

Welcome to our October edition of Get SuSSed, read on for all the latest eco news from SSDC and across the district plus grants, learning, events, recommended reads and more!



Hello from Councillor Sarah Dyke our Portfolio Holder for Environment

Autumn has arrived and the colours of nature are simply stunning! It's been a busy month and the beauty of nature has allowed me to stop and smell the roses as it were, or in my case the trees!

I recommend this to anyone who is managing a heavy workload to just stop for a moment, find nature and soak it up.

I've been busy with several projects including my recommendation to fellow councillors for SSDC to join the UK100 coalition of local authorities committing us to achieve Net Zero Carbon further and faster than national targets. Full Council unanimously agreed this was an important step for us and voted to join. We also pledged to join the Countryside Climate Network to make sure our rural voice is heard.

COP26 is imminent and I'm looking forward to what I hope are some big steps by our world leaders to mitigate climate change. More locally, I will be attending the Somerset COP26 event being organised by the Levels Climate Forum in Somerton on 6th November with our environment specialist Cara Naden, and we're looking forward to meeting parish representatives and hearing how they are working towards sustainability. If you're going, please come and say hello! I'm also a guest speaker at the CPRE Rewilding Somerset [online event](#) on 19th November so I might see you there.

*Best Eco Wishes
Sarah x*

SSDC Green News

SSDC has joined UK100 and Countryside Climate Network

South Somerset District Council (SSDC) has joined [UK100](#) – a coalition of the most ambitious local leaders in the UK who are committed to achieving Net Zero further and faster than national targets. At Full Council on 21 October, Councillor Sarah Dyke proposed a motion to join UK100, which was supported by members. SSDC joins 112 local authorities who have already taken the UK100 pledge.



Additionally, to make sure our rural voice is heard, we have also joined the Countryside Climate Network (CCN), which is the rural arm of the UK100 network, and currently consists of 28 member Councils. As members of UK100, the CCN are committed to delivering climate action in their communities and amplifying the rural voice as part of our national policy advocacy - bringing the best from cities and the countryside together.

You can read the full story [here](#).

SSDC Support for CEE Bill

SSDC recently passed a motion pledging its support for the CEE Bill and resolved to invite local members of parliament Marcus Fysh and David

Warburton to ask them to take urgent action on the climate and ecological emergency and support the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill in Parliament. The CEE Bill has been developed to address the gaps in current legislation, a framework which will lock policy and action into step with the latest science. It is a private member's bill drafted by leading UK scientists, academics, economists and lawyers. You can find out more about the CEE Bill and show your support [here](#)



Happy 1st Birthday to Yeovil DfT E-Scooter Trial!

Wow! How time flies! It's already been a year since the DfT E-Scooter trial was launched in Yeovil. The trial was initially proposed for one year but has been extended by The Department of Transport for

another year to allow them to collect further data outside of lockdowns so they can assess and decide whether to legalise E-Scooters in the UK.

Our partners Zwings, who are the e-scooter operators and fund the trial, report that since the trial began last autumn, riders have covered over 100,000 kilometres (over 62,137 miles) the equivalent cumulative distance as travelling around the equator two and a half times! Given user feedback on modal shift and industry standard data, this represents an equivalent reduction of roughly 4 tonnes of CO₂.

**Yeovil e-scooter trial
30% higher than the
global industry average**



ZWINGS is brought to you in partnership with South Somerset District Council



Have you tried a Zwings e-scooter yet? They're situated at approximately 60 bays across Yeovil. Download the app and find one near you and start your zero carbon journeys around town. You'll also find a list of SSDC FAQ's [here](#).

Latest SSDC Carbon Calculator

In May 2019 we recognised a climate and ecological emergency and committed to be carbon neutral by 2030. To allow us to track our journey to carbon neutrality we calculated our baseline from our 2018-2019 financial year which was 1650.42 tCO₂e.

We found we had to reduce our carbon emissions by 10% year on year to get to reach our target of net zero carbon emissions on time.



The latest calculation from 2020-2021 saw a 6% reduction in CO₂e, which is lower than our target. Although the period includes times when our offices and leisure centres were closed due to the pandemic, there was increased utilisation of some SSDC buildings due to occupation by Avon & Somerset police 24/7 who now rent part of the Brympton Way building. Also, CO₂ emissions from gas usage has increased, influenced by increased use of the Crematorium over the last year. Another factor was during lockdown our Environmental Services and Countryside colleagues had to use separate vehicles to carry out their work in order to be covid safe.

Actions proposed for 2021-2022 will get us back on track. Installation of improved insulation, additional PV and air source heat pumps from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant will reduce gas and oil use in our highest use buildings and in turn reduce SSDC's CO₂e emissions. Staff will also be encouraged to continue reducing their travel for meetings by replacing them with virtual communication technology wherever possible. Electricity emissions will also decrease due to our

switch to a renewable energy tariff. All of these will contribute to us being on target or better next year!

You can view the SSDC carbon calculator infographic [here](#)

RHS South West in Bloom Winners!

Yeovil in Bloom is in its 24th year of entering the RHS South West In Bloom Competition. This year the displays have once again been amazing and recently received a prestigious Silver Gilt Award.

