



Hello from Cllr Sarah Dyke our Portfolio Holder for Environment

I hope you were not affected too much by the recent storms. It's said that it is difficult to pinpoint climate change as a reason for individual severe weather events, but climate models do indicate an increase in these type of storms as the earth continues to warm. So this is very much in line with what climate scientists have been warning us about. We continue our journey to be carbon neutral by 2030, and have promoted the environment to priority 1 in the new Council Plan.

Read on to hear more news from SSDC, our Parish Environment Champions and some key dates for your diary, as well as looking at our clothes shopping habits and slowing down fast fashion.

Best eco wishes Sarah x

SSDC Green News

Space to go wild at Yeovil Rec

If you are visiting the pitch and putt course at Yeovil Rec over the coming weeks you may start to notice some changes. This year we are trying out a different method of grassland management after a very successful trial last year that saw us attract many different types of wildlife and wildflowers to the small areas that were left to do their own thing with minimal intervention. The team are carrying out **sinus management** which originated in The Netherlands, and is an ecological mowing method. The grass is cut in a meandering way, whereby areas of the grass remain uncut. By mowing in winding paths and in phases, a diverse grassland is created. As a result, there is plenty to be found for butterflies, bees and birds all year round, thus contributing to biodiversity. More information on the sinus method is available [here](#)



Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) NEW Repair & Reuse Service

A new mobile repair and reuse service will be hitting the road this summer.

The customised van will be travelling the county supporting Somerset's network of repair groups and cafes in their work to fix all things electrical. From toasters to tablets, record players to remote controls – if it has a plug or takes batteries, this project is about giving it a new lease of life.

Providing practical help, useful tools and a PAT testing service, the van will encourage people to get things fixed and reused rather than throw them away or recycle them.

The van will also visit events, schools and businesses to provide hands-on help, training and promote the repair and reuse of electrical items and electronics. There's also the chance to name the van, and SWP are recruiting for a repair coordinator too. Read more [here](#).

Parish Environment Champions

Community Tree Planting at Haselbury Plucknett

Environment Champion Alison Scott and the Haselbury Plucknett community have just completed the planting of 36 oak and beech trees along Claycastle Lane.



Alison is a founder member of the Haselbury Wildlife and Habitats group and this was her first project as Environment Champion. She received the full support from the Parish Council from the outset, from planning and getting permissions to implementation. Alison pointed out that Haselbury Plucknett is not a large or prosperous village and the land is intensively farmed in places, so it was good to be able to make small changes to improve biodiversity and help the local environment.

Alison said: "We told the community about it and asked if residents would like to sponsor a tree for £80. We were amazed when all the trees were quickly sponsored. A local supplier was found to supply trees of at least 3m tall. All of these have now been planted with the help of volunteers. It has been a wonderful if at times challenging experience – bringing together the Parish Council, Landowner and community and I thought other environment Champions might like to hear a success story!"

They have two more projects in the pipeline to get a phosphate monitor for their local waterways and plans to create a wildflower area in our recreation ground through the SSDC Great Parish Wildflower Giveaway.

For other local case-studies, visit the Community Projects page of our website [here](#).



The Problem With Phosphates-Catch Up

Earlier this month we held a webinar which took an overarching look at how phosphates are impacting our rivers and waterways in Somerset and the challenges facing the environment and our communities. Press play to watch a recording.

Are you mad about the environment? We are looking for more Parish Environment Champions!

Our Environment Champion network is a growing group of local residents, passionate about the environment, who are willing to volunteer their time to share best practice and support each other to deliver local eco projects in their community. We launched the Parish Environmental Champion network in 2020 and we currently have representatives from over 60 parishes across the district, **however we are looking to increase this number to cover additional parishes!**

The network is vital to the success of the District environment strategy and volunteers act as the 'eyes and ears' in their local areas as well as acting as a pathway for sharing initiatives such as our Great Parish Wildflower Giveaway.

If you see a need for a champion where you live and would like to either nominate yourself or know of someone in your parish who would like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you. For more information of how to get involved and to see a map of where are Champions are currently located click [here](#).



Future Environment Champion Events



2 March – Climate and Ecological Crisis? What's all the fuss about? Zoom Webinar, 7pm

Join us for a presentation by environmentalist David Ramsden to help provide some context to the climate and ecological crisis. The talk will provide an easy-to-follow introduction to the subject followed by a realistic assessment of the situation. It also sets out some positive changes that we might want to consider. A stimulating talk followed by a question and answer session. For a place contact ssdcenvironment@southsomerset.gov.uk

11 March – Wyke Farms tour (In-person, 1.30 - 4pm) Environment champions and local businesses are invited to join us for a tour around Wyke Farms Anaerobic Digester plant, including a "carbon neutral" cheese grading and tasting session afterwards. There are still a few places left so please get in touch [here](#) to book.



