



Somerset Liberal Democrats
Chard South
 April 2026

Help with food and fuel – phonedlines open

Our staff, practitioners, partners, and schools, community champion networks and our councilors, are all working together to reach households most in need. Our joint aim is to ensure every resident has access to the right support at the right time. If you need help for your family, please note the many programs available below. And please forward this information through your professional and/or personal networks. Help us spread the word, and the support that's out there.



Food vouchers this Easter break

Help available for households who receive free school meals and are worried about covering the cost of food during the Easter school break (3 April to 19 April 2026). We are working with Citizens Advice Somerset (CA) to deliver vouchers from selected supermarkets to eligible families.

Find out more here: [Easter Holiday Family Support - Citizens Advice Somerset](#)

Applicants complete an online form and provide the relevant supporting evidence. The form can be found here: [EHFS Form - Citizens Advice Somerset](#)

Anyone struggling to fill in the form can give the CA a call on freephone **0808 278 7842**. Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm.

In addition to the CA scheme, there's also the [Happy Healthy Holidays \(HHH\) programme](#). These holiday clubs and camps are available during the Easter break for families with children eligible for free school meals. It's delivered by Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP).

Help with fuel costs

Somerset Council is also working in partnership with Citizens Advice to ensure vital support is available for those struggling with heating oil costs. A dedicated phonedline has been set up for Somerset residents needing urgent financial assistance. Freephone **0808 278 7842**.

Families can also find a range of support here:

- [The Council's #Help4All scheme](#)
- [Community Hubs network](#)
- [Healthy Start – NHS – healthy food and milk](#)
- [The Local Pantry Network in Somerset](#)
- [Cost of living support for Somerset residents](#)

Somerset Bus Service Funding

Somerset has secured a Government Bus Service Fund award of £11.4m capital and £13.1m revenue to improve local bus services to 2029. Plans include expanded Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT), better bus to rail links, and improved connections to employment and health services — benefiting rural communities across Somerset.



Putting the heart back into S♥merset



Pot Holes and Roadworks update

It's been a busy month for road repairs although we are aware that there is still Much more work to be done, please report any defects that you come across via the website or get in contact with myself. Here is a brief list of repairs and works that have taken place in our area over the last month.



CW- Carriageway Pothole U5122/100 CHARDSTOCK LANE 5

- *CW- Carriageway Pothole T5185/10 BURRIDGE CROSS LANE 4*
- *CW- Carriageway Pothole B3162/210 STREET FARM TO BLACKLAND LANE - FORTON 3*
- *CW- Carriageway Pothole T5163/20 SCHOOL LANE - SOUTH CHARD 3*
- *CW- Carriageway Pothole U8797/10 LINKHAY - SOUTH CHARD 3*
- *CW- Carriageway Pothole A30/220 CREWKERNE ROAD 2*
- *CW- Carriageway Pothole A358/140 TWO ASH HILL - TATWORTH 2*
- *CW- Carriageway Pothole B3162/310 HOLYROOD STREET/DUCK LANE/CROWSHUTE LINK 2*
- *GY- Blocked Drainage System U5174/11 POST OFFICE LANE - SOUTH CHARD 2*
- *CW- Carriageway Pothole U8753/50 MINTONS*

Recycling — changes for flats

From end of March 2026: expanded communal recycling collections for ~13,000 households in flats
New collections include: plastic bottles, pots/tubs/trays, tins/cans/foil, glass, cartons, food waste and plastic bags/wrappers
Funded by Government's Simpler Recycling programme

Somerset Council Budget — The Gap is Closing

Funding gap: Cut from £101m (March 2025) to £25m (February 2026) — a significant turnaround in just 12 months.

Government support: £30m Exceptional Financial Support approved — £25m to close the gap, £5m for service transformation.

Council Tax: 4.99% rise confirmed at Full Council on 4 March 2026. Somerset's rate remains lower than Wiltshire, Dorset and Cornwall.

Around 66% of Council Tax funds Social Care and Children's Services, where demand and costs continue to rise. Over 60% of residents consulted backed an increase to protect essential services. Somerset has balanced its budget every year since formation in 2023, despite a 40% reduction in Government funding to local authorities in recent years.

Savings on track: Investments of £15.3m projected to deliver £31m–£57m in savings by 2030/31.

What residents said (Dec 2025 consultation, 1,400+ responses)

62% backed a council tax rise to protect services

86% want the council to lobby central government for more funding

Top priority: roads and pavements (55%), then crime (29%), public transport and schools (28% each)

83% opposed cuts to road maintenance; 68% opposed cuts to waste services



Keeping in Contact

**COME AND TALK WITH US
AT A LIB DEM SURGERY**

FIRST SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

With your Town and Unitary Councillors

AT THE GUILDHALL, CHARD



10am to 12pm

You can meet with me to discuss any concerns or for help dropping into our monthly surgery or I can arrange an appointment on a day and time that suits you feel free to give me a call on 07736 310805 or email

Jason.baker@somerset.gov.uk

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