Monthly Somerset Councillor Report
Oct 2026

News, decisions and dates from across Somerset Council, for sharing with your parishes and communities.

Fairer, more consistent parking across Somerset: revised proposals go to Executive

Somerset Council's Executive will consider revised proposals for parking charges across the county's 120 council-run chargeable car parks at its meeting on 7 October. The Council inherited a patchwork of different rates from the councils that merged in 2023, and the system has not been reviewed since.

The proposals have been shaped by listening to residents, businesses and local councillors. Following the issues raised at scrutiny and by communities, the approach has been revised so that increases are phased where current charges are especially low, giving towns time to adjust. There will be no decisions on the 42 currently free car parks, on-street parking, permits or concessions without first engaging with communities, local councillors, businesses and other stakeholders.

Making it fair: if approved, existing charges, frozen since August 2025, would rise by 10% from January 2027, with a new county-wide tier-based system from autumn 2027. Town-centre residents' parking schemes would be extended to seven days before any seven-day off-street charging is introduced, and a new framework would let city, town and parish councils support local parking objectives.

Investing in our car parks: up to £350,000 from the Parking Reserve to replace outdated payment machines, up to £150,000 to redesign bays at Taunton's Orchard Multi-Storey Car Park for larger vehicles, including electric vehicles, and a six-month trial of seven-day operation at Taunton Park and Ride.

Cllr Liz Leyshon, Lead Member for Finance, Procurement and Performance, said: “As a new unitary council, we inherited a patchwork system for parking charges which is fundamentally unfair. We have a duty to address this, and these proposals are about creating a clearer and more consistent system, while recognising that every town and community is different. We have listened to the issues raised at scrutiny and by the community and have revised the approach so that increases are phased where current charges are especially low.”

Useful links:
Council news release
Executive papers, 7 October

£50 million flood resilience programme agreed, with first funding reaching communities before winter

On Wednesday 23 September, the Council's Executive approved how the £50 million allocated to Somerset by Defra in June will be allocated. The programme covers 15 projects, including extra river

desilting, more gully clearance, improved pumping, better maintenance, new infrastructure, and an expansion of the My Community flood planning and prevention programme.

More than £650,000 will reach communities before winter: an extra £100,000 for Somerset Prepared small grants for emergency equipment such as radios, aerials, tools and PPE, plus first aid training; £50,000 for the Council's emergency response teams, for communications kits and power packs to check on stranded households and run Community Information Points, building on lessons from Storm Chandra in January; and an extra £500,000 for more frequent gully clearing in flood-prone areas.

Through My Community, the Council is working with parish clerks and flood wardens in affected villages and towns to identify local solutions, with initial work beginning by spring 2027. A new Programme Advisory Group of partners, Executive members and stakeholders will oversee delivery.

October is **Somerset Flood Awareness Month**, led by the Somerset Rivers Authority, with displays and drop-ins at libraries and half-term workshops. The highlight is the free Somerset Prepared **Community Resilience Day on Wednesday 21 October at Millfield School, Street**.

Useful links:
Somerset Prepared: apply for a small grant
Somerset Flood Resilience Programme (full report)
Flood Awareness Month events
Check for flooding and sign up for warnings

Preferred bidder confirmed for Saxonvale, Frome

The Council's Executive has selected Newcore Capital, a specialist real estate investment manager, as preferred bidder for the unconditional sale of the 12-acre Saxonvale brownfield site in Frome. Eight bids came in through an open sales process, and were judged on financial offer, proof of funds, transaction timescales, experience and track record, not price alone.

The site was bought by Mendip District Council in 2018. Previous development partnerships with Acorn Property Group and Mayday Saxonvale Development Ltd did not complete, after a withdrawal and a lack of proof of funding respectively. Newcore is a certified B Corporation company, part of a community of businesses that meet verified social, environmental, and governance standards. The company has committed to holding community engagement events with local stakeholders on priorities for the site.

Useful links:
Council news release
Executive report

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British Empire Medal for Wheddon Cross community hero

Eric Norman, landlord of the Rest and Be Thankful pub in Wheddon Cross, has been awarded the British Empire Medal for opening his pub as a refuge for children, school staff, parents and the emergency services after the coach crash in July 2025, in which one child tragically died. Presenting the medal, the Lord Lieutenant, Mohammed Saddiq, said: “Mr Norman's actions were exemplary. I cannot praise him highly enough.”

Mr Norman said: “I like to think this medal is for the entire community who within half an hour rallied round on that dreadful day and tried to give help where we could.”