The In Bloom initiative is not just about hanging baskets and bedding plants, it recognises the significant value that 'wild' and native planting provides and embracing the recent SSDC Re-wilding and No Mow conservation initiatives with several sites in Yeovil town centre. This includes St John's Churchyard in Yeovil (see image) which has produced pyramid orchids, and on one of the Yeovil roundabouts bee orchids appeared. All in the first year!



Huge congratulations to everyone involved who work so hard to bring this to the town. Our social media went crazy when we posted pictures and the comments were testament to how much the floral displays, community spirit and environmental benefits are appreciated. You can read them [here](#).

Congratulations also go out to Henstridge, Milborne Port, Crewkerne and Hazelbury Plucknet who also netted a great haul of prizes from In Bloom!

Last chance to complete the SSDC Green Business Survey

A reminder to share our **Green Business Survey** within your networks. We are encouraging South Somerset businesses from all sectors, of any size and varying stages of reducing their carbon footprint to take part [here](#) before midnight on 5th November!

How is your business reducing its carbon footprint?

Help us understand how we can support. Take part in our Business Environment Survey.



South Somerset District Council Committed to be carbon neutral by 2030

We welcome businesses of any size and at any stage of improving their carbon footprint. We know many businesses across the district are already working hard to reduce their carbon emissions but also know others face barriers and challenges or want to learn more. We are therefore keen to understand where our business community is at with addressing the climate emergency, and to gain information that will help us identify where we can offer advice and support going forward.

With **COP26** imminent, this is a great way to let us know your thoughts during this time of focus on climate action.



Community environment project? SSDC Community Grants can help

Does your community have a great idea for a project that will enhance the environment, reduce carbon emissions or benefit wildlife? If you do then SSDC want to hear from you.

Our Community Grant Scheme funds up to 50% of the application costs and requests between £101 and £12,500 can be considered. Even a few hundred pounds for your community can make a difference to projects that benefit the environment and reduce the carbon footprint of communities. Find out more [here](#)

Previous projects we've helped include Ferne Animal Sanctuary reintroducing water voles and West Coker Memorial Hall energy saving.

South Somerset country parks and nature reserves retain Green Flag status

Volunteers and rangers are raising three Green Flag Awards this year at Ham Hill, Yeovil Country Park and Chard Reservoir, allowing SSDC to retain the award for the 16th consecutive year!



After seeing an increase in visitors during the last 18 months, our rangers, volunteers and Friends groups have been working hard to continually improve our green spaces. We are proud to see that their enthusiasm and dedication has been recognised by the Green Flag Awards for another year.

Ham Hill has also achieved the much coveted Green Heritage Site Accreditation, supported by Historic England, for the management of its historic features. Read the full story [here](#)

Parish Environment Champions

Catch up on the brilliant Wild Flower Seminar

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the SSDC wildflower Seminar on 29th September, and special thanks to Kate Petty from Plantlife UK, Steve Fox from SSDC and Jem Langworthy Parish Environment Champion at Barwick and Stoford.



The talk was engaging and full of great advice on how to start wildflower areas in your community. It was also good to hear SSDC's position which helped attendees understand how we're working to increase more wildflower areas and some of the barriers we have faced. Jem was the icing on the cake as he gave a fantastic presentation about how they have produced amazing areas where he lives and how he convinced the 'bowling green' naysayers to give rewilding a try.

Check out the [video](#) and learn how you can go wild!



The Great Wildflower Seed Parish Giveaway

We're asking Parishes to start identifying sites that would best suit an area for wildflowers in your community. This information will form part of our wildflower seed giveaway applications which will be sent out to Parishes soon asking for sites and the overall area (m²). Areas, where the public can experience and access the natural beauty of the flowers, are preferred

but not essential, however, the proposed wildflower areas do need to be somewhere open and sunny for most of the day, but can be flat or sloping. A relatively large area is best, where you have space for growing a range of wildflowers.

Keep an eye out for the application form email over the next week along with further details on how to create a wildflower meadow and how to maintain for future years.

Where will your community go wild?

The Great Collaboration Platform - Supporting Local Parish Actions for a Healthy Planet

We are encouraging Parish Councils to utilise the '[Great Collaboration](#)' interactive online platform, which can track and capture information about the



carbon reduction actions that individuals, business, community groups and schools in your local community are taking and planning.

A "personalised" platform for each participating parish council will be made available to communities as a link from a parish council's existing local website. Outputs include:

- **Understanding the uptake of carbon reduction activities that local people are undertaking;**
- **Increased understanding about local drivers and challenges;**
- **Support and education for local people around adopting reduced carbon approaches, raising local awareness and confidence; and**
- **Encouragement for shared community action on carbon reduction.**

The platform is based around an easily accessible list of actions that are applicable to everyday life. Information will help inform *Parish Carbon Reduction Action Plans* and support community building by sharing knowledge & experiences, identify information and training needed, allow cost saving from group purchases and present opportunities for collectively financed initiatives. [Visit our website for more information.](#)



Get to know other Parish Environment Champions

We've been promoting Parish Environment Champion 'coffee-meet-ups' in recent editions of Get SuSSed, to help you get to know one another and share ideas. We've had a great response from across the

network. We've recently shared a list of "groups" to allow you to get in touch with each other for a brief virtual or in person coffee/ chat. There's no obligation to be involved but we hope you enjoy the opportunity to speak to other champions!

You might also be interested in seeing a map of the location of all our Environment Champions across the district (nearly 70 at present) – click [here](#) to view the map.