

Hello 2022! We're excited to be at the start of another promising year and looking forward to implementing environmental projects to help us live a more eco-friendly, sustainable life. Read on for tips and tweaks that can help ourselves and the planet.



Hello from Cllr Sarah Dyke our Portfolio Holder for Environment

Belated Happy New Year! Have you made some sustainable New Year resolutions? I've pledged to grow more of my own veg, improve the wildlife-friendly space in my garden to attract and support more wildlife, plant a tree, buy fewer clothes and when I do, I'll choose 2nd hand, fair trade, organic or recycled.

I attended our SSDC Community grants webinar on 12th January where it was great to see such a high attendance of people interested to know how the council grant scheme can support environmental projects. If you don't already know about these grants check out the feature further on.

Please do share Get SuSSed with others and help spread the environment message. It's easy.. just see the Psst...Pass it on section below. We've moved it to pole position this month so you can think about who might like to read it while you are. Thanks!

Best Eco Wishes Sarah x



If you enjoy Get SuSSed and would like to share it, you'll find the link on our website [here](#). Just copy and paste the link into your social media or within some text on your website. Or just forward the email to friends.

You can also find all back issues of Get SuSSed [here](#).

SSDC Green News

Green Homes Grants available (LAD Phase 2)



To help people save on their heating bills and reduce carbon emissions, the Government is funding retrofit improvements to homes with low-income householders. In the South Somerset District Council area, procured by the SW Energy Hub, Happy Energy is delivering this work in partnership with E.ON Energy.

Endorsed by SSDC, under the Green Homes Grants Scheme, owner-occupiers will benefit from energy efficiency installations up to the value of £10,000 with nothing for them to pay towards the costs of works. Tenants of rented properties can also access grants of up to £5,000 for energy efficiency upgrades, but the landlord will be expected to contribute at least one third towards the cost of works. Read more [here](#).

Ham Hill Community Tree Planting

To coincide with National Tree Planting Week, postponed by a week due to storm Arwen, a Community Tree Planting Day was held at Pit Wood, Ham Hill on Saturday 4 December.



Armed with spades and boundless enthusiasm, 22 volunteers met our SSDC rangers at 9.30am, including members of The Friends of Ham Hill, Florence's Street Cleaning Mission and members of the public, who all worked together to plant 750 trees! Read more [here](#) and watch the video [here](#).

Uncovering Ham Hill's past for its future. Have your say!



A project which will seek to protect and safeguard the Hillfort at Ham Hill Country Park is set to commence in Autumn 2022 and will help to create a better visitor experience with new and exciting features planned for the site. As we prepare to submit our final grant application to the National Lottery's Heritage Fund, we would like to hear your thoughts on our project proposals. The project at Ham Hill broadly aims to:

- Protect and conserve the scheduled monument
- Improve biodiversity & site management
- Improve facilities for visitors
- Provide opportunities for a wider range of people to get involved
- Achieve future financial sustainability



We will be holding a **public consultation** about the Heritage Fund project **at Ham Hill from Saturday 19th February, until Friday 25th February** with daily activities for all the family to get involved with, as well as further information about the project and a chance to have your say.

From mid-February you can also take part in the survey via a link on the Visit South Somerset website [here](#). We look forward your views on our proposals.

Half Term Activities

Are you planning to get out and about in the wonderful South Somerset countryside this Half Term? Our [Visit South Somerset](#) website is brimming with all that South Somerset has to offer to get close to nature as well as numerous other activities to enjoy.



Parish Environment Champions



SSDC's Area East Thermal Camera Trial

We're currently trialling a thermal imaging camera loan scheme in Area East, South Somerset this winter. This is in partnership with the Bruton & Cary Retrofit Project and Town and Parish councils in Area East.

The thermal imaging camera identifies heat loss areas which may indicate where the installation of insulation and draught-proofing could help in reducing fuel bills and lowering energy usage (along with the associated CO₂ emissions). Interest has been high and we have had 12 Town & Parish Councils sign up to use the cameras under the trial. For more info and to find out which communities are in Area East, please go to the South Somerset Environment website [here](#). We will be reviewing the project trial in Area East at the end of this winter with a view to re-running the scheme again from October 2022, as well as potentially expanding it to the rest of the district if feasible.

