

SOMERSET COUNCIL
Norton St Philip Parish Council
Cllr Dawn Denton
August 2024

Somerset Press Releases: You can view all the Somerset County Council press releases for the last month using this link: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/newsroom/>

Farleigh Hungerford Mill Stream Bridge: There are structural concerns about the bridge, and I am chasing the Bridge Team at Somerset Council to get an update.

Bath Rugby: The Somerset Council Environmental Officer will be in attendance to monitor the noise levels of the weddings this month. I know Bath Rugby is also having their regular meeting with the residents of Farleigh Hungerford.

A36 overhanging tree: A resident reported a dangerous overhanging tree on the A36 which is on private property. There has been no action by the council, and I am hoping to get this tree branch removed before something serious happens.

Parking on the footway on the B3110 Townend / High Street: Somerset Highways is concerned about the deterioration of this footpath. I am waiting for an update before it becomes an expensive job to repair. And as the council doesn't have the money for this work, it will deteriorate even further until it becomes dangerous. I will chase this month.

Longmead development: There has been some progress with conversations between Somerset Council, Malcolm Lippiatt and the lawyers. Malcolm is keeping me updated and I am keeping the residents updated. Movement is slow, but it is at least movement.

Litter picking on Balls Lane: I asked the council to action. If it wasn't done, or more needs to be done, please let me know.

Rights of Way: I have asked the Rights of Way Officer for an update on the following routes, identified as 'red', needing attention: F11/7, F11/8, F11/12, F11/23, F11/33, F11/34 and F11/39. I will update as soon as I have a response.

Asset disposals: A report recommending the disposal of several Somerset Council assets to generate funds and help bridge an £80m funding gap in the current financial year and a £100m budget gap for 2025/2026 will be considered by the Councils Executive on 7 August. The report outlines proposals to dispose of a number of non-operational buildings and small parcels of land which hold development potential and also several high-profile assets including the Market House in Taunton, The Cornhill in Bridgwater, Land at Evercreech, Yeovil Small Business Centre, C Block - County Hall, Saxonvale in Frome, Boden Mill Chard and St Mary's St Car Park in Taunton. The proposed sites have a combined estimated capital receipt range of £17m to £21m. However, information relating to individual asset disposals will remain commercially confidential.

Reduction in Council Tax support: Somerset residents are being encouraged to have their say on possible changes to a scheme which offers financial support to working age adults on low incomes. In November 2023, Somerset Council declared a financial emergency and agreed to several actions to reduce spending. This included a commitment to consult with the public on potential changes to the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme. Council Tax Reduction is a discount offered for Council Taxpayers on low incomes. The proposed changes would only apply to working age adults – the support provided for pensioners would not be affected. It was initially proposed to consult on changes that could potentially save Somerset Council £6.4m a year. The options for consideration include reducing the maximum available discount from 100% to 75%. More information can be found at <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/ctr/> The consultation runs until 1 October, with any changes coming into effect from 1 April 2025.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection - Serious Youth Violence: Between 20th and 24th May 2024, the Care Quality Commission, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Ofsted and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation jointly inspected the Somerset area's multi-agency response to children over 10, who are at risk of, or affected by, serious youth violence in the county. The inspection found that partnership working between organisations is not effective in identifying, understanding or responding to the extent of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation of children in Somerset. The oversight of partnership working, led by the Safer Somerset Partnership and the Somerset Safeguarding Children's Partnership lacks rigour, drive and challenge. Serious weaknesses in practice across organisations has meant that risks are not identified at the earliest opportunity. These issues were accepted by both partnerships during the inspection process and work began immediately to plan a more impactful approach. Improvement plans will be submitted to Ofsted by Safeguarding Children's Partnership, by 25th October 2024.

E Scooter trials halted: E-scooter services in three Somerset towns have been suspended with immediate effect by the operator. Mobility e-scooter trials in Taunton, Minehead and Yeovil, which have run since 2020, have been halted by the operator due to an unexpected supplier issue. The trials were due to continue until the end of May 2026 but whilst the service is suspended the scooters are being removed from town centres and users have been messaged. The initiative is a collaboration between DfT, Somerset Council and Zipp Mobility in Taunton and Minehead, with operator Zwings running the trial in Yeovil. (Zwings has now been amalgamated with Zipp Mobility).

Government funded childcare for September: The Department for Education (DfE) is reminding eligible working parents in England making childcare arrangements for September 2024 that they need to apply by 31 August for the 15 hours childcare for their child aged 9 months old and 30 hours childcare for their 3 or 4 year old. Parents should visit <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working> to get their code and then share it with their childcare provider.

Go Green grants: Launched last October, the 'Go Green Scheme' was introduced by Somerset Council to offer businesses expert advice to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. The scheme has been funded from the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Local Growth Fund. The scheme is one of the gateways to apply to the Green Grant Scheme which is open to applications until 9 August. This scheme can fund up to 50% towards the capital costs of projects. Applicants must have an independently verified sustainability plan to apply for Green Grant.

funding. Further information on the Go Green Scheme and Green Grant Schemes are available at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/net-zero-for-business/>

Please get in touch for questions, concerns or referrals:
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