

For information on the Coronation please visit [www.royal.uk](https://www.royal.uk/).

1. **Reminder - Changes proposed for selected tennis courts in Taunton**

SWT is asking the public to have their say on refurbishment and future maintenance proposals for its tennis courts at [Vivary Park](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/large-parks-in-taunton/vivary-park/) and [Taunton Green, Cheddon Road](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/parks-and-open-spaces/neighbourhood-parks/taunton-green/), in Taunton.

The survey, along with further information about the proposals, will be available until **Monday, 27 February,** and can be completed by visiting the Council’s [consultation portal](https://yoursay.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/climate-emergency/tennis-courts/). Alternatively, paper copies are available at [Deane House](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/contact-us/council-offices/deane-house/) and [Taunton Visitor Centre](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/contact-us/council-offices/taunton-visitor-centre/).

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/changes-proposed-for-selected-tennis-courts-in-taunton/) to read the full press release.

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

**New recycling regulations coming into force: pilot programme launched to help Somerset businesses comply**

New recycling regulations for businesses are coming soon and Somerset is one of five areas nationally to pilot a business support programme, designed to prepare its businesses for the change.

The new regulations will require all businesses, healthcare establishments and academic institutions to separate glass bottles and jars, metal food and drink cans, plastic bottles, pots, tubs and trays, paper, cardboard and food waste from their general waste.

Somerset County Council are working with WRAP, a global sustainability charity, to deliver the pilot, which will take place for 10 weeks between **13 February and 21 April 2023**. The pilot will promote the launch of a new [Business of Recycling website](https://businessofrecycling.wrap.org.uk/) which will provide a waste calculator tool to help businesses monitor how much waste they generate and how recycling can help them save money, step-by-step guidance to ensure they are compliant with the regulations and free downloadable communication resources to promote recycling in the workplace.

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/09/new-recycling-regulations-coming-into-force-pilot-programme-launched-to-help-somerset-businesses-comply/) 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.](https://www.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.

For information on the repair cafés and Fixy reuse van, see: [somersetwaste.gov.uk/share-and-repair](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fsomersetwaste.gov.uk%2Fshare-and-repair%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2dCaq9h4OkMHVGCgw7xajk6aZHquyajj8mO5oF1wdxDVi_YOGL6Co5Z8w&h=AT1xKgFoQdEG0X026XnzWUhz5vk1OODvGWet1-kq0L-NOn6ZvmA2DMMkKZ7wdPjIgCBt9KTj9iIIFdyjR-Wn0rlzO-38TzwbauWTaI42fsO0yBEEpiYCXI7KbFttayWJFw&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT3zScXuyg6TPHK5hxzYzBRVNwGVK3mOTBgmErhTS0eQpnH68zXrEbuVMH4QAM9vru1uBkeHG3eC_7vB1cMEm-Rsvmy5kRzxFQ9mYCHzYVTHMwF1bJZA9rDQ4gK6Hk7oswYVCI2uYZHv4BWAkz24QJ5APkTsBBGy_lXBy4fi6GjstxeQJx1ksFwz-RTUGKAYlRUoDoOS_M8HNg).

**New Somerset Council**

**Latest news**

**Spring business resilience workshops coming soon**

It is challenging times at present for small and medium Somerset businesses. In response, the five Somerset councils (Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset County Council, Somerset West and Taunton and South Somerset) have devised a programme of support to help businesses develop the skills they need to thrive, whatever the economic environment.

The spring business resilience webinars on offer will feature advice, guidance and top tips on key areas of finance, marketing and HR, plus ten businesses will have the opportunity for one-to-one sessions after each webinar with top specialist advisors.

The two-hour business resilience webinars will focus on the following themes:

**Financial Resilience -** Providing support and tools to help businesses identify their weak spots, skills to protect the bottom line and ideas to help businesses become more attractive to funders.

**Finding, recruiting and retaining top talent -** Supporting businesses by providing practical tools and advice to support SMEs in attracting the right people to improve business resilience

**How to use marketing in an economic downturn -** Helping businesses to understand and define their offer, why branding is important and how to use it, find the right audience and develop a plan of action

**One-to-One support sessions -** 1-2-1s will be offered to 10 businesses after each webinar and consist of a two-hour session with a specialist advisor. This will include an action plan to take away to build resilience in your business.

