

## SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

### BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

#### SEPTEMBER 2020

**Corona Virus Update:** Whilst every death is undoubtedly an absolute tragedy, the situation in Somerset has been throughout the pandemic relatively quiet compared to the rest of the Country. As at 25<sup>th</sup> August, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 1,373 and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 203. There was one further Care Home death in late July and the current number of total deaths across the County is currently 4% below the 5-year average. The latest R-value for Somerset is between 0.8 and 1.1.

**Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund-Open for applications from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020:** A pot of £1 million is now available to help local communities become carbon neutral and mitigate the impacts of Climate Change in Somerset.

Somerset County Council Leader David Fothergill announced in February 2020 that £1 million would be made available for city, town and parish councils to support local communities.

From 1 October, city, town and parish councils across Somerset are invited to bid for between £5,000 and £75,000 for innovative projects that can make a real difference in reducing carbon emissions and can contribute to making Somerset resilient to the effects of Climate Change.

Councillor Fothergill said: “This is a great opportunity for city, town and parish councils to support their own communities to get involved in reducing carbon emissions. Somerset is working towards being carbon neutral by 2030 and if we are to reach this target, then everyone has an important part to play.’

Councillor Clare Paul, the County Council’s Cabinet Member for Public Health & Well-Being and Climate Change, added: “We are looking forward to seeing proposals for interesting and innovative projects that can have real impact and make this £1million go as far as possible.”

For information about the Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund scheme, eligibility criteria and application process, visit [www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency). Please note that all applications must be submitted by your parish, town or city council or local member if you are in an un-parished area, so if you’ve got a great idea for what your local council might do, get in touch with them now.

Full details of the Somerset Climate Emergency Community Fund scheme can be viewed online from 1 September and from 1 October applications can be made via the website. [www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency)

**Return to School:** Children of all ages are expected to return to school over the next two weeks with the clear message from Somerset's head teachers that they are ready and can't wait to welcome the pupils back. Measures being put in place vary from school to school but include: Year group or class group bubbles; one-way systems; regular hand sanitizing and cleaning of spaces; desks organised in rows all facing the front and spaced out; outside areas divided into 'zones', which are allocated to specific groups of children plus staggered start and finish times.

**Return to School and College Transport:** SCC is following current Government guidance in relation to school and college transport. Parents and students are being advised to walk, cycle or be driven to school or college where possible. For those that use school transport Students are advised to sit with their year group and are strongly advised to wear face coverings on the bus. For college transport, routes where additional capacity is needed, SCC are laying on approx. 20 additional buses at peak times. Details are at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/schooltransport>

**Covid 19 Parish and Towns Forum:** SPARK is hosting a Forum along with SALC on the 15th September aimed at Parish & Town Councils. It will be an opportunity to showcase some of the councils in Somerset who really engaged in the Covid-19 response in their communities, co-ordinating local efforts and experimenting with new ways of working. SPARK and SALC are hoping that this will initiate a conversation about how Parishes can work better with the communities they serve and capitalise on the volunteering legacy from Covid-19. To register go to [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvdu-qz4tEtdXYBab\\_pbWDMGESkYf5Y7I](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvdu-qz4tEtdXYBab_pbWDMGESkYf5Y7I)

**One Somerset:** The business case to move to a Single Unitary authority across Somerset is available on [www.onesomerset.org.uk](http://www.onesomerset.org.uk) and details the reasons for the recommendations and the substantial benefits to the residents of Somerset. Full Council approved the business case on the 29<sup>th</sup> July for submission to the Secretary of State. Engagement and consultation activities on One Somerset will continue through the later summer and autumn.

**Public Health Nursing:** the Institute has nationally acclaimed SCC's Public Health Nursing service for Health Visiting for the innovative online

support developed during lockdown – a time when face-to-face appointments were no longer possible. Health Visitors, who as part of their role visit new parents after having a baby, had to adopt big changes to the way they work to enable them to deliver services to new parents to offer much needed support advice and guidance, weigh-ins for new babies, ante-natal, post-natal and infant feeding support and other essential contacts.