Useful links:
Council news release
About the British Empire Medal

Shepton Mallet holds its first Walk for a Life

People from Shepton Mallet and the surrounding area came together on Thursday 17 September for the town's first ever Walk for a Life, remembering those who have lost their lives to suicide, raising awareness and encouraging positive action to help prevent suicide. The event has run in Taunton since 2022, and this was the first year it was held in the east of the county.

Organised by Somerset Council's Public Health team with local statutory and voluntary partners, the walk set off from Shepton Mallet Library on a wheelchair and pushchair friendly loop around Collett Park, followed by refreshments and time for reflection back at the library. The Mind Hub on the High Street also opened during the event for anyone wanting extra support.

Mendip South Councillor Claire Sully, who attended the Taunton walk and worked with Cllr Evie Potts-Jones and local partners to bring the event to the east of the county, said: “Suicide has touched the lives of many families across Somerset, including people in my own close-knit community.”

Cllr Potts-Jones, Lead Member for Public Health and Equalities and Diversity, said: “Whether you're walking in memory of a loved one or to show your support for suicide prevention, your presence matters.”

If you or someone you know is struggling, call **Mindline, Somerset's 24/7 mental health helpline**: local 01823 276 892, freephone 0800 138 1692.

Useful links:
Walk for a Life
Somerset Council Public Health
Council news release

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Croscombe riverside wall rebuilt, with new drainage to reduce flooding

The collapsed stone wall between the A371 and the River Sheppey near Croscombe, damaged in a vehicle collision, has been repaired, with the work completed ahead of the autumn rain. The wall was rebuilt using the stone recovered from the river and embankment.

As part of the rebuild, weep holes were added along the wall to help floodwater drain through and reduce future flood levels. PVC drainage pipes were installed at roughly 2 metre intervals at road level along the full length of the rebuilt section. They stick out slightly from the back of the wall, with a small drip edge (about 50 mm) so water doesn't run down the stonework.

Recycle Week: Somerset reuse up by more than a quarter

Somerset's annual recycling tracker, published for Recycle Week, shows nearly 3,500 tonnes of materials rescued for reuse last year, up 26%, and more than 23,000 tonnes of food waste recycled, up 8%. Around 1,100 tonnes less rubbish went to energy from waste and 40% less to landfill. Somerset's 55% recycling rate for 2025-26 puts it in the top 10% of unitary authorities in England.

Useful links:
Recycling tracker
Pass it on: reuse options

Bridgwater South Pride in Place: have your say at October workshops

The Bridgwater South Pride in Place Board met on 17 September to review survey feedback and shape the long-term vision for the area's Community Plan. Residents can meet Board members at three drop-in workshops: Monday 5 October, 5pm to 7pm, YMCA George Williams Centre, Friarn Avenue; Tuesday 6 October, 1pm to 3pm, ReCreation Community Hub, Rhode Lane; and Wednesday 7 October, 10am to noon, Westfield Church, West Street. The online survey remains open.

Useful links:
Pride in Place survey
Council news release

Somerset Health and Care Academy business case approved

The Executive has approved the Full Business Case for the Somerset Health and Care Academy, a partnership between the Council, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and NHS Somerset ICB. Based at the former Bridgwater Hospital site, with digital training, it aims to train more than 2,500 people a year once fully running, with simulation spaces, careers support and an Independent Living Centre. It is part of the Levelling Up Fund programme secured in 2022.

More information: Council news release

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A38 improvements a step closer

The Executive has approved £7.34 million towards an £18.8 million joint scheme with North Somerset Council to improve the A38 between Burnham-on-Sea and Barrow Gurney, including a revamp of the Edithmead roundabout at M5 Junction 22 and safety improvements at Rooksbridge, Cross and the Strawberry Line crossing. Subject to £9 million of Government funding, work is expected to start in early 2027.

More information: Council news release

Council welcomes housing investment but calls for local flexibility

The Council has welcomed recent Government housing announcements, but is asking for councils to be trusted to target funding where it is needed most, and for historic Housing Revenue Account debt to be written off. Somerset services £133 million of this debt; clearing it could allow around 630 more council homes on top of the 580 already planned. As of 30 June, 13,149 households were registered with Homefinder Somerset.

More information: Council news release

Recovery Month: Recovery Walk on Saturday 10 October

September was Recovery Month, celebrating people recovering from drug and alcohol dependence and challenging stigma, and County Hall was lit purple on 30 September. The Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service Recovery Month Walk takes place on Saturday 10 October. Free, confidential support is available on 0300 303 8788.

