

COUNTY COUNCIL CONSERVATIVE GROUP

BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

SEPTEMBER 2019

School transport: For the first time in over 25 years Somerset County Council will be operating their own school bus fleet from the beginning of the new school year. The low emission buses represent a major investment into school transport service delivery whilst saving the County Council money. The design, which shows silhouettes and scenes from around the County, is one that SCC intend to use extensively in the future on minibuses, highways vans and numerous other vehicles.

Castles and Coast Way: A new walking trail in a less travelled but beautiful part of Somerset is now open to the public. The Castles and Coast Way is a 13-mile circular footpath which runs from Nether Stowey to Stogursey and on to the Somerset coast at Shurton Bars. The route links the Coleridge Way to the England Coast Path National Trail, which will eventually run around the coast of England.

Apprenticeships: Over the past three years Somerset County Council has invested in more than 300 apprenticeships, helping people get started on their career and up skilling existing staff to further their career. 50 new apprentices will be starting this autumn to start apprenticeships during the Autumn. SCC is the first local authority in the South West to make use of the Social Work Degree Apprenticeship, which will also see 12 of our existing staff across Adults and Children's Service up skill to become Social Workers.

Stand Up For Care: Three major local government bodies have given their backing to Somerset County Council's Stand Up For Care petition. The petition calls for cross-party discussions before Christmas on how to address the national social care funding shortfall. Leaders of all political groups at the County Council have given it their backing and they have been joined by the Local Government Association, County Council Network, and the Association for Directors of Adult Social Services. The petition is hosted on the www.petition.parliament.uk website and can be found by visiting the site and searching 'Somerset'.

Shared Lives Service: Somerset County Council; has agreed to transfer its Shared Lives service to Shared Lives South West (SLSW), in a move that will see more people with different needs benefit from the life-changing

support. The Shared Lives scheme currently focuses on people with learning disabilities but the new arrangements will make this support available to younger people with physical disabilities, the elderly, those being discharged from hospital and people with mental health conditions. Shared Lives support sees adults with additional needs matched with a trained and paid carer who opens their own family home to the person needing support. The aim is for the person being supported to live the fullest life they can, be part of the community and maintain and promote new skills.

iAero: An £8m cutting-edge aerospace technology centre in Yeovil is taking off with construction work starting on site. Somerset County Council is working with the aerospace industry, including Leonardo Helicopters in Yeovil, on the flagship iAero Centre which will encourage innovation, collaboration and growth in the aerospace sector and supply chain, ensuring it remains competitive in a fast- changing world. iAero is due to be completed in July next year with the first tenants expected to move in later in 2020

Squibbers Way: Somerset County Council recently asked the residents to help find a new permanent name for the £18.4 million Colley Lane Southern Access Road (CLSAR). This attracted more than 250 unique nominations that were whittled down to a shortlist of six and put to the public vote to choose the winner. In total 2,728 people cast their vote with Squibbers Way receiving 59% of all votes. (Squibbing, featuring two-handed firework torches held overhead, is an intrinsic part of Bridgwater Carnival).

Emotional and Mental Health Support: The dates for the next Mental Health First Aid Course are the 9th and 16th October 2019. Full details are available from lfinnis@somerset.gov.uk Health Promotion Manager and applications must be in by the 16th September 2019.

Recent press releases:

Ultramarathon boosts Mendip Hills Fund

Make your voices heard, young people in Somerset are urged

Volunteer Elaine wins Pride award