This pilot programme is funded by a proportion of the Business Rates Retention Pilot Programme and is run by the five district councils. It is designed to be a precursor to a longer programme of business resilience support, which will run throughout the year.

For further information and to book a place, please contact: [businesssupport@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:businesssupport@somerset.gov.uk)

**Have your say on new Somerset Council planning consultation process**

Somerset residents are being invited to have their say on the new Somerset Council’s approach to planning matters.

**The consultation will run until Thursday 16 March 2023**.

To view the current draft of the new Statement of Community Involvement and complete the survey, please visit [somerset.inconsult.uk/sci/consultationHome](https://somerset.inconsult.uk/sci/consultationHome).

Please [click here](https://somersetnewsroom.com/2023/02/02/have-your-say-on-how-new-somerset-council-will-consult-on-planning-and-development/) to read the full press release.

**City, Town and Parish Council Working Group – You are welcome to attend!**

Did you know that the LCN Team hold fortnightly catchups exclusively for Clerks and Chairs from across Somerset?

Simply drop an email to [LCN@somerset.gov.uk](mailto: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)**

**SCC Highways maintenance update**

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/.](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.somerset.gov.uk%2Froads-and-transport%2Freport-a-problem-on-the-road%2F&data=05%7C01%7CKBridgwater%40somerset.gov.uk%7Cd61da1cdb9a44cb9588d08da7c419bec%7Cb524f606f77a4aa28da2fe70343b0cce%7C0%7C0%7C637958918474690610%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=ZwOZVJjRrldn9GajUWJR5Po7rSJKXpEnNDks1voefYw%3D&reserved=0)or call **0300 123 2224.**

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.

**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.

**Community Employment Hubs**

**West Somerset, Taunton and Wellington Jobs Fair**

The next Jobs Fair is happening on **Thursday 23 February at Somerset County Cricket Club**, **Taunton.**

There will be lots of local companies and organisations offering part-time and full-time jobs, apprenticeships plus training, and volunteering opportunities.

Need help getting your CV ready for those all-important interviews? Come along and speak to the experts to help you get a foot on the career ladder.

**Somerset Business Mentoring Programme**

SCC is launching an ambitious business mentoring programme. In recognition of the contribution mentoring makes to the success of micro, small and medium size business growth in the UK, twenty experienced active and retired business people will be recruited as mentors - and SCC need your help.

The team are seeking mentors to work with local businesses, social enterprises and/or charities in Somerset. SCC are looking to fill the roles with active or retired executive and senior management level business leaders, or successful entrepreneurs, who can understand the challenges associated with running and growing a business and the value of impartial advice, offer sector experience or a specialism such as finance, marketing, HR or e-commerce. And above all, be willing to give up their time for free to make a difference.

They will attend a two-day training workshop in preparation of delivering the programme (early 2023) and meet regularly with their mentee. They will spend at least twelve hours with each mentee over a three-month period (commencing April 2023).

The application process for mentors is open now and closes at the end of February 2023. For further information click here- [www.somerset.gov.uk/business-mentoring](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-mentoring).

**Exmoor National Park Authority (ENPA)**

**Reminder - Missing finger from Exmoor Landmark Sign Sought**

The finger from one of Exmoor’s iconic historic signposts is missing and the National Park Authority are appealing for its return.

Many visitors admire Exmoor’s iconic cast-iron signposts, and they are now a source of local pride, but a few years ago many were dilapidated and broken until a project led by the National Park Authority and Somerset County Council with an army of volunteers from local parishes enabled the restoration of 140 signposts.

Please [click here](https://myemail.constantcontact.com/The-Search-for-Exmoor-Landmark-Signpost-Missing-Finger.html?soid=1102765974837&aid=XPkTmhGX0Gs) to read the full press release.

