

MEMBERS' BRIEFING 29 March 2023



Welcome to your final update on South Somerset District Council news. What a journey it has been over the past 49 years of this council.

It has been a pleasure to keep you up to date with all things South Somerset through this newsletter over the past few years from corporate plan updates, to people news and events, local project developments and service delivery achievements to national news headlines and much more.

While the closing of this final chapter in the story of SSSDC is tinged with sadness, we look forward to working as one unitary Somerset Council from next week, and taking with us all the positives from our time together.

'Caring, supportive, ambitious and friendly' are just some of the most popular adjectives that have been used to describe SSSDC by staff - and judging by the atmosphere at last week's SSSDC Celebrates event, which saw around 250 staff and Members come together at Westlands Entertainment Venue, to recognise and celebrate some fantastic achievements over more than four decades - it is not hard to see why.

To commemorate South Somerset District Council and its work over the past 49 years, an Oak Tree was planted by Cllr Paul Maxwell and Cllr Val Keitch last week at Penn Hill Park, near the Octagon Theatre and a plaque installed. The full story is featured below.

A huge and heartfelt thank you, to you, our Members and Town and Parish Council colleagues, for your hard work, dedication and tireless efforts in delivering the very best for the residents and businesses of South Somerset. Together, we have achieved great things and the ongoing prosperity of South Somerset will continue to be built on these foundations.

If you would like a PDF version of this newsletter or a URL link, please email communications@southsomerset.gov.uk

[Visit our Website](#)

Commemorating South Somerset District Council: Oak Tree Planting

On Thursday, 23 March, SSSDC Chairman, Paul Maxwell accompanied by Leader of the Council, Cllr Val Keitch, planted an Oak Tree at Penn Hill Park, behind the Octagon Theatre, to commemorate the work of South Somerset District Council over the past 49 years.

Joined by Members and staff, Cllr Maxwell gave a short speech paying tribute to the achievements of the council and all those who had contributed - and will contribute to - the prosperity of South Somerset. A plaque was also placed at the site of the tree.



Upcoming Meetings

[South Somerset District Council - Thursday 30 March - 7.30pm](#)

[Previous meetings can be viewed on our Youtube channel.](#)

Featured News



Councils celebrate shared history at Wells Cathedral

A special service of Thanksgiving took place at Wells Cathedral on Sunday 12 March to mark an historic milestone in Somerset's history. The service celebrated the contribution and coming together of Somerset's five councils before Somerset Council comes into effect on Saturday 1 April. Councillors and staff from the councils - Mendip, Sedgemoor, Somerset West...

[Read More](#)



The 2023 pantomime awards nominees are announced and Octagon is up for 4 awards! | South Somerset District Council

The UK Pantomime Association has announced the nominations for The Pantomime Awards 2023, with Evolution Productions production of Dick Whittington at The Octagon Theatre being nominated for four awards! Taking place at Trafalgar Theatre in London's West End on Tuesday 11 April, The Pantomime Awards are hosted by Christopher Biggins, with judges attending over 240 venues to see over 700 performances across the UK.

[Read More](#)



Tourism Showcase to kickstart an exciting new season for Somerset. | South Somerset District Council

The Somerset Tourism Showcase is set to bring together many of the county's fantastic attractions at Westlands Entertainment Venue in Yeovil on Tuesday 28 th March 2023, 10am to 12pm.

[Read More](#)

SSDC Celebrates!



SSDC Celebrates: 1974 - 2023

Last week saw over 250 staff and Members gather together at Westlands Entertainment Venue in Yeovil for first time in more than three years.

The SSDC Celebrates event was an opportunity to reflect on the unwavering dedication of SSDC colleagues and elected members, and recognise and celebrate some of the fantastic achievements of SSDC's service areas: Strategy & Commissioning, Support Services & Environmental Services, Place & Recovery, Service Delivery and Arts & Entertainment.

