

April/May 2026 Update to the Frome North Parish Councils from Adam Boyden, Somerset Councillor, Frome North

A few things of note this month include:

Fusion in administration - Somerset Council steps in to protect leisure centres:

On 1st April it was announced that Fusion Lifestyle, which runs leisure centres in Frome, Wells, Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet, and other centres around the UK, had gone into administration. However, funding from Somerset Council has ensured these facilities will continue to run as normal for the next three months, while a new operator is found.

It is 'business as usual' and customers and regular members are encouraged to keep using their leisure centre and to maintain memberships which will continue into the new contract period with an alternative operator. Somerset Council is working to secure a new operator as soon as possible before the end of June, so that services can continue without disruption for staff and users.

This will be discussed fully at Somerset Council's Communities Scrutiny meeting next Thursday – see item 6 at [Agenda for Scrutiny Committee - Communities on Thursday, 30th April, 2026, 10.00 am - Modern Council](#).

This is also a great opportunity to address the recent issues and problems that people and Frome College have been reporting. Please see - [Somerset Council steps in to protect leisure centres | Councillor Adam Boyden](#) for details, and Anna's petition to support Frome leisure centre at [Support Frome Leisure Centre – Frome and East Somerset Liberal Democrats](#).

Schools consultation:

Somerset Council's informal consultation into whether to change the schooling system in and around Frome (18 schools) from a largely three-tier system to a two-tier system, ran until 20th March, to test the community's appetite for change. There were nearly 800 responses from the consultation, and 71% of those wanted to progress to a formal proposal. Meetings with the key education stakeholders are progressing, and if all are in favour a detailed proposal will be developed for consultation in June. If progressed, the new system would be introduced from 2028/29 (September 2028).

People's Emergency Briefing

Representatives of local businesses, community groups, colleges, faith groups and councillors and MPs are being invited to attend screenings of the People's Emergency Briefing film on the risks to British life and the UK economy from the ongoing damage to nature and to our climate. The film features footage from last November's National Emergency Briefing, which brought together leading UK experts in climate science, food security, health, economics, national security and nature, and presents an overview of how the climate and nature crisis is affecting everyday life in Britain, including supply chains, energy prices and community resilience, and what the evidence says about risks and responses. The initiative is explicitly non-partisan and is supported by a wide range of organisations including The National Trust, Church of England, Exeter University, the Royal Meteorological Society, WWF, National Education Union, and more. The purpose of the Briefing is to ensure that public institutions, businesses and communities share a common understanding of the scale and urgency of the challenge including the opportunities and benefits that flow from responding at pace. See <https://www.nebriefing.org/the-film>.

The film is being shown in hundreds of venues across the UK (<https://www.nebriefing.org/screening-map>), including Frome's Cheese & Grain on 21st May – see [Select tickets – People's Emergency Briefing – Cheese and Grain, Frome](#)). The parish council and community groups can also consider hosting a screening – see [National Emergency Briefing host a screening](#).

Planning roundup

- **Selwood Garden Community gets permission:**

On 2nd April the Secretary of State issued their decision to approve the outline planning application for Selwood Garden Community between the south of Frome and the A361 Frome Bypass, for **1,700 homes** and other facilities, after 'calling it in' in February 2025 just before it was due to be heard again at Somerset Council's Planning Committee (East), taking the decision out of local hands - please see [Selwood Garden Community planning application approved](#).

- **Oldford Hill**

The planning application for **360 homes** between Oldford Hill, Windsbatch Lane and Gypsy Lane adjacent to the northern edge of Frome ([2026/0216/OUT](#)) has attracted 85 objections so far, and was discussed at Frome Town Council's Planning Committee on 17th March. Representatives of the applicants attended, and I and other councillors asked questions. Berkley Parish Council has objected on several points. Further assessments and other information are required by Natural England, National Highways, Somerset Council's Highways, Lead Local Flood Authority, Archaeology (South West Heritage Trust) and Placemaking/Landscape teams, which will take time to provide and could require a re-consultation. National Highways has issued a **holding objection**, to require further traffic modelling to assess the impact on the A36, so Somerset Council cannot now approve the application for **6 months**. Frome Town Council agreed to defer their response until the further information requested by statutory consultees has been submitted. See <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/2026/02/09/oldford-hill-planning-application-submitted/>.