6 April - Rivers, Flooding and Climate Resilience Zoom webinar, 7pm

Join us to hear about our local rivers in South Somerset, including some of the adaptations and solutions required to help provide climate resilience for our communities. The session will include local case-studies, focused on river restoration, flood, climate and ecological resilience.

30 April - River Restoration and Channel Management (10.30-12.30)

Join us for an in-person walk at Dodham Brook, Yeovil Country Park and hear from our Yeovil Rivers Community Trust (YRCT) representative about the work they have been undertaking. We will also have a number of other guest speakers that are yet to confirm. Interested? Get in touch at ssdcenvironment@southsomerset.gov.uk



Other Local Events

Check out our [events](#) page on the South Somerset Environment Website for full details:

Mon 28 February - How to undertake a DIY energy audit of your village hall, and identify practical steps for improving energy efficiency (Virtual/ Zoom, 10-12noon):

This free event will provide an independent and professional look at heating and energy efficiency in village halls and will be focused on how to undertake a 'DIY energy audit' which has been tailored specifically to suit the needs of community buildings. The session will be led by Robert Horn from Community Council for Somerset (CCS). It is suitable for anyone involved with managing a community building. Click here to [sign up](#).



Fri 4 March - The Environment Act in the Southwest: With Rebecca Pow MP:

Join an exciting question time style event on the 2021 Environment Act, what it means where you live, and its implementation in the South West.

Pre-submit your questions to ask the panel live in Taunton on 4th March. The panel session is your chance to ask the MP and local leaders your questions on their plans for the local environment in the area. [Sign up to watch live via zoom](#).

Grants and Funding

Environment Grants

Find the latest information on grants and funding on the South Somerset Environment website [here](#)

Here are some key ones:

- **The Screwfix building maintenance grant** – offering grants up to £5,000, with no matched funding requirement for charities to fix, repair, maintain and improve properties and community buildings. Works should be environmentally friendly (i.e. retrofit & insulation, energy efficiency) – click [here](#).
- **The Weinstock fund** – a Somerset-based trust which awards grants up to £5,000, for a range of charitable causes including the environment. For details and to apply, visit [here](#).
- Grants of varying sizes (which do not have to be match funded) are available to groups working in the areas of the environment and animal welfare (up to £100,000) from the GD Charitable Trust. For details, visit the web link above.
- **Somerset Waste Partnership:** offering £500 eco-school grants to up to 50 schools to encourage waste reduction, reuse and recycling. Apply until the end of May 2022 – click [here](#).
- **Woodland Trust** – Offering free trees to Parish Council's, schools and community groups as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. For details and to apply, visit [here](#).
- **The Food Resilience Grant Fund 2022:** Get smart with food resilience - Grants up to £2,000 are available for groups to develop food resilience programmes in Somerset. Apply by 31 March 2022. Visit [here](#).
- **Rewilding Britain:** The rewilding innovations fund: revenue grants up to £15,000 are available for innovative projects, that help remove barriers to land and marine rewilding projects. Apply by 31 March 2022. Visit [here](#).



Eco Schools

St. Margaret's CEVA Primary School Tintinhull Green Tree School Award

St. Margaret's CEVA Primary School are about to receive their Gold award from the Woodland Trust's Green Tree School Award.



They have also been on BBC radio talking about their environmental projects, including growing their own fruit and vegetables, planting trees around the school grounds, maintaining class planters, and they have recently received a grant that enabled them to create a sensory garden at the front of the school for the use of pupils and the local community.

"We work closely with the village as I am keen for our children to recognise that we are part of a wider community and we have a duty to support and care for each other. We also worked with the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, and helped to plant a Ginko tree in the village to mark the start of Tintinhull's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and to support The Queen's Green Canopy project! Finally, we received a letter from the Queen last week thanking us for our various projects aimed at helping the local environment and designing gardens." Massive well done St Margaret's!

Find out more about Support Services for Education Eco-schools [here](#)

Transport

Somerset County Council Transport - New Think Travel Portal

Somerset County Council have launched a brand new portal to promote sustainable travel to residents

and local businesses in Somerset. Find out about your local community transport services and plan journeys avoiding using your car by visiting <https://somerset.thinktravel.info>

thinktravel



Green Business

Save Money Whilst Reducing Your Carbon Footprint

Save Money Whilst Reducing Your Carbon Footprint:
SME Business Workshop