Hosted by former BBC Radio Somerset presenter Emma Britton, the event featured speeches from Cllr Paul Maxwell and Cllr Val Keitch, as well as some rather special individual and group accolades - some light hearted, while others reflected on outstanding effort. Highlights included Sally Nash being awarded the 'Special Lifetime Achievement Award', recognition a group of Senior Leadership Team nominated 'Unsung Heroes' and the 'Rising Star' award being presented to Natalie Fortt, Regeneration Programme Manager.

As Jane Portman, CEO commented: "It's not often that we can get such an insight into all the brilliant work that all our staff across the council get up to day-to-day, and especially in the context of South Somerset District Council's entire history.

"The SSDC Celebrates event was all about giving SSDC the send-off it deserves before it is no more in only a matter of days. But on to pastures new where I am sure, Members, towns and parishes will continue to be kept well informed and up to date. Thank you to all at SSDC; I wish you all every success for the future."

SSDC Car parks update: Installation of Scottish Power EV Charging stations

The installation programme was significantly delayed but will continue post vesting day into the new Somerset Council. Over the remainder of this year the final units will be installed and connection dates confirmed and scheduled in with the District Network Operators. During the summer months the bays will be repainted for EV drivers to identify they are EV charging bays and are exclusive for EVs while connected to and being recharged by the charging station. To see where the EV Charging Stations are and when fully installed and operational see <https://www.southsomersetenvironment.co.uk/ev>



Young people urged to have their say on Somerset's transport future



Ambitious plans to transform education in Somerset

Somerset County Council has launched a survey to capture the views of young people across the county on the future of transport. The survey was compiled with the help of the Somerset Youth Parliament and their deputies who belong to the UK-wide group representing the voices of young people.

[Read More](#)

Ambitious plans to transform education and drive improvements in Somerset schools have been unveiled. Somerset County Council's new five-year education strategy was shared with professionals from across schools, local authorities, Ofsted and the Department for Education at the Somerset Education for Life event, held at Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton yesterday (21 March) The...

[Read More](#)

Planning a journey in Somerset? Think Travel can help

A new one-stop travel information website has been launched by Somerset County Council to support more local people to access public and community transport.

If you don't own a car - or you want to leave it at home and travel more sustainably, Think Travel can help you with your transport options. Whether it's getting to the doctors, shops, travelling to work, college, or school, or just into town to meet friends or family, the new travel planner shows you what's available. It covers public transport, community transport, the Slinky demand responsive transport service and car sharing.

To start your search, all you need to do is enter your journey start point and destination in the planner and Think Travel will find the available options for you.

As well as information on train and bus services, there's also a dedicated car sharing notice board you can sign up to, where offers or requests for car sharing journeys can be posted.

The aim is to grow this facility and encourage local car sharing networks to evolve.

You can check out Think Travel here: <https://somerset.thinktravel.info>

Somerset County Council's Lead Member for Travel and Digital Cllr Mike Rigby said: "Think Travel brings together all available information on travel options in the county for those not using their own car, whether you're a student, older resident who relies on community or public transport, or if you just want to help a little bit towards protecting our environment. It's a really important tool in terms of supporting sustainable travel and hopefully it will play a part in growing car sharing communities across the county.

"Now more than ever, it's vital we support alternatives to single private car use, while at the same time support residents who rely on public and community transport.

"I would encourage people to check out the service and see if Think Travel can help you."

The image shows a screenshot of the Think Travel website. At the top, the 'thinktravel' logo is displayed. Below it, a dark blue box asks 'Planning a local journey?'. A white box contains the text 'Want to know what your travel options are but don't know where to start?' with two location pin icons. A pink button says 'Think Travel can help!'. Below this, a map shows various transport icons: a bus, a car, and a person walking. Text boxes explain: 'We can provide you with the information on what's available in your area', 'So why not get planning now using Think Travel...', and 'Scan the QR code or visit: somerset.thinktravel.info'. At the bottom, a pink box lists 'Your new journey planning website for information on:' followed by a bulleted list: 'Public transport', 'Community transport', 'Demand responsive transport (Slinky)', and 'Car sharing through a dedicated noticeboard area'. The Somerset County Council logo is in the bottom right corner.



