



Somerset Liberal Democrats Chard South May 2024



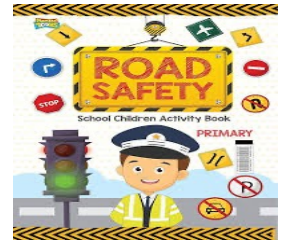
Road Safety Team launches campaign following 'disturbing' rise in road deaths

Dangerous driving behaviours are the focus of a new Somerset Council campaign aimed at reducing fatal collisions on the county's roads. The Fatal Five campaign, backed by Avon and Somerset Police and led by Somerset Council's Road Safety Team, highlights the key behaviours which can contribute to serious or fatal collisions.

Tragically, 30 people died while travelling on Somerset's roads in 2023 - this is nearly 43 per cent up on the figure for 2022 and the highest number of fatalities in 10 years. In four of the incidents more than one person died. There is no particular cause or issue thought to be responsible for the increase, and according to Avon and Somerset Police 76 per cent of the collisions involve one or more of the following five behaviours: Intoxicated driving (drink or drugs), Careless or inconsiderate driving, Careless or inconsiderate driving, Excessive Speed, Mobile phone use or distraction, or Failing to wear a seatbelt.

A further concerning factor is that nearly half of the fatal collisions were caused by a vehicle crossing into the path of another one. Of the 30 fatal casualties, 11 were car drivers, 12 motorcyclists, four were car passengers, and three were pedestrians. Fourteen of last year's fatalities happened on the county's A roads, five were on trunk roads, five were on B roads and six were on unclassified roads. The figures for the past five years:

- 2019: 22 collisions / 22 fatalities
- 2020: 12 collisions / 12 fatalities
- 2021: 24 collisions / 25 fatalities
- 2022: 20 collisions / 21 fatalities
- 2023: 26 collisions / 30 fatalities



Somerset Road Safety's delivery team delivered face-to-face training for 41,000 people in 2023. This included talks in primary schools for 12,619 pupils, as well as presentations to 8,579 secondary school pupils. The team gave talks and training to 2,509 motorcyclists and gave 1,182 older drivers advice and guidance on how to stay safe on Somerset's roads.

Somerset Libraries to launch Neurodiversity book collection



Somerset Libraries will be launching its new Neurodiversity book collection to coincide with the start of Autism Acceptance Week. A special author event will be taking place at Yeovil Library on 20 April where local neurodivergent writer, Hannah Walker will speak about her latest book 'Mess is Progress'.

The new book collection replaces the pioneering Somerset Autism Collection, which was created in 2015. In the last nine years, research and writing about autism has grown and the new collection will showcase the best of this. The list of books is available on Somerset Libraries website. It will also cover a wider range of conditions associated with neurodiversity, including ADHD, demand avoidance, dyslexia, and dyspraxia. The collection includes 50 books and aims to provide 'something for everyone' including books for children, young people, adults, parents, women and those without an official diagnosis but who experience neurodivergent traits.

Somerset swimming pools awarded funding for energy efficiency upgrades

Somerset Council has been awarded £316,700 of grant funding from Phase 2 of the government's Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF). The ringfenced money from Sport England and the National Lottery will be used to install new energy efficiency measures in four Somerset leisure centres.

Chard Leisure Centre and Goldenstones Leisure Centre in Yeovil ran by Freedom Leisure will have destratification fans installed. Destratification fans circulate warm air which has built up near the ceiling back down to ground level. They will help to improve energy efficiency by reducing the need for additional heating of the pool halls. Somerset Council has previously been awarded £211,208 in 2023 as part of SPSF Phase 1 funding which supported five Somerset swimming pools with the increase in pool chemical and utilities costs. Learn more here: www.somerset.gov.uk/news/swimmingpoolsupportfund.



Feed your family, not the bin' say Somerset Council and SUEZ



In support of Food Waste Action Week, Somerset Council and SUEZ are helping the county's Local Pantry members go the extra mile to reduce food waste.

Fridges set to the correct temperature can help food stay fresh for up to three days longer. Somerset Council and SUEZ recycling and recovery – the Council's collections contractor – are providing a fridge thermometer to every food pantry member, helping families to keep their food at a cool 0°C to 5°C.

It's not just keeping your fridge cool that can help prevent food waste, the nationwide 'Love Food Hate Waste' campaign shares simple tips that can help everyone make the most of their food:

- Create a weekly meal plan
- Check your portions to avoid uneaten leftovers
- Don't put hot food straight in the fridge, let it cool first so it doesn't increase the temperature
- Keep fruit and vegetables in the fridge – it makes them last longer
- Create an 'eat me first' space in the fridge – so you can keep tabs on food that needs using up

Some food waste is unavoidable, it's always best to use up what you can, but if it must go then recycling food waste is the next best thing. Households in Somerset can recycle their food at the kerbside, with their weekly recycling collection. Last year 23,000 tonnes of food waste was recycled – but the waste in the general rubbish bins were filled with 21% food waste.

Food waste in Somerset is recycled in the county, via anaerobic digestion – it's turned into fertiliser for farms and electricity that goes into the national grid.

According to 'Love Food, Hate Waste', a staggering 60% of the UK's food waste come from our homes – that's eight meals a week!

Food pantries in Somerset are thriving, with nine up and running across the county. The nine Local Pantries do a brilliant job of diverting surplus food from shops and local allotments, saving food which would have otherwise been thrown out.

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