



Somerset Liberal Democrats

Chard South

February 2026

Flooding in Somerset: why a "major incident" was declared

Somerset Council declared a major incident after Storm Chandra because exceptionally heavy rain fell on already saturated ground, causing rapid rises in river and moorland water levels and localised flooding across the county. Calling a major incident is used as a precautionary, multi-agency trigger: it allows councils, emergency services, the Environment Agency and voluntary partners to pool resources quickly, run a central incident cell, redeploy staff, share information, stand up rest centres if needed, and prioritise support for the most vulnerable. The declaration does not automatically mean mandatory evacuations, but it signals the heightened risk and ensures a coordinated, scalable response while further warnings and flood alerts remain in force.



Storm Chandra followed multiple recent storms, producing new short-duration rainfall records in the south-west and rapid flooding across previously less-affected areas.

Experts argue the pattern is directly linked to global heating (warmer air → more water vapour → heavier downpours) and that communities are already experiencing impacts earlier than expected.

Local leaders and flood scientists warn that emergency, short-term measures (pumps, cranes, contractors) are necessary but insufficient without sustained funding, maintenance and nature-based interventions; some voices even raise the difficult prospect that, without major investment, some settlements may become increasingly hard to protect long term.

This is a rapidly changing situation for updates please see links below:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/beaches-ports-and-flooding/flooding-information-and-advice/>

<https://www.somersetriversauthority.org.uk/news/>

https://www.facebook.com/travelsomerset/?locale=en_GB

Have your say on Green Lane proposals

Somerset Council is consulting on trial changes at five rural/edge-of-residential routes (Burcott Lane, Wells; Comeytrawe Road, Taunton; Neville's Batch, Gurney Slade; Downend Road, Puriton; Touches Lane, Chard) to improve access for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and wheeling users by removing through motor traffic where appropriate. Trials would be followed by further consultation before any permanent changes. Nearby residents and businesses will be notified by letter.

Take part: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/consultations/green-lanes-consultation>



Changes to recycling collections for people in flats

Somerset Council will roll out expanded communal recycling collections from the end of March for about 13,000 households in flats and other communal properties. New collections will include plastic bottles, pots/tubs/trays, tins/cans/foil/aerosols, glass bottles and jars, cartons, food waste, and plastic bags/wrappers. A leaflet with start dates will be posted to affected residents; if you do not receive a letter, your collection remains unchanged. The scheme is funded by the Government's Simpler Recycling programme.



More information: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste-recycling-and-environment/recycling/>

Residents to shape Somerset's adult social care future

Somerset Council has launched a short consultation to refresh its Adult Social Care strategy for 2026–2029 and is inviting residents, unpaid carers and organisations to contribute. The council will combine face-to-face engagement with an online survey to gather views on recent experiences of care, barriers faced, what good care looks like and priorities for the next three years. Responses will inform the revised strategy and a continuous improvement plan. The consultation closes on 27 March 2026.



Have your say: Somerset Adult Social Care Strategy (2026–2029) consultation page — <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/consultations/>

Council delays budget meetings after Government postpones funding announcement

Somerset Council has revised its budget timetable after the Government confirmed the Final Local Government Settlement will be published on the 9th of February 2026, a week later than expected. The delay reduces the time available to analyse the settlement, complete approvals and prepare statutory budget papers.

The 9th of February announcement is also expected to confirm whether councils may set Council Tax above the 4.99% referendum limit and whether financial support will be provided for the accumulated Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.

Decisions on Exceptional Financial Support via a Capitalisation Directive — which last year arrived in late February — may also be delayed.



Revised meeting timetable for budget decision making:

11th of February: Executive

25th of February: Extraordinary Executive

4th of March: Rescheduled Full Council — Budget and Council Tax setting

Keeping in Contact

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

FIRST SATURDAY IN THE MONTH

With your Town and Unitary Councillors

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