



**Somerset Liberal Democrats  
Chard South  
December 2024**

**Somerset Parish Conference**

The joint venture between Somerset Council and the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) was designed to showcase partnership working at its best, to help improve the lives of our communities.



Speakers included Somerset Chief Executive, Duncan Sharkey,, Service Director for Partnerships, Localities and Culture, Sara Skirton, Lead Member For Transformation, Human Resources and Localities, Cllr Theo Butt Philip, and SALC Chief Executive, Ewan Jones. Also in attendance was Jonathan Owen, Chief Executive of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) - placing a national spotlight on our Council, partners, and parishes in Somerset.

In addition to key speakers, there were workshops on Civility and Respect led by our Head of Governance and Democratic Services, Scott Wooldridge, and How to Contact and Engage with Somerset Council, with Strategic Manager for Customer Access and Operations, Sharon Jones, and Local Community Network (LCN) Development Lead, Kate Hellard. SALC also ran a health and wellbeing workshop, which featured a funding offer for parishes.

LCN Link Officers were on hand during the busy workshop sessions and facilitated throughout the event. Emma Plummer, Senior Parish and Community Development Officer co-ordinated the conference, working with Stronger Communities Officer, Kirsty Conger. Compère for the day was Internal and Transition Communications Lead, Richard Birch. A truly collaborative effort which brought local clerks, councillors, partners and Somerset Council together, and involved staff from across many service areas who took time out to support the conference.

Duncan said at the conference: "A huge amount of energy is going into improving the relationship between our parishes, partners and the Council. These relationships are based on trust and respect, not rules or processes. We have really good colleagues who are totally focussed in this area, and they are doing some great work."

**Pay What You Can Christmas Lunch – Monday 23rd December**

This Christmas, Chard CommuniTea Waffle are opening their doors for a special Pay What You Can Christmas Lunch. If you're spending the festive season on your own or feeling lonely, we'd love to welcome you on Monday 23rd December Spaces are still available, so book now to join us for a warm, festive meal and good company – because helping those who feel lonely is a big part of who we are. To book, pop in or call them on 01460 497578 and Let's make this Christmas a little brighter together.



## A personal message

I Would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for all of there help and assistance over the last year, I strongly believe that we can deliver some amazing things for our residents and will always stive to do this be it holding surgeries, putting on events, helping people with case work, attending meetings, volunteering or anything that is needed. I would like to wish you, your colleagues, staff and family a peaceful and happy Christmas a hope you have a great new year.



## The Octagon Theatre & Westlands Entertainment Venue

The Octagon Theatre & Westlands Entertainment Venue Arts Engagement & Outreach Programme delivers activities that aim to benefit health and wellbeing, enrich learning and education in and outside schools, and inspire and celebrate talent in our community.



From April 2023 to March 2024, the Octagon and Westlands hosted hundreds of memorable performances, inspiring screenings, and fantastic participation classes. They have entertained audiences, inspired children and young people, boosted the wellbeing of participants, empowered our community, and brought people together.

We reflect on the last 12 months in our Annual Review - read all about it here (or pick up your copy at Westlands Entertainment Venue Box Office): [12 Month Review: Octagon Theatre & Westlands Entertainment Venue](#) You can find out about our projects and upcoming opportunities at [westlandsyeovil.co.uk/participate/octagon-academy-participate/](http://westlandsyeovil.co.uk/participate/octagon-academy-participate/) If you would like more information, please contact the Arts Engagement & Outreach Manager, **Katherine Hoskins**. [Katherine.hoskins@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Katherine.hoskins@somerset.gov.uk)

## Chard CommuniTea Waffle

A major scheme that will strengthen Chard Reservoir's barrier and help protect local communities from its potential to flood is due to get underway. Somerset Council is budgeting up to £831,000 for the work with a further £160,000 held for contingencies, having awarded the contract to Kier. The project involves building

A low wall along one section of the reservoir to reduce the risk of the reservoir failing. In the worst case scenario this could lead to severe flooding downstream, potential loss of life and multi-million pound damages.

Currently the chance of flood waters overflowing and leading to failure of the dam in any given year is approximately 1 in 5,000. With the wall in place, this chance reduces to about 1 in 400,000. The scheme will be phased with work on culverts taking place before Christmas with the wall and stabilisation works likely to start in the New Year.



## 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](mailto:Jason.baker@somerset.gov.uk)