

SOMERSET COUNCIL

Rode Parish Council

Cllr Dawn Denton

FEBRUARY 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/>

Write to Them: to find out who your local councillor and Member of Parliament is, you can input your postcode into the Write to Them website. You will get their names, and can email them directly from the website too: <https://www.writetothem.com/>

Straight Lane and Crooked Lane: the drainage system has been assessed and we wait to hear what work is required and when this will take place. This will include jetting the drains along Straight Lane (from the junction with Parkgate Lane) to remove debris, and re-profiling the surface of Crooked Lane (near the junction with Straight Lane).

2024/5 Council Budget: Despite recent increased Government funding the scale of the Council's financial woes in Somerset have been set out in papers to the Executive meeting due to be held on 7th February. In the papers a budget gap of £36.6m for 2024/5 is predicted to increase to £147.9m in 2026/7 if no actions are taken. Without taking these actions the Council will have no choice other to issue a Section 114 (bankruptcy) notice. Consequently the Council is proposing over 260 cuts (or fee increases) to service funding in 2024/5 including:

- Closure of five recycling centres
- Removal of historic open space and burial ground grants to Parishes
- Cancellation of RNLI Lifeguard contract
- Removal of all School Crossing Patrols
- Reduction in road safety budget
- Closure of all public owned toilets
- Cessation of funding for Citizens Advice local assistance programme
- Closure of Tourist Information and Visitor Centres
- Proposal to cease the Mobile Library service.
- Review of subsidies for contracted bus services
- Increased Crematorium charges

A full list of cuts to funding for services can be found at

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s24438/Appendix%207%20-%20Detailed%20List%20of%20Savings%20Proposals.pdf>

Local nature recovery strategy: Somerset Council has launched an online survey to shape the county's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) which will provide a single vision for nature recovery in Somerset. The work is funded by Defra and local authorities throughout England have been appointed to lead the work. The Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) will set out local priorities and actions for restoring and creating habitats. It will identify the locations most suitable for nature restoration, and the places where the recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits such as carbon sequestration, flood regulation, and access to nature-rich spaces for health and wellbeing. For more information visit www.somerset.gov.uk/lhrs

Voter registration: Residents in Somerset are encouraged to make sure they are ready to vote in elections – both local and Parliamentary. The next scheduled elections in Somerset are for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Avon and Somerset on Thursday 2 May 2024. Everyone who votes must be on the electoral register and for those unsure if they are registered, the Electoral Services team 0300 123 2224 will be able to help. Voters also may need to update their details if they have moved house or changed their name. This can be done via: <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/register-vote-and-update-your-details>

Highways: Roadworks Offences Broadband provider Truespeed Communications Ltd has been hit with fines and charges totalling more than £34k after pleading guilty to five offences in Somerset. Truespeed admitted failing to install proper traffic management and guarding broken and excavated road surfaces to ensure the safety of pedestrians on a number of occasions, in breach of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.

Best wishes,

Dawn