- **Service station and drive-thru proposed at A36 White Row Farm Roundabout**

A hybrid (part-outline, part-full) planning application for a petrol station and shop, drive thru unit and EV charging hub (full), and another drive thru unit (outline), and associated car parking, has been submitted at the A36 White Row Roundabout (ref. [2026/0121/FUL | Hybrid Planning application](#)). Beckington Parish Council has submitted an initial objection, but other consultees responses (including National Highways) are awaited, and further information is being submitted.

- **Farleigh House**

In relation to the planning enforcement case at Bath Rugby's Farleigh House concerning weddings and other events held since summer 2023 (Somerset Council Planning Enforcement ref. **ENF/2025/0160**), Somerset Council has received an application from Bath Rugby for a Certificate of Lawfulness – see [2026/0421/CLE](#). This will be determined based on the lawfulness of the activity rather than an assessment against planning policies. Enforcement action by the council will be held pending determination of the application, but if it is refused, enforcement action would proceed. I am preparing my response. See [Planning enforcement: – Farleigh House](#).

- **Rudge Lane**

The unauthorised travellers encampment to the south of Rudge on Rudge Lane is an active planning enforcement case (Somerset Council ref. **ENF/2025/0160**) and has police involvement. The planning enforcement team have visited site and started to undertake enforcement actions, but this has been delayed due to enforcement staff shortages. Beckington Parish Council's meeting in January had an hour discussion with the Police neighbourhood inspector, Parish Council and local residents. I am asking Somerset Council's planning team to act, and hope to meet the local community again on this, when there is something more positive to report.

Road closures for utility repairs and road resurfacing:

Somerset Council's Highways team and contractor Kiely Bros are preparing to *surface dress* some roads as part of the spring/summer maintenance programme. This will seal road surfaces, improve skid resistance and help prevent potholes forming in the first place, on key routes across the county. Surface dressing involves treating roads which are in relatively good condition, and is a cost effective form of highway maintenance which extends the life of the carriageway at approximately a tenth the cost of resurfacing. The work can only be carried out in dry weather, so dates can change at short notice. Most sites are completed within a single day or in just a couple of hours, but larger sites can take between 1 and 3 days. The works require short duration temporary road closures. More information is found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/surface-dressing/>.

All road closures can be seen on this map - <https://one.network/en-gb>.

I have been notified that road works are planned in the following areas, including for utility works:

Location,	Purpose – to enable	From – to	Link to map
A361 Frome Road, Rode, near Church Farm	Utility asset works – VSNL Telecommunications – with lane closure and traffic lights	April 27 th – May 1 st	https://one.network/?GB149872851
Frome Bypass, Selwood, Berkley and Frome	Heidelberg to carry out resurfacing works on behalf of Somerset Highways (associated with the speed limit reduction)	May 7 th to May 20 th (7pm- 6am)	https://one.network/?tm=GB148527729
Road Hill, Tellisford and Rode, and Bradford Road	Kiely Bros to carry out phased work including surface dressing, application of Kiely Lock and associated works such as stud removal/renewal and lining works on behalf of Somerset Highways	Pending completion now, and May 9 th – 13 th (7am-7pm)	https://one.network/?tm=GB147581889
Brunel Way, Frome	Kiely Bros to carry out phased work including surface dressing ... on behalf of Somerset Highways	May 9 th – 13 th , 7am-7pm	https://one.network/?tm=GB147580718
Innox Hill, Frome	Wessex Water to repair damaged sewer lining	May 11 th – May 20 th	https://one.network/?tm=GB149162801
Mill Lane, Beckington	Openreach to carry out cabling works	May 13 th (9:30am - 3:30pm)	https://one.network/?tm=GB148419410
The Barton, Norton St Philip	Network Plus to cut off redundant leaking pipe for Bristol Water (0345 702 3797)	May 13 th – May 15 th	https://one.network/?tm=GB148414465
Stonebridge Drive, Frome	Kiely Bros to carry out phased work including surface dressing, ... on behalf of Somerset Highways	May 18 th – May 22 nd (7am to 7pm)	https://one.network/?tm=GB147804915

Road defects completed:

The following lists the safety defects completed by Somerset Council in March in Frome North:

Report Date Range: 01/03/2026 to 31/03/2026

Page 1 of 1

This report shows the number of safety defects (split by defect type and location) completed by Somerset Highways within your division for the previous month.