**Somerset Youth Music Group:** Thanks to a unique online project, Somerset's musical groups including students from 32 of the county's schools and colleges have put together a stunning a recording of Elbow's One Day Like This. 90 young people, with ages ranging from 8 to 21 took part. Organised by Somerset Music, the video features the Somerset County Youth Choir, Somerset County Youth Orchestra and Somerset County Youth Concert Band. The inspirational video can be found at [https://secure1.somerset.gov.uk/forms/PortalShowForm.asp?fm\\_formalias=SMD](https://secure1.somerset.gov.uk/forms/PortalShowForm.asp?fm_formalias=SMD)

**Armed Forces Covenant Recognition:** SCC has been awarded the Silver Award in recognition of the Council's support for the Armed Forces community. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve or have served that we will do all we can to ensure they are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. The Covenant seeks to ensure fair treatment for Regulars, Reservists, Veterans and their immediate families. Silver Award winners must actively demonstrate that servicemen and women, and their families, are not treated unfairly because they are serving in the Forces and must have an internally publicised positive Human Resources policy on employing Reservists. Further information can be found at <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/forcescovenant>

**Spot 'County Lines' and stop the crime - A new campaign, which aims to stop exploitation by raising the awareness of the signs of drug-related criminal behaviour in the county:**

Somerset communities are urged to know the signs of 'County Lines' in a bid to stop illegal drug related criminal activity operating in their area. A new campaign launched today by the Safer Somerset Partnership sets out what County Lines are, the signs to look out for and how to contact Crimestoppers if you believe County Lines are operating in your area. County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks who export illegal drugs from one area (usually a city) into another (usually a more rural county) within the UK by using dedicated mobile phone lines or another form of "deal line". The criminal gangs often exploit children and vulnerable adults to move

and store drugs and money, and will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Unlike most crime types, Somerset experiences County Lines more than its more urban neighbours due to its rurality, size and convenient access routes to cities.

They bring harm in all guises – from the danger of the drugs themselves, to drug debt enforcement through violence, “cuckooing,” (taking over a vulnerable person’s home for illegal drug purposes), “turf” conflict between gangs and anti-social behaviour.

Speaking on the launch of the campaign, Chair of the Safer Somerset Partnership, Avon & Somerset Constabulary Superintendent Mike Prior said, “Illegal drugs activity is nothing new, but the risk of serious violence, the sophistication of the method and the targeted exploitation of vulnerable members of our communities makes County Lines a priority area of work for the Partnership. Through the campaign, we aim at getting the community involved when it comes to identifying signs of drug related exploitative behaviour. It will not be overnight in success, but with persistence, continued partnership working and above all education we will overcome County Lines.”

A young person who is involved in County Lines activity might show some of these signs:

- Persistently going missing from school or home, or being found out-of-area
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts or phone calls
- Relationships with controlling, older individuals or gang association
- Parental concerns, and leaving home or care without explanation
- Suspicion of self-harm, physical assault or unexplained injuries
- Significant decline in school performance and changes in emotional well-being

Karen MacDonald, Regional Manager of West Country Crimestoppers Trust, said, “We know that the term ‘County Lines’ might not be widely recognised, which is why we are keen to be involved in this campaign and are asking for your help to support us in tackling this issue. We need help to put a stop to this exploitation and the damage that these criminals are inflicting on our communities and those being taken advantage of. We are asking you to contact us anonymously and safely through our 0800 555 111 number, or via our secure online form at [Crimestoppers-uk.org](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) – both methods are 100% anonymous. Always. Together we can put a stop to this.”

The campaign particularly aims to raise awareness about County Lines among frontline staff, like teachers and health workers, and those working in transport like taxi operators and bus and coach company staff who are most likely to encounter vulnerable young individuals who are at

maximum risk of exploitation.

If you have information that will help the police investigate this crime, and wish to remain anonymous, contact [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) online or call 0800 555111.

### **Recycle More-In Mendip from October 2020**

You will soon be able to recycle so much more. The household waste collection will revert to a 3 weekly collection. To avoid smelly bins, avoid food waste going into landfill and therefore recycle more it is best that you do not put food waste into your household waste bin. For those of you who do not have a food waste bin you can order one on line at

[www.somersetwaste.gov.uk](http://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk)

The kerbside food box (brown) is lockable and you can also order a kitchen caddy (brown) should you need one.

