



Somerset Liberal Democrats Chard South August 2025

Ongoing Roadworks and Road Closures

As you will be aware we have had road works taking place in Chard for what seems like for ever, several residents have contacted me with concerns over these and the time that it is taking to complete the work. This concern was further heightened when further planned work signs appeared in both Victoria Avenue and Old Town, following these concerns regarding the level of road works in Chard I have sought clarification from the highways team and expressed concerns.



I am pleased to say that the signage that was placed on Victoria Avenue was placed in the incorrect location and held misleading information. I can confirm that Victoria Avenue will not be closed for the advertised planned works, but in fact Wessex Water are going to be closing the cycleway located on Crewkerne Road. These works will have no impact to motor vehicular traffic. I have also received an update regarding the Furnham Road closure, and they have advised that the closure of Furnham Road will be completed on the 12.08.25.

Following concern regarding the dates of the Old town closure and the annual Carnival, I have been assured that the Old Town closure works will be completed and removed prior to the event commencing.

Somerset Moves Forward with Plans to Deliver a Sustainable Council

Since becoming a Unitary Authority in April 2023, Somerset Council has been dedicated to building a fairer and more resilient future for everyone in the county. The merger of five councils into one makes it all the more vital that we work more closely with local communities, listen to your needs, and improve services.

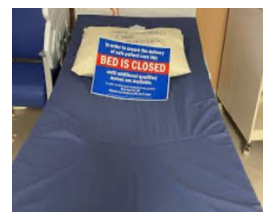


Like many local councils, we face significant financial pressures caused by rising costs, increasing demand for support, and reduced government funding. Despite these challenges, Somerset has managed to avoid declaring a section 114 notice, by making tens of millions of pounds in savings, helping us maintain democratic control over our services.

Building on our early efforts, we are now entering an important new phase of transformation with the adoption of the whole-council "Inspiring Innovation" transformation plan. This initiative aims to make our council financially sustainable and better able to deliver for the people and residents of Somerset. We are redesigning how we work, making use of digital technology, and creating a culture of teamwork and inclusion within the council, and partnership working outside, focusing on prevention and locality working.

Community Hospital Beds in Somerset Could Be Closed or Relocated following “trial”

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust is considering closing local community hospital beds across its 11 community hospitals to provide more treatment closer to home. They say this aligns with the government's ten-year NHS plan and aims to increase "pathway beds," helping patients leave hospitals sooner and receive care at home.



The trust currently operates 13 inpatient wards in hospitals across Somerset, including Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea, Frome, Glastonbury, Minehead, and Wellington. The trust says no final decisions have been made, but they are consulting internally with staff—including changing contracts and consulting with unions—and this process is nearing completion. This has raised local concerns about transparency, community involvement, and the long-term impact on local NHS services.

Somerset Councillor and Vice Chair of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee, Claire Sully, has publicly called for urgent scrutiny ahead of upcoming decisions in the autumn. She criticised the trust for limited public engagement and a lack of transparency, as no business case has been presented to the public or Somerset Council.

Somerset Council Acts to Reduce Planning Application Backlog

Somerset Council has launched a 12-week plan to address delays in processing planning applications. The measures include limiting applicant updates, reducing non-essential meetings, and prioritising site visits to streamline decision-making. The aim is to clear the backlog, improve response times, and create a sustainable service for residents and developers.



The Council recognises the challenges caused by staff recruitment, system issues, and application complexity, and is committed to long-term improvements over 2025-2026 to deliver a better, more efficient planning service.

Focus on Food Waste Recycling as New Collection Calendars Arrive

Somerset residents will soon receive an 18-month recycling and rubbish collection calendar, with a focus on improving food waste recycling. While participation is high, a large amount of food waste still ends up in general bins.



Recycling food waste reduces costs and produces renewable energy and fertiliser through Anaerobic Digestion, with tea bags also suitable for recycling. Somerset Council, alongside SUEZ Recycling, will remind residents to separate food from packaging and recycle regularly. Free kitchen caddies and bins are available online to help reduce food waste.

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 by dropping into our monthly surgery or I can arrange an appointment on a day and time that suits you or feel free to give me a call on 07736 310805 or email Jason.baker@somerset.gov.uk