**National Trust**

**Beavers on the Holnicote Estate, West Somerset**

Get to know the beavers on the Holnicote estate, Exmoor, like never before in this [brand-new immersive virtual tour](https://storage.viewit360.co.uk/national-trust/holnicote-beavers/?campid=Social_Central_LON_Facebook_BeaverAR-020223), launched on February 2 to celebrate World Wetlands Day.

Everything you ever wanted to know about beavers in their natural habitat is explored through 360° video, allowing you to navigate this waterscape and experience what life is like for beavers and other wildlife that call this place home.

A 'question and answer’ session with beaver expert, Ben Eardley, provides a fascinating insight into why beavers were reintroduced here three years ago. Ben explains how beavers became extinct in the first place and why their reintroduction has been a success so far, including the birth of three beaver kits – Rashford, Russo and Toone.

**Quantock Hills (AONB)**

**Swaling underway**

Over the next month and a half, you may see some flames or smoke on the Quantock Hills as part of the AONB controlled burns (Swaling).

This is a management technique of keeping the heathland at different stages of growth to provide a variety of habitats available for different bird species and allowing some of the heath plants to grow. It also ensures there are fire breaks at various points in case of summer fires.

If you are concerned please do ring the Fire Service, and if it is the AONB carrying out swaling in an area they will know about it, and if it isn't they will respond accordingly.

Please [click here](https://www.quantockhills.com/swaling-more-info?fbclid=IwAR3_d5q6ff89FMk4F3_0dVCDtVfHQgMXdDTc3cOf5nM9T2xGf406WEk_45k) to read more information on the website.

**Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme**

**Crowcombe Court Community Excavation 2022**

For a few weeks last summer, with an amazing band of volunteers, [Context One Heritage & Archaeology](https://www.facebook.com/contextone) went in search of a lost medieval manor that had been forgotten for three centuries.

At the foothill of the Quantocks, with the magnificent Crowcombe Court as the backdrop, this community excavation for [Quantock Landscape Partnership Schem](https://www.facebook.com/quantock.lps/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZV5sOn8wQqpVXN8kcpNFD5wKoEouAxLfXpjtcn0sJqEDJL3ENGQ1PHKOxvwsFJcV62Ehia1El2YNB84q49vf7__frx6mr8C8_mq7twwYYwyajMXIC7R3GEECmowQog1sn7-D8PmstsSGUwb6Ud82rvN_P0rHlJXy1tDxQ1oz7yYH6U5zImXocMZOjddZ-BRqkJQPbyFeybSjQi-yUG--qsI&__tn__=kK-y-R)e proved to be a most memorable experience.

But did the team find what they were looking for?

They will tell you everything at 2pm on Saturday, February 25 at Crowcombe Village Hall as they present the results of the excavation for the first time.

**Maritime and Coastguard Agency**

**HM Coastguard Watchet**

Recruitment to the local coastguard team will be opening very soon. If you or anyone you know is looking to do something amazing with your spare time – why not join the UK’s oldest 999 emergency service.

Please [click here](https://www.facebook.com/HMCoastguardMinehead) for further information.

**Be prepared at the coast this half term**

This half term holiday the coastguard is reminding everyone to stay safe if heading to the coast and be prepared:

* Make sure you check the weather and tides before heading out, wear appropriate footwear and clothing for your activity, know the sea conditions and stick to coastal paths.
* Carry a mobile phone so that you have a way of making contact in an emergency and make sure you tell someone where you are going and when you will be back.
* Cliffs can be more unstable than they look, and cliff falls or landslides can happen without warning. Take note and adhere to local warning signs. Don’t ever be tempted to stand near the edge to take a “selfie” as it may be the last photo you ever take.
* If you take your dog out with you keep it on a lead at the coast especially near cliff edges. If they get stuck on a ledge, in mud or swept out to sea, don’t go after them. Most dogs make it back safely, but you might not…

Please don’t take risks and if you see anybody in trouble call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

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

**Voluntary and Community Sector Suppor****t**

**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](https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/sep/07/community-groups-will-close-without-energy-bill-help-liz-truss-warned) 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](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/energy-bill-relief-scheme-help-for-businesses-and-other-non-domestic-customers), this isn’t enough to keep some community buildings warm.