For reference, codes starting with T or U represent Unclassified roads.

Frome North ED

• CW- Carriageway Pothole	T2596/30	RODDEN ROAD	7
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	B3090/210	BATH ROAD	6
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	U2901/10	TELLISFORD LANE TO RODE HILL - TELLISFORD	2
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	A361/1417	FROME BYPASS - BERKLEY	1
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	A361/1720	FROME ROAD / RODE COMMON - RODE	1
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	A366/180	FARLEIGH ROAD - NORTON ST PHILIP	1
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	A366/190	FARLEIGH ROAD - NORTON ST PHILIP	1
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	B3090/225	BATH ROAD / OLDFORD HILL	1
• FW- Debris in Footway	B3090/225	BATH ROAD / OLDFORD HILL	1
• FW- Debris in Footway	F1056/2050	URBAN FOOTPATH	1
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	T2575/50	CLINK ROAD - BERKLEY	1
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	T2849/20	RODE HILL - RODE	1
• CW- Carriageway Pothole	U2942/30	LEYS LANE	1

Total: 25

SEND Reform Plan – Children and young people survey launched

Consultation on the Government's SEND reforms is underway, as is the national process for local areas to submit their SEND Reform Plans by 19th June. Somerset Council Children's Services staff are currently working to engage and consult with as many stakeholders in as many organisations as possible to hit the June deadline. This includes consulting children and young people with SEND across the county.

If you know a young person with SEND needs, please encourage them to share their thoughts and views with us in the SEND Reform Plan Survey at <https://tinyurl.com/SENDReformPlan> by **15th May**, so the Council team can address any issues, make better decisions, and work on improvements. See also <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/send-reform-plan-children-and-young-people-survey-launched/>.

Somerset Council launches Best Start in Life programme

A new early years programme 'Best Start in Life' to help children, parents and carers thrive from pregnancy through to school is being rolled out by Somerset Council. This is designed to support families during the first five years of a child's life through a collaborative, community-focused approach. Best Start in Life is a government programme with an ambition to see 78% of 5-year-olds in Somerset obtain a good level of development by 2028. Key to the Best Start in Life Programme will be accessible, co-ordinated support and services through a local Family Hubs approach, building on support already on offer across Somerset - see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/somerset-council-launches-best-start-in-life-programme/>.

River Frome

I and other councillors attend meetings of the Environment Agency's steering group for the Farleigh Hungerford Bathing Water on the River Frome. I attended part of the last meeting earlier in April, and await the notes from that, but I understand the Environment Agency and Wessex Water are still monitoring the river and investigating the sources of bacteria in the river to find out where is best to invest to improve the local sewerage network and sewage treatment works (Rode, Beckington, Frome and Mells), so that water quality becomes 'good' and safer to swim in. The results should be reported in 2027. Rode sewage treatment works (STW) as the closest STW to the Bathing Water, has had its treatment capacity increased by 65%, and is planned to have ultra-violet (UV) treatment by 2030, but other improvements to Beckington and Frome remain on hold pending the results of investigations on sources and apportionment. Please see Wessex Water's information sheet.

Water quality data at [Farleigh Hungerford Dashboard](#) currently states concentrations of *E.coli* and Intestinal enterococci on 08/04/2026 show good indicative water quality at this location. The 2025 Bathing Water classification was again 'poor' based on the EA's monitoring of harmful *E.coli* and intestinal enterococci during the bathing season (May – September) (see [Bathing water profile](#)) so more must be done to improve river water quality.

Other news from Somerset Council:

see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/newsroom/>

Open consultations:

see [Find activities - Somerset Council - Citizen Space](#)

Report a problem to Somerset Council:

For handy links to report problems such as potholes, broken street lights or empty litter bins, to Somerset Council please see <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/2025/05/16/reporting-a-problem/#page-content> or call **0300 123 2224**.

Best wishes,

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Web: see the latest news at <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/>