Use the food waste collections to recycle all cooked and raw food waste, including:

Meat and fish – including bones and carcasses that fit in your caddy

Fruit and vegetables

Cheese and eggs

Bread, pasta and cereal

Tea bags and coffee grounds – including coffee filter paper

Pet food

Paper kitchen towel and napkins

# Recycle More Messenger



4 September, 2020

**Welcome** to the latest update about Recycle More. It's the biggest change to our recycling for a decade and coming to Mendip at the end of October. Most people in Somerset are recycling. Recycle More will make it easier for everyone to recycle even more and help protect our environment and tackle climate change.

## Online Q&A sessions

We ran the first of our Facebook Q&A sessions last week and fielded dozens of questions from the public. Please join in with the future sessions and promote them in your communities and with colleagues, family and friends. To take part, just visit the @somersetwaste Facebook page at the right time, then post your questions to the team.

- Tues, 22 September, 7am to 8am
- Sat, 10 October, 11am to 12noon
- Thurs 29 October, 7pm to 8pm

Some examples of topics covered:

Q: Won't the blue bag just blow away?

A: No, it's base-weighted and this worked well in trials.

Q: Will garden waste collections go three-weekly too?

A: No. Garden waste will still be collected fortnightly.

Q: Will we be able to recycle plastic bottle tops?

A: Yes. In the Bright Blue Bag, along with plastic bottles, pots, tubs, trays, and tins and cans, empty aerosols and foil.

## Q&A at the Talking Cafe

We are also running Q&A sessions during two of the Mendip Talking Café Live events run by the Community Council for Somerset.

Just visit <https://www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset> and join the conversation 'live' on the following dates and time, or watch the recorded sessions later.

- Weds, 9 September, 11am to 12noon
- Weds, 14 October, 11am to 12noon

## Coming soon! Info on your doorstep

We want to make sure everyone understands what is changing and when. Everyone in Mendip will be written to twice before anything changes.

The first leaflet will be coming soon - delivered across the district from Monday, 14 September. And gives an introduction to Recycle More, the timescales and how people can prepare.



[somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more](https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more)

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A second leaflet, delivered in early October, will include a 'what goes where?' guide to recycling with the new service, and an individual collection day calendar.

### What's changing?

A reminder of key Recycle More changes.

- These items will be added to weekly recycling collections:
  - plastic pots, tubs and trays
  - food & drink cartons (Tetra Pak etc)
  - small household batteries
  - small electrical items (kettles etc)
- A new recycling container – a Bright Blue Bag – delivered to all homes.
- With more being recycled, rubbish will be collected every three weeks instead of every two.
- Collection days will change for roughly a third of households.

So, everyone will need to do things a little differently.

### When will things change?

These changes will be introduced across Mendip over the course of around two weeks (depending on where you live), starting on Monday, 26 October. Look out for the Bright Blue Bags. They will be delivered in the two weeks before launch and are the sign that things are about to change.

### What won't change?

- Garden waste and clinical waste collections and their collection days will stay the same.
- Assisted collections (when crews help people with their recycling and rubbish) will continue but on the new collection days.

### What about communal collections?

Blocks of flats, houses of multiple occupancy and retirement developments often have communal rather than individual rubbish and recycling collections.

Communal rubbish collection days may change for some, but that won't affect residents directly, they just need to use the communal bins as normal.

Anyone who lives somewhere with a communal rubbish collection, but who also makes use of some kerbside collections (for example of food waste) will see the kerbside collection days change – we'll write to them with details before anything changes.

Communal recycling collections will be expanded, but not until early 2021. Everyone affected will be written to directly before things change.

### Concerns or worries? Get in touch

We want to make sure Recycle More works for everyone—many people are excited but know some may have concerns.

Extra guidance and support is available and we want to hear from anyone who has questions or worries, for example about three-weekly collections.

- Contact us through My Account or My Waste Services on the SWP homepage
- Telephone Mendip District Council on 0300 3038588.

**Remember:  
nothing changes  
until you receive  
your Bright Blue  
Bag**



[somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more](https://somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more)

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