Please [click here](https://www.cse.org.uk/news/view/2717) to read the full press release.

**North Taunton Partnership**

**Priorswood Community Centre – Treasurer and Trustees Required**

The North Taunton Partnership are seeking individuals to join its board of trustees. They would like to hear from anyone with a willingness to give a little of their time, experience and commitment.

The North Taunton Partnership is a registered charity which has overall responsibility for the legal structure and safe running of the Priorswood Community Centre. It employs 4 part-time members of staff with support from 38 volunteers who undertake various toles within the Community Centre.

If you would like to find out more information please contact Lesley Councill, Manager on 01823 353643 or email [lesleycouncill@priorswoodcommunitycentre.co.uk](mailto:lesleycouncill@priorswoodcommunitycentre.co.uk).

**Lendology**

**Council-funded loans help homeowners towards net zero**

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

Many homes in the UK struggle to retain heat because of their age and poor energy efficiency, as well as how they are heated. Whether looking to invest in renewable technologies such as solar or heat pumps, or to install energy-saving measures, homeowners may be eligible for an energy efficiency loan to help fund the upfront cost.

Working in partnership with Social Enterprise lender, [Lendology](https://www.lendology.org.uk/), SWT provides accessible finance in the form of low interest loans to homeowners wishing to increase their energy efficiency.

Please [click here](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/news/council-funded-loans-help-homeowners-towards-net-zero/) to read the full press release.

**Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP)**

**Chance to Shine Street Cricket 2023**

[Chance to Shine](https://www.facebook.com/chancetoshinecricket?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZV9nseQ_wEA-HTDGGSbTD0B-AvDRkGwNoyz8LJmOURCo8W3nhzgMnWi0GTBl6rcKVq2UfpXzFzOcC7Ko27YbP-IcWpDgcWGO8j2U6NF_AvTPfnHdMHsoYCwYTSBBIxBccZze8i_Que_qFmj7T8Oo5M4KEZqU7zGg0GtMCD8rdFi4xLvvXck1KK1ErSH7lqwjIo&__tn__=-%5dK-R) Street Cricket aims to make cricket accessible to young people who may not want or have the finance for cricket club membership or buying lots of equipment.

Street cricket offers a different way into the sport, with nearly all of the players not having played or having belonged to traditional cricket club when they join. The Somerset Cricket Foundation welcome beginners and this is a great opportunity for children who do not belong to a cricket clubs to attend and find a new passion!

**Wellsprings Leisure Centre**

**Starts on Tuesday 21 February from 5:00pm – 6:00pm.**

Sessions are completely free and will run every Tuesday (term time only); players do not need to bring any equipment and can wear whatever they like.

Street Cricket is simply an opportunity to get involved with cricket and straight into a fun and enjoyable match. Street cricket is game based, so the focus is on playing!

Please [click here](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=CcMcZt-Tx0WnW7L2ExnpdRq0Bx3S50VMhqC9Mfe9s-tUNEhFOVNXVFVCQlBPVlJVODJJMkc3ODFKMiQlQCNjPTEu&fbclid=IwAR1xyttaGA3MvTs5Sp4BD9RbWDyG9jSwiuDfo72qfovs1ZK0E4f40a4rBrA) to register a place.

**Community Council for Somerset (CCS)**

**Talking Cafes Live – every Wednesday at 1pm**

COMING UP on February's [Talking Cafe](https://www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset/?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWpTKl2tDqCBN6L3RR_Mug3Si9VozuVeCMzysveu4n5Co074R7EZQ24sdviMUgFUY9Jiv1-X6JNdfGyvLDhfAyYR-GLg6b-VKD-99-VN75xih-TVLawVWoqPke-pRsoNnEaaJ4Tt3VdZXnzKJlBoUvBjXcw5yx4MNmMH3vPGq961GKsOW6EHSDz6l4k85ilzEc&__tn__=kK-R) Live Streaming Sessions, available on:

[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5goIPHD91Ie4VDI5NMJdrQ/videos), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/RuralSomerset?fbclid=IwAR0uBg3jt6fs3q_tWCv-L-hMomh8awMZVa_-4g_OQjFmi-bmgOCnGBO-Mo4).