Useful links:
Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service
Council news release

King's Award for Voluntary Service: nominations open until 1 December

Volunteer-led groups across Somerset are encouraged to apply for the King's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award for voluntary groups and described as the MBE for volunteer organisations. Recent Somerset nominees include the Exmoor Community Bus Association and the Good Fellowship Club in the Yeovil area.

More information: Apply for the KAVS

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Ham Hill Fun Dog Show

Dogs and their owners enjoyed the Ham Hill Fun Dog Show at the Meadows at Ham Hill on Sunday 13 September, with ten fun classes, the Ham Hill Challenge and Best in Show, raising money for the Friends of Ham Hill charity.

More information: Ham Hill Fun Dog Show

Fostering: Cuppa with a Carer, Frome, Wednesday 14 October

A free, informal fostering information session runs from 6pm to 8pm at Cordero Lounge, Frome. Around 700 children are in care in Somerset, and more local foster carers are needed so children can stay close to home. Call 0800 587 9900.

Useful links:
Book a place
Fostering in Somerset

Council leaders see progress at Agratas battery plant

Council Leader Cllr Bill Revans and Chief Executive Duncan Sharkey visited the Agratas site at Gravity Smart Campus near Bridgwater, the UK's largest battery manufacturing investment. The Council is working with Agratas and University Centre Somerset College Group on skills, training and apprenticeships, so local people and businesses benefit.

More information: Council news release

M5 closures from 5 October for Agratas power connection

A high-voltage cable connecting the Agratas site to the national grid will be laid across the M5 between junctions 23 (Dunball) and 24 (Huntworth) for up to 15 days from Monday 5 October. Expect overnight closures in one direction on most nights with diversions via the A38 through Bridgwater, a 50mph limit with two lanes open by day, and one night of full closure in both directions.

More information: Council news release

Taunton flood defence works start mid-October

Enabling works for the £6 million flood alleviation scheme on the left bank of the River Tone begin in mid-October for around six weeks, with main construction early next year. Parking bays and a short section of Clarence Street, between Portland Street and Cleveland Street, will be suspended for two weeks from 26 October.

More information: Scheme details

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Recycling sites move to winter hours from 1 October

Somerset's 16 recycling sites open 9am to 5pm on weekdays and 9am to 4pm at weekends until 31 March 2027. Midweek opening days vary, so check your nearest site before travelling. Queue cameras are available for nine sites.

Useful links:
Find your nearest recycling site
Recycling site queue cams

Free health and social care information event, Trull, Thursday 1 October

Residents can plan ahead and talk to adult social care practitioners, social workers and local organisations at Trull Village Memorial Hall from 1pm to 4pm, with free health checks, parking and refreshments. Recorded webinars are available for anyone unable to attend.

Useful links:
Your adult social care journey
Recorded webinars

2,000 people in Somerset have a hidden heart condition

Public Health is looking for around 2,000 people with undiagnosed familial hypercholesterolaemia (FH), an inherited condition causing high cholesterol from birth. If anyone in your family had a heart attack under the age of 60, get checked: people aged 40 to 74 can book a free NHS Health Check.

Useful links:
Familial hypercholesterolaemia
Book an NHS Health Check

Free NHS Health Checks now available in Williton

Eligible residents aged 40 to 74 who have not had a check in the last five years can book a free 20 to 30 minute NHS Health Check at Williton Library, West Somerset House.

More information: Book a health check

'What will you miss?' stop smoking campaign

A new South West campaign is urging smokers to quit ahead of the smokefree generation law on 1 January 2027. Smokefree Somerset offers free face-to-face, phone and online support, and helped 2,300 people last year. Call 01823 356222.

More information: Smokefree Somerset

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High Court injunction over unlawful Oxen Lane development

The High Court has granted a final injunction over the unauthorised residential traveller site at Oxen Lane, North Curry. Residential occupation must stop within three months, and the development must be removed and the land reinstated within four months.

More information: Council news release

Pandaemonium sells out at Hestercombe

Extra screenings of Pandaemonium were added at Hestercombe House on Sunday 27 September after the Saturday showings sold out, marking the 25th anniversary of the Somerset-shot film.

More information: Screen Somerset

Somerset Lord-Lieutenant Cadets appointed

Four cadets have been appointed Lord-Lieutenant Cadets for their leadership and service: Cadet Flight Sergeant Ewan Glossop, Cadet Sergeant Thomas Greaves of Castle Cary, Cadet Sergeant James Hargreaves and Cadet Lance Corporal Simon Simukaitis of Yeovil. They will support the Lord-Lieutenant at official events.

