



Somerset Liberal Democrats
Chard South
May 2025



Work Starts to Protect Dam at Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve

Somerset Council has initiated a major project to strengthen the dam at Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve, aimed at protecting it from extreme flooding events. Partially funded by Somerset Rivers Authority, the project includes building a wave wall, reconstructing culverts, and re-grading the Anglers car park.

Contractor Kier will carry out the work, expected to be completed by summer, with some traffic disruptions as Chaffcombe Lane will fully close from April 28 for about 10 weeks. Pedestrian access to the reservoir will remain open, while the Anglers car park will be available for anglers only; other visitors should use the Oaklands car park. The need for the wave wall was identified during an independent safety audit and is a legal requirement under the Reservoirs Safety Act. Somerset Council has collaborated with engineers from Stillwater Associates and conducted an ecological survey to monitor local wildlife during construction. Community engagement is underway to raise awareness about the project's significance.



Public Health - Raising awareness, challenging myths – Somerset supports nationwide stalking campaign

Somerset is supporting this year's national campaign for Stalking Awareness Week, 21 – 25 April, aimed at raising awareness about stalking, challenging common myths and providing vital information to support those affected. The initiative, which is backed by many organisations across the country, seeks to highlight the realities of stalking, offering data-driven insights and practical advice for recognising and responding to this serious crime. Recent figures from the [Crime Survey for England and Wales reveal](#) that an estimated 1.5 million adults were victims of stalking in the twelve months ending March 2024. Stalking is disproportionately affected. Despite these alarming statistics, misconceptions about stalking are widespread, often hindering effective intervention and support for those targeted.

Key myths debunked

The campaign tackles five common myths about stalking:

- **Stalking is rare** – In reality, one in five women and one in ten men will experience stalking in their lifetime.
- **Stalking only happens to celebrities** – Most victims are everyday people, not public figures.
- **Stalking is just persistent pursuit** – It encompasses a range of behaviours, including surveillance, harassment, and online abuse.
- **Stalking is a crime of passion** – It is motivated by control and intimidation, not love or infatuation.
- **Stalking is a victimless crime** – Victims often suffer severe psychological impacts, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

Victims are urged to report incidents online or by calling 101, or 999 in emergencies.



Schools - National Offer Day: Somerset secondary school places announced for 2025/26 academic year

Somerset Council is pleased to report that 99% of children received primary school offers for the 2025/26 academic year at one of their top three choices, showcasing the council's commitment to accessible quality education. With offers emailed or posted to families, the message is clear: the council is dedicated to ensuring every child's educational journey begins positively. There are options and support available for families who did not receive their preferred choices, emphasising an inclusive approach for all.



Parents and carers of children not offered one or more of their three primary school preferences have various options available. Information can be found on the **Council's applying for a school place webpages:**

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/applying-for-school/refused-a-place-at-your-preferred-school/>

Social Care: Unpaid carers in Somerset attend free information day

Somerset Council hosted a free drop-in event for unpaid carers in Bridgwater, Highlighting the invaluable role these individuals play. The event featured tailored advice and informative seminars addressing essential topics like Lasting Power of Attorney and Direct Payments. Local organisations came together to provide guidance and show appreciation for the dedication of unpaid carers, enhancing their confidence as they continue their vital work in the community.



Adult Social Care staff guided unpaid carers through questions they might have. Other organisations involved providing advice, included: **Second Step**, **Age UK**, **Open Mental Health**, **Healthwatch**, **DeafPlus**,

Assets: Somerset Council sells part of County Hall to developer of key worker housing

In a move to support essential workers, Somerset Council has sold part of County Hall to Prime plc for the development of key worker housing. This initiative will not only address local housing needs but also exemplifies the council's commitment to enhancing community welfare while generating funds to support vital services. As Prime and its housing partner, Hyve, work towards creating comfortable living spaces for public service workers, the council looks forward to the positive impact on both housing availability and community wellbeing.



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