

SOMERSET COUNCIL
Norton St Philip Parish Council
Cllr Dawn Denton
March 2025

****SOMERSET PRESS RELEASES:** You can view all the Somerset County Council press releases for the last month using this link: [Newsroom](#)

****OPEN CONSULTATIONS:** [Citizen's Space](#)

****BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW FOR SOMERSET:** The deadline for stage 1 of phase 2 of the consultation was extended by the Boundary Commission (at the request of Somerset Council) to 4 March 2025. This followed a rejection of the recommendations of the cross-party Electoral Review Working Group at the Constitution and Governance Committee Meeting in January.

In the absence of a submission from Somerset Council by the original deadline of 20th January the Conservative Group at Somerset Council submitted the report prepared on behalf of the working group before the deadline on 20th January. The submission included details of some areas that we felt needed further consideration.

There is another paper going to a Special Meeting of the Constitution and Governance Committee on 3rd March To consider and finalise the Somerset Council submission as Somerset Council's Stage 1 of the Phase 2 response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

This is the link to the papers: -

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=7579>

Appendix A has the details of the proposed structure of electoral divisions. The overall electorate of Somerset, based on the projected 2030 figures is 467,274; the target figure for 96 divisions per member was 4,867, and the Council has endeavoured largely to stay within 10% of that figure.

More information about the review can be found here: - <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset>

****SOMERSET COUNCIL FINANCIAL SITUATION:** Somerset Council Faces a £52.2m budget Gap for 25/26 and plans to increase Council Tax - In addition it has needed to seek government support to close this years remaining gap of £43m. The £43m gap will be bridged using a Capitalisation Direction which is a form of one-off assistance (that was also requested last year) offered by Government which allows the Council to sell assets or borrow money and use the proceeds to fund the budget gap and the day-to-day running costs.

The Council applied to the Government for financial support and has been allowed to increase Council Tax by 7.5%, more than the usual cap of 5%. If approved at Full Council on 5 March, this would mean a band D property paying an additional £129 a year. For many homes in Somerset this will be in addition to very large increases in some Town and Parish elements of the Council Tax including an annual increase of £111.73 (Band D) in Bridgwater making it one of the most expensive in the country.

****ILLEGAL TOBACCO & VAPES SEIZED ACROSS DEVON, PLYMOUTH, SOMERSET & TOBAY:** As authorities crack down on illegal tobacco and vape sales in multiple regions, more than £37,000 of illegal tobacco, vapes and cash was seized by Trading Standards officers during a recent operation. The five-week operation during January and February saw officers from the Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service, supported by Devon and Cornwall Police and Avon and Somerset Police, look for illegal tobacco.

To report concerns of counterfeit or other illegal products, contact Trading Standards, email tradingstandards@devon.gov.uk or phone [01392 383000](tel:01392383000).

****GUIDANCE FOR REPORTING SAFETY ISSUES ON SOMERSETS ROADS:** A quick and simple online reporting service is available 24/7. It's the best way to report any problems spotted on our county's roads – including snow and ice issues. This can be used to report non-urgent incidents both during hours and out of hours at the weekend:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

You can also report a hazard on the road using this online form, including items or obstructions such as rubbish, tyres or blown/displaced traffic cones:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/hazards-on-the-road/>

To report an urgent out-of-hours highways issue that's a risk to public safety, please call Somerset Lifeline 0300 123 2224.

There is a dedicated call centre resource to deal with out-of-hours highways matters. Operators will notify the highways duty officer if appropriate, and they will take any necessary action.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If the hazard is on the M5, A303 or A36 please contact National Highways 0300 123 5000.

Fly tipping – <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/how-to-fight-fly-tipping/>

Gritting/salt spreading – <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/gritting-map/>

Parishes interested in additional winter service provision should contact the Kier Community Engagement Manager direct: somersetehm@kier.co.uk

Dawn Denton: dawn.denton@somerset.gov.uk