

Rode
SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL
report

SEPTEMBER 2022

Local Community Networks: The geography of the proposed LCN's, which was due at the end of June, is now expected during the autumn with more details as to their constitution and responsibilities. We await new information this week from the current administration in relation to vision, responsibilities and structure. The Exmoor Pilot (in relations to Highways) led by Conservative Councillors, has shown to be a huge success, so we look forward to seeing how this is incorporated into the new LCN model.

New CEO for Somerset County Council: Duncan Sharkey start as the new Council Chief Executive later this month. Mr Sharkey was previously Chief Executive of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and will become Chief Executive of the new unitary Somerset Council from April next year. Mr Sharkey succeeds Pat Flaherty who has been Chief Executive of Somerset County Council since 2014. He takes up the post of Chief Executive at Harrow Council in September.

Bus usage: With the ongoing cost-of-living crisis SCC and Somerset Bus Partnership are joining forces to encourage people to 'BUS IT'. Bus use in Somerset is slowly climbing again, but is about 70 per cent of levels compared to pre-Covid. In particular, patronage among bus pass holders is lower than before. Bus operators are weighing up the viability of routes in Somerset, and one of the key factors operators will be the number of passengers on each route. The Bus-It campaign aims to highlight that with households under financial pressure buses have never been more relevant, offering a cheaper travel alternative.

I will be hosting a surgery on the D2 (from Frome through Rode to Bath and back) on Monday 26th September. Please join me.

Somerset Community Resilience Award: A new award has been launched to celebrate people or groups that have made their communities more resilient. Nominations are invited from Somerset residents, for groups or individuals that have made a difference in helping their community: for example, local flood groups, parish or town councillors who can be counted on to think ahead, or someone who has helped to make sure vulnerable people can get help in an emergency. The winner will be announced at the 2022 Somerset Community Resilience Day on October 13, at West Monkton Village Hall. To find out more or nominate someone see the Somerset Prepared website <http://www.somersetprepared.org.uk/>

New Lord Lieutenant of Somerset: The Queen is proud to appoint Mohammed Saddiq DL, who is Executive Director of Operations at Wessex Water, as Lord

Lieutenant. He takes over from Annie Maw CVO when she retires at the end of October. Since the reign of Henry VIII, the role of the Lord Lieutenant is to support the monarch in the county.

Mr Saddiq's parents came to England in the late 60s from a small village in Pakistan, setting up a new home in Leeds. He has held several senior engineering and management positions in those sectors over the past 30 years. Mr Saddiq, who is 52, now lives in Midford near Bath with his wife Paula and five children.

Know your numbers: The national campaign from Blood Pressure UK, aims to raise awareness of high blood pressure (hypertension), encouraging all UK adults to check their blood pressure at home over a week. In Somerset there are about 50,000 people with hypertension who do not know they have it, so the Public Health Team have worked with the library service to put in place a **free** to access service – providing blood pressure monitoring kits that can be loaned from libraries across the county. The kits can be loaned for a fortnight allowing people to check their blood pressure, 'at rest', in their own home.

Family Connections Survey: Family Connections is the proposed name for Somerset's Family Hub model. The initiative aims to coordinate the services that already exist to make it easier for families to find the right information and support they need when they need it. A survey has been launched to gather feedback that will help to develop the Family Hubs model across Somerset. Please help by sharing the survey widely with your contacts using this link – forms.office.com/r/7YZ2dXCU3Y. Completed surveys must be received by the closing date on Thursday 30 September.

Electric minibuses: Following a decision by the previous Conservative administration at County Hall SCC has taken delivery of two fully electric, specially adapted wheelchair accessible minibuses available for use. The vehicles are Maxus EV80 minibuses have a capacity of ten passengers, and the seats within can be adapted so that three wheelchairs can be safely included. On one charge, the buses can travel approximately 114 miles currently.

On the Move: please join me at the Frome Park Run (<https://www.parkrun.org.uk/theoldshowfield/>) this month to have a chat while on the move. I will be walking so anyone can join me. Please get in touch if you will be out there with me so we can connect: dawndentonfrome@gmail.com

Dawn Denton

Somerset County Councillor for Frome North