



Somerset Liberal Democrats Chard South September 2025

Scrutiny Committee Discusses Proposed Community Hospital Bed Reductions

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Somerset Council's adults and health scrutiny committee met recently in Bridgwater to discuss proposals for inpatient bed reductions at several Somerset community hospitals and to ask NHS Somerset questions about their plans. NHS leaders responded that no final decisions had been made and suggested that the changes might enable a wider range of services to be offered at the local level. Numerous members of the public voiced concerns about the lack of clarity so far with local communities on the changes.

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust is considering bed reductions at community hospitals in Bridgwater, Frome, West Mendip, Burnham-on-Sea, and Crewkerne, as part of the government's health plan to deliver more care at home. Lead member for Adults Services, Councillor Sarah Wakefield, emphasised that the best interests of patients remain a priority. She highlighted the success of the My Life, My Future programme, which aims to help people stay healthier and recover at home for longer. She stressed that losing beds does not mean loved ones will be denied proper treatment. Councillor Claire Sully, vice-chair of the scrutiny committee, expressed concerns over the plans, stating that staff with decades of service are uncertain about their job security and the future of the hospitals.

NHS Somerset is hosting events over the summer and autumn as part of the 'Big Conversation,' providing opportunities for the community to share their views on future healthcare services.



NHS Somerset is also inviting expressions of interest to join a Stakeholder Reference Group – a space for regular discussion, co-design and feedback on future care models in Somerset. If you're interested in joining a group, please email us at: somicb.engagement@nhs.net

Somerset Council Trains Thousands to Improve Road Safety in 2024

Somerset Council's Road Safety Team provided training and education to nearly 38,000 people across the county, aiming to make roads safer for everyone. The initiatives targeted a wide range of road users, including young children, teenagers, and older adults.

For young pupils, programs like Bikeability offered essential cycling skills for Year 5 and 6 students, helping them learn how to ride safely on the road. Workshops for children in Reception to Year 6 focused on pedestrian and passenger safety, while presentations for Year 8 and 9 students emphasised the dangers of distractions near roads. Older students in Years 10 and 11 received advice for safer journeys, and college students learned about the serious consequences of collisions through dedicated road safety talks.



The team also ran practical courses for motorcyclists in collaboration with police and hosted special sessions for older drivers, addressing how driving habits should adapt with age. Beyond classroom sessions, the council improved road safety by installing speed cameras, upgrading signage, and implementing traffic calming measures in areas with high accident rates.

This comprehensive approach ensures that road safety education reaches all age groups and helps encourage children and young people to start cycling early. The ongoing work of the Somerset Road Safety Team has a significant positive impact on the community, making roads safer for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike.

Somerset Urges Food Waste Recycling to Save £1 Million

Somerset Council is encouraging residents to recycle their food waste more effectively, highlighting that doing so could save around £1 million and reduce environmental costs. Currently, 16,000 tonnes of food waste, including packaging, is thrown away each year, much of which could be recycled.

Recycling food waste is a much cheaper and greener way to dispose of it, as it avoids the costly fees associated with sending waste to Energy from Waste, the process used to recover energy from general waste.

Although 7 out of 10 households already recycle food, small actions like recycling food scraps can significantly impact.

Residents that need a new or replacement kitchen caddy or food waste bin can do via the Council's [replacement bins and recycling containers](#) page.



Somerset Boosts Environmentally Friendly Transport with £3.8 Million for Inclusive Electric Vehicle Charging Network

Somerset Council has secured nearly £3.8 million from the Government's LEVI Fund to expand local EV charging networks, with a focus on supporting rural and underserved communities. In Somerset, more than a quarter — around 27% — of properties lack off-street parking, making this funding a vital opportunity to help many more people switch from petrol and diesel vehicles to electric. The funding will support at least 1,606 low-power chargepoints, many using existing lamp column wiring to reduce disruption. The Council will soon ask residents for suggestions on chargepoint locations via its website.

Importantly, at least 25% of chargepoints will be installed in lower-demand rural areas to ensure fair and equitable access across the county. The goal is to promote a greener, more inclusive Somerset by making electric vehicle use accessible to all.



Somerset Council Imposes Banning Orders on Rogue Landlords

Two landlords in Yeovil have received Banning Orders for repeated housing standard breaches and non-compliance with enforcement notices. The Orders, issued by the Property Tribunal in May 2025, ban Mr. and Mrs. Fuller from managing or renting properties from September 2025 for six and three years, respectively.

The Orders aim to protect tenants from substandard housing and demonstrate Somerset Council's strong stance against rogue landlords. The council continues to work closely with lawful landlords to ensure safe, healthy, and appropriate homes for residents.



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 dropping into our monthly surgery or I can arrange an appointment on a day and time that suits you feel free to give me a call on 07736 310805 or email

Jason.baker@somerset.gov.uk

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