

## SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL

### BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

JULY 2021

#### Councillor Gemma Verdon – Chard South

**Coronavirus infection rates:** As at 25<sup>th</sup> June the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 20,982 (up from 20,455 on 28<sup>th</sup> May) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 799. The rate per 100,000 stands at 47.1 (5.5) for Somerset with Mendip at 40.7 (5.2), Sedgemoor at 74.7 (8.9), South Somerset 20.8 (3.6) and SW&T at 58.7 (5.2). The number of total deaths across the County is currently 19% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 1.0 and 1.5.

***Despite significant progress and even for those who have had both jobs it is vitally important to remember, to observe Hands-Face-Space and to Ventilate indoor areas at all times.***

**Road map out of lockdown:** The final stage out of lockdown delayed until July 19<sup>th</sup> (with a July 5<sup>th</sup> review) is subject to Government assessment on four key criteria:

- the vaccine deployment programme continues successfully
- evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated
- infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS
- the assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new variants

By this date the Government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact and to reopen remaining premises, including nightclubs. The final easing of restrictions on large events, performances and life events such as weddings will also be subject to the analysis of the outcomes from certain pilot events.

**Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline:** A single phone number continues to be available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. **0300 790 6275**, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm.

**Vaccination programme roll-out:** Somerset continues to have one of the highest vaccination rates in the country with the latest figures showing over 700,00 doses (both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) Take up rates of both doses is very high: 80+ (96%), 75-79 (100%), 70-74 (98.3%), 65-69 (90.4%), 60-64 (95.2%), 55-59 (91.7%) and 50-54 (84.5). First dose rates are currently 45-49 (84.9%), 40-44 (90.4%), 35-39 (81.6%), 30-34 (71.5%) and 25-29 (44.2%).

**One Somerset:** An announcement on the future of local government in Somerset is expected from the Government before the Parliamentary summer recess on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. For more information visit: [www.onesomerset.org.uk](http://www.onesomerset.org.uk)

## **Flood Incident: South Somerset (Chard/Combe St Nicholas/Wadeford/Wambrook/Whitestaunton)**

Following the flood event in Chard on Monday evening (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2021 Operational Update)

- Operational staff continue to focus on the local area.
- Highways Superintendents continue to inspect the wider geographic area;
  - Targeted inspection of highway gullies in the Chard urban area. Works package to be issued to Milestone for reactive gully cleaning works. Locations include;
    - Glynswood
    - Furnham Road
    - Crimchard
    - Elizabeth Way
    - Locations in Winsham
    - Locations in West Crewkerne
  - Minor rural roads will continue to be inspected to understand the full extent of the network damage. Where necessary actioning defects and/or formalising road closures. This is proving to be a considerable task.
  - Safety gangs assigned to this area to respond Highway Superintendent requests.
- Scrapton Lane, Combe St Nicholas, and Court Mill Lane, Wadeford, White Ash Lane and Holiday Lane, Whitestaunton are closed as debris/loss of surface course has made the roads impassable.
- Scrapton Lane, Combe St Nicholas. Major clear up process has commenced. Site compound set up on Thursday. Clearance works ongoing tomorrow and planned for Saturday. Sunday working TBC. The spoil material will temporarily be stored on site. Landowner permission granted.
- Whitestaunton. Access has now been reinstated to the community, albeit over a temporary running surface. The spoil material, currently stored on Pretty Oak Main, starting to be removed from the temporary location and formally disposed of. Consideration will now be given to the permanent engineering solution options.
- SCC sweeper will be operational in the Chard/Combe St Nicholas area. Arisings continue to be temporarily stored in A30 Windwhistle chippings landing.

**Consultation on A38 Burnham to Bristol airport upgrade:** Proposals to make improvements to one of Somerset's key roads are being shared with the public. Somerset County Council and North Somerset Council are working in partnership on a number of proposed schemes on the A38 Burnham-on-Sea to just outside Bristol. The scheme seeks to improve journey reliability times, road safety and better connect local communities – whether by car, public transport or active travel. The public are invited to comment on these plans using the interactive map on the engagement website, <https://a38mrn-engagement.com>. The feedback will help inform the A38 Major Business Case that will be submitted to Government for approval later in the year.

**Tackling Somerset's Childminder shortage:** The number of registered childminders in the county has decreased by over 31% since September 2015. In response, Somerset County Council has been working hard to boost numbers and is tackling the shortage of childminders across the county. In addition to a 'Golden Hello' grant worth £250.00, guidance and training is being offered to newly registered childminders which supports

them through Ofsted registration and beyond. Anyone interested in attending an information session on Wednesday 21 July (6.30-7pm) is urged to register through: <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/childminding-in-somerset-virtual-information-session-tickets-157986252133>

**Pioneering Climate adaptation website:** A new web-based app gives the opportunity to explore the impacts of climate change on the Somerset Levels. The app, created as part of the Adapting the Levels project to help local people turn individual ideas into plans for collective action, focusing particularly on the challenges of flooding and drought. Adapting the Levels has worked with SCC, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, Parish and Town councils, businesses and communities to create draft pathways, which are available to explore online. Everyone is invited to view the pathways, comment and add ideas, by visiting [www.adaptingthelevels.co.uk](http://www.adaptingthelevels.co.uk)

**Investing in Children and Young people:** An ambitious and innovative approach to improve the life chances of Somerset's highest needs children has given the green light. The ten-year programme will deliver a new way of working which will address the needs of Somerset's most complex children and young people who are cared for by the Council. The council will be seeking a strategic partner(s) to provide up to 10 new small homes in Somerset, linking these to foster carers and therapeutic education to provide a seamless service that will help children and young people to grow and flourish. Combining foster care and small homes will offer young people the experience of a stable home environment and the opportunity to live with a family when they are ready. Skilled therapists from different agencies and teachers will work together to provide wraparound support designed to meet their individual needs.

**Special Educational Needs Survey:** Parents, carers, children, young people and practitioners are being asked to complete a short confidential survey to help shape services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Together with NHS Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group and the Somerset Parent Carer Forum, SCC are keen to hear views of children and young people who have SEND, their parents, carers and families, and the practitioners who support them. The short survey will close on Friday 9 July. [www.somerset.gov.uk/360survey](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/360survey)