**Publications across Britain
step up to support the
nation's mental health**



**Stopping child sexual abuse
is in our hands**

Over 350 national, regional, local, and multicultural news publications are taking part in a press partnership to promote the importance of looking after mental health. The campaign encourages people to maintain their mental wellbeing with the help of a wide range of free, easy to access mental health resources and helpline services.

[Read More](#)

Child Protection professionals in Somerset unite today on 18 March for Stop Child Exploitation Day 2023, joining the national #HelpingHands campaign to #EndCSEin23. Professionals across the county have shared their pledges to end child exploitation in the following video, which has been shared on social media.

[Read More](#)

Somerset Council: what happens to waste services?

It will be business as usual for waste services when the new Somerset Council comes into effect next month. From the start of April, the new council takes on responsibility for all the county's waste services, including the 350,000 weekly kerbside collections and 16 recycling sites.

All the councils in Somerset have worked together on waste services as the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) since 2007, so residents should not notice the change. The contractors making collections and running recycling sites will continue to do so. Behind the scenes, the SWP team will become part of the new council. Waste services will continue to have their own @somersetwaste accounts on Facebook and Twitter, and the dedicated SORTED monthly e-newsletter will carry on providing the latest service news and useful advice.

There will, however, be changes to the waste website presence and customer contact.

All the content currently on the SWP website will move to a dedicated section of the Somerset Council website www.somerset.gov.uk/waste from Saturday 1 April. The www.somersetwaste.gov.uk website will be no more, but anyone trying to visit should be redirected to the new site. Residents will still be able to do all the same things online that they can do now, including ordering containers, subscribing to the garden waste service, reporting missed collections, and checking collections days.

A single phone number, 0300 123 2224, will replace district contact numbers and will be taking calls about waste services from the start of April. Our new email address for waste related enquiries is wasteservices@somerset.gov.uk

The SWP name and branding will be going as waste services become a part of Somerset Council. Some things will change immediately, such as the social media branding, while others will change over time, like vehicle branding and signage.

This is an exciting new era and we look forward to continuing to help people waste less and recycle more as a key service within the new Somerset Council.



Further support and news

Coronavirus Support

The Coronavirus Support section on the Government website is a valuable resource to help you support your community, give health advice and keep you updated on COVID-19 news.

[Read More](#)



Cost of living crisis: Food collection points in South Somerset

As the cost of living crisis continues to impact our communities, food collection points have been set up for members and SSDC staff to donate at two SSDC sites. Donations will be taken to the Lord's Larder at The Gateway in Yeovil.

Places you can donate:

- Canteen, The Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil
- Please hand your donations to a Connect Officer in reception at The Connect Office, Petters Way, Yeovil.

Food items requested by the Lord's Larder include:

- Instant Coffee
- Tins of Baked Beans

- Tins of Ravioli
- Tins of Macaroni Cheese
- Tins of Spaghetti
- Tins of Meatballs
- Tins of Hot Dogs
- Tins of Chilli con Carne
- Tins of Potatoes
- Tins of Sweetcorn
- Tins of Fruit
- Tins of Peas
- Carrier Bags
- Jars of Pasta Sauce
- Long Life Milk
- Sugar
- Rice
- Shower Gel or Shampoo

The Lord's Larder also [post weekly updates](#) on Mon/Tues on their website of food items that they most need.

Should any of your constituents wish to donate, they can do so at the Gateway Reception, Addlewell Lane, YEOVIL, BA20 1QN, Monday-Friday between 9am and 3pm.

Thank you for any help you are able to give in these difficult times.

Social media

South Somerset District Council's main social media accounts will merge with the account of Somerset's other four councils to become a single Somerset Council account from April 1. Keep an eye on our accounts to see all the details.