* **22 February** - [Walkers and Talkers](https://www.facebook.com/walkersandtalkersQandA?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWgiR5eZSwGHfnkZdYlpoZAu5YSJcWPAYP2P0WmPCTiJC33_to-0MHxA3UZF2KicCX_cg7BZ5es8kliCJYtSLp_QfFJJh5SJ3JsIPH_p3S9HJHUeW-h6tNSXKpTnjrylLp602zObnSmIMEQBfKFPwcMjlZmYacqFD8Q553GTE0HK69qF1sLpmDEFFZGsIb5dOs&__tn__=-%5dK-R) at Somerset County Cricket ground with [Somerset Cricket Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/SomCricketFDN?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWgiR5eZSwGHfnkZdYlpoZAu5YSJcWPAYP2P0WmPCTiJC33_to-0MHxA3UZF2KicCX_cg7BZ5es8kliCJYtSLp_QfFJJh5SJ3JsIPH_p3S9HJHUeW-h6tNSXKpTnjrylLp602zObnSmIMEQBfKFPwcMjlZmYacqFD8Q553GTE0HK69qF1sLpmDEFFZGsIb5dOs&__tn__=-%5dK-R)

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@somersetrcc.org.uk](mailto:debis@somersetrcc.org.uk) or message the Talking Cafe page.

**Spark**

**Somerset Volunteer Coordinator Forum**

**Monday 27 February 2023, 1:00pm – 4.00pm**

**The Canalside Conference Centre, Marsh Lane, Bridgwater**

Spark recognise that Volunteer Coordinators are often the sole person within their organisation with responsibility for volunteers and this is an opportunity to meet people with a similar role and share peer support.

This monthly face to face meeting will give volunteer coordinators a chance to network, share best practice and gain help and support.

Tickets to this event are freely available to anybody who manages or coordinates volunteers in Somerset, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity.

Please [click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/somerset-volunteer-coordinator-forum-tickets-522412187917) to find out more and register for a place.

**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](https://ccslovesomerset.org/app/uploads/2022/10/Warm-Spaces-Funding-Directory-1.pdf) to view the new Warm Spaces funding list.

**Health and Welfare**

**NHS Somerset**

**What matters most to you? Help shape the health and care strategy and plans for Somerset**

In Somerset the way we deliver health and care is changing. Public services are coming together, to plan and buy health and care services.

SCC and the NHS in your area, want you to have access to the best possible health and care now and into the future, but they need your help to make this happen. Your feedback will be used to help shape the new Integrated Care Strategy and Five Year Forward Plan.

Please [click here](https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/what-matters-most-to-you/?fbclid=IwAR3kzOgo70jeFYngZX79oGbHjNGHGtI0E9KvggUIAA82dgShnF9VGDNxSIQ) to find out more and take the survey. The survey closes on **Sunday 5 March 2023.**

**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**

The Autumn Booster and general Booster programme ended on Sunday 12 February. A Spring Booster will be announced with more details in due course.

**Influenza**

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](https://newsletters.onyx-sites.io?mailpoet_router&endpoint=track&action=click&data=WyI1MjEiLCIxbWRhbWxvZnRhbjRnb2d3ODRrZ2s0azhzOHdzd3c0YyIsIjE2MDciLCJhZTM5MDUxYTRjYzUiLGZhbHNlXQ), 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-who-should-have-it-this-winter-and-why) for more information about the Flu vaccination.

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

**Crime / Safeguarding**

**Avon and Somerset Police (ASP)**

**New campaign launched to recruit volunteer police officers**

ASP are launching a new recruitment campaign, asking people to join them and begin a second career as a volunteer police officer.

Volunteer police officers – or Special Constables, as they are known, provide an important link between their community and the police. ASP recognise the benefit that different life experiences and perspectives can bring to policing and are particularly interested in receiving applications from people from an ethnic minority background, and women.

Please [click here](https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/news/2023/02/new-campaign-to-recruit-volunteer-police-officers/) to read the full press release.

**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.