See them on TV!

Earlier this month the BBC came out to Charlton Musgrove to see how the thermal imaging camera scheme works. Ruth Bradley interviewed Cllr Henry Hobhouse who is leading the scheme, Justine Mallison of Bruton Retrofit who is an expert domestic retrofit assessor, along with residents Clare and Al Atkinson whose home was being assessed with the cameras.



Watch the full televised piece on **Politics West BBC1 at 10am on Sunday 6th February**. You can also listen to interviews on BBC Radio Somerset that aired last week [here](#). Listen in at about 1 hour and 9 minutes.



SSDC Community Grants

Members of our Environment Team were joined by Adrian Moore from our Locality service, our Portfolio Holder for Environment Cllr Sarah Dyke and members of our Parish Environment Champions to talk about how SSDC Community Grants can benefit local environmental projects.

Press play above to watch a recording of the webinar and you'll find information on how the grant scheme works [here](#)

The SSDC Great Wildflower Seed Parish Giveaway is live!

We've received a great response from Parishes across South Somerset who want FREE wildflower seeds this winter as part of SSDC's new Great Parish Wildflower Seed Giveaway. We will be in contact over the coming weeks to advise on applications, explain how we wish to progress and provide dates for wildflower meadow creation days where we will have our experts showing best practices first hand.



If your parish hasn't applied yet, there is still time. Don't miss out! We are keeping the applications open till February 21st.

- Open to all South Somerset parishes and landowners
- Identify sites that would best suit an area for wildflowers
- Areas where the public can experience and access the flowers
- Highlight areas that already have existing beneficial species, to be sure of what is present before applying
- Make sure there is plenty of sun and it's somewhere open

Where could your community go wild? **Find out more [here](#)**



Have you got skills? We're building an Environment Champions Skills Directory

We have received a call to action on our **Environment Forum** from one of our Environment Champions to help with compiling a list of skills and experience held across the group. We are asking our Champions if they are willing to share their skills, contacts, equipment, or project experience, which may help others, and allow us to create a skills directory. As you'll know, projects often depend on the help and support of others, and so sharing knowledge is vital for their success.

Skills could include wildlife gardening, surveying, energy efficiency and advice, bicycle repair, EV driving, food growing or others. Please do share on the forum so we can all help each other [here](#).

Our aim is to then combine these into a skills directory document which we can share with the group at a later date.

Thanks, Jem Langworthy of Barwick & Stoford for getting the ball rolling!

Future Environment Champion Events

2nd February – The Problem with Phosphates

Environment Champions have been invited to join our virtual webinar next week to hear about phosphates and why they are causing an environmental issue in South Somerset. You'll hear presentations from SSDC's planning team and local Environment Champion Andrew Clegg about citizen science and local monitoring opportunities. All Parish Environment Champions have been sent a zoom invitation so please check your inbox.



19th February (Saturday) – Hedge-laying course @ Ham Hill (in-person, 9am-2pm)

We have a great opportunity for you to learn the wonderful practice of hedge laying, and why it is so important for biodiversity. Hosted by our Countryside Ranger, Paul, the workshop is free and there are limited spaces available. Please contact us [here](#).

11th March – Wyke Farms tour (In-person, 1:30-4pm)

Environment Champions are invited to join us for a tour around Wyke Farms sustainable energy visitor centre and Anaerobic Digester plant, including a "carbon neutral" tasting session afterward. Spaces are limited so please get in touch [here](#) to book a space.



Somerset COP26 review

Somerset COP26, lead by the Levels Climate Forum, brought together 26 Town and Parish council representatives and their Environment Champions to learn and share about solutions to the climate and ecological emergency during COP26 held in Glasgow.



The presentations and talks from exemplar projects have now been uploaded to the Levels Climate Forum [YouTube channel](#). Feedback from attendees was very positive with most responding that the Parish Green Charter workshop, instigated by our Environment Specialist Cara Naden, was really useful. The Levels Climate Forum has a discussion forum on the South Somerset Environment forums page [here](#).

Grants and Funding