More information: Council news release

Charities celebrated at Lord-Lieutenant's garden party

More than 150 charity volunteers from across the county were thanked at a garden party hosted by the Lord-Lieutenant, Mohammed Saddiq, with 20 volunteers nominated by each of six organisations including Thrive, Spark and Somerset Community Foundation.

More information: Council news release

Updated maximum taxi fares now in force

New maximum hackney carriage fares took effect by 19 September, the first update since May 2024, reflecting higher fuel, insurance and maintenance costs. The first mile rises from £4.60 to £5.06. These are maximums, and operators can charge less.

More information: Council news release

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Get involved in your Unitary Council

Residents don't have to wait for an election to have a say in how Somerset is run. The Council's Council and Democracy pages set out the main ways to get involved, including having your say through open consultations and engagement, finding and contacting your local councillor, following or speaking at council and committee meetings, checking committee agendas, reports and minutes, submitting or signing a petition, and exploring what's involved in standing to become a councillor yourself.

Further information: Council and democracy

Upcoming Council meetings

Meeting dates are subject to change. When looking for details of a particular meeting, please contact the relevant officer to confirm that the meeting is going ahead as scheduled.

October 2026 meetings

- Planning Committee – East: 6 October at 2.00pm, Council Offices, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet
- Executive: 7 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton (including the parking proposals)
- Scrutiny Committee – Adults, Health and Housing: 8 October at 10.00am, Bridgwater House, Bridgwater
- Licensing Sub-Committee (West): 9 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton (The Ruishton Inn, Ruishton)
- Human Resources Committee: 12 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton
- Bus Advisory Board: 13 October at 10.00am, virtual meeting
- Planning Committee – North: 13 October at 2.00pm, Bridgwater House, Bridgwater
- Scrutiny Committee – Corporate and Strategic: 14 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton
- Scrutiny Committee – Climate, Environment and Place: 15 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton
- Pension Fund Board: 16 October at 10.00am, Council Offices, Shepton Mallet
- Planning Committee – South: 20 October at 2.00pm, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil
- Licensing Sub-Committee (South): 21 October at 10.00am, virtual meeting (7 North Street, Martock)
- Standards Committee: 22 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton
- Strategic Planning Committee: 22 October at 2.00pm, Bridgwater House, Bridgwater
- Licensing Sub-Committee (East): 27 October at 10.00am, virtual meeting (The Godney Gathering)
- Planning Committee – West: 27 October at 2.00pm, County Hall, Taunton
- Shareholder Executive Sub-Committee: 28 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton

- Planning and Transport Policy Executive Sub-Committee: 28 October at 2.00pm, County Hall, Taunton
- Audit Committee: 29 October at 10.00am, County Hall, Taunton
- Next Somerset Rivers Authority Board: 4 December at 9.45am, Council Offices, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet

Useful links:

democracy.somerset.gov.uk – Council calendar

Somerset Rivers Authority – meetings and public questions

Report It First

Useful links to share with your communities

- **Visit - Report a Problem on the Road -** A list of all reporting pages to do with roads, pavements, lighting: Report a problem on the road
- **Potholes and road damage -** Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users: Potholes, road damage and edge loss
- **Report a problem with a street light -** We maintain and repair street lights to national standards: Report a problem with a street light
- **Road signs, markings and lighting -** Includes bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate or new road sign: Road signs, bollards and road markings
- **Speed limits -** Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures: Speed limits
- **Traffic lights -** We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the County: Traffic lights
- **Street and roadworks -** We maintain the roads and pavements managed at public expense in Somerset: Street and roadworks problems
- **Traffic updates and roadworks -** follow Travel Somerset on X and Facebook: Travel Somerset on Facebook
- **All ongoing roadworks -** Available on the Somerset Council website interactive map: Roadworks and travel information
- **Somerset Waste -** Collection days, replacement bins or recycling bags and missed collection reporting: Bins, recycling and waste
- **Sign-up for the latest climate news from across Somerset:** Climate newsletter sign-up
- **Open Somerset Council Consultations -** Which anyone can complete and take part in shaping the future of Somerset: Somerset Council - Citizen Space - Consultations
- **Somerset Prepared -** Community resilience information, funding support and the Community Resilience Awards: somersetprepared.org.uk

SOMERSET COUNCIL TELEPHONE NO - 0300 123 2224 / SOMERSET COUNCIL WEBSITE HOMEPAGE