



MDC Mendip Monthly

February 2022

We stand with Ukraine: How you can help

Mendip District Council stands with those affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Many residents in the district want to help support the humanitarian response. The Council is not collecting donations directly, but we've compiled a list of support organisations.

- **Disasters Emergency Committee** – [Ukraine humanitarian appeal](#)
- **The Red Cross** has set up the [Ukraine Crisis Appeal, which is requesting donations to respond to humanitarian needs](#) through food, water, first aid, medicines, warm clothes and shelter
- **UNICEF** is especially concerned for the safety and wellbeing of children and has set up a [specific fund to protect children in Ukraine](#)
- **The UN refugee agency** [helps refugees fleeing situations of war and has a specific collection for Ukraine.](#)
- **The Ukrainian Embassy** has set up a [special fund to support Ukraine](#)
- [Polish Humanitarian Action](#) is supplying hygiene products, food, and blankets to those in need on the Ukrainian/Polish border.
- **London's Ukrainian Institute** also has a round-up of support methods [here](#).
- **UN Women** is working to ensure that women and girls' rights are upheld during times of peace, and now, in this frightening time of war - [Support women in Ukraine - UN Women UK](#)
- **Care International** is running [an emergency appeal to provide emergency food and water.](#)
- **Choose Love** are [appealing for donations for supporting projects who are providing vital aid and services to those still in and fleeing the country,](#) including: emergency medical care, food, shelter, clothes, legal support, support for the LGBTQIA+ community and mental health support.

This information can also be found on the Mendip District Council website

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10815/We-stand-with-Ukraine>.

New section of multi-user path in Dulcote open

A new section of a multi-user path in Dulcote was officially declared open at a special celebration on 4th March 2022.



It marked the latest stage in a key section of the Strawberry Line which forms part of the Somerset Circle, now in construction. The path connects Wells to the Charlie Bigham's food kitchen at Dulcote quarry.

Volunteers, plus landowners Somerset County Council, Charlie Bigham's, the planning applicant Greenways, Cyclerooutes, and officers and members from Mendip District Council, were thanked for their efforts on the path, which is now ready for all to enjoy. Additional planting, landscaping and benches are to be installed shortly. The Council invested £70k towards the works which were commissioned by Greenways and Cyclerooutes, as well as a further £15k from Charlie Bigham's S106 money.

The Strawberry Line is part of the Somerset Circle which, when completed, will form a 76-mile traffic-free circuit. Learn more about the project here:

And also visit: [The Strawberry Line website](#)

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10822/New-section-of-multi-user-path-in-Dulcote-open

Top ten performance ranking for Mendip as it tackles climate change

Mendip has been recognised as a top ten District Council for its impressive performance in tackling climate change. Campaign group Climate Emergency UK ranked Mendip an impressive 9th best District Council in the whole country. Your local Council was awarded 71% overall, with top marks in mitigating and adapting to climate change, understanding the co-benefits of climate action along with the risk of inaction, and our commitment to tackling the ecological emergency.

Climate change projects Mendip has recently been working on include:

- Launching a £50k Climate Emergency Fund which will provide 14 projects across the district with money to work towards eco initiatives in the community.
- Working in partnership with the AONB, Reimagining the Levels and Somerset Wildlife Trust to help plant nearly 7000 trees, restore hedgerows and protect biodiversity.
- Partnership working with the Centre for Sustainable Energy and the other Somerset Authorities to deliver Green Homes Grants to help improve energy efficiency and decrease the carbon footprint of homes in Mendip.
- Developing additional planning policies to ensure new housing developments are more sustainable and energy efficient.
- Working on a project to better understand the emissions from agriculture and how these can be mitigated and reduced.
- Reporting annually on our own civic emissions as well as monitoring and reporting on emissions across the district.
- Expanding the Strawberry Line multi-user path, to ensure safe, sustainable travel for residents and visitors to Mendip.

See how other Council's ranked, here: councilclimatescorecards.uk.

Keep up to date with the Council's climate action here: [Climate Emergency](#)

Download the Council's Climate Action Pledge Card and see what small changes you could make to tackle climate change at home:

 [Mendip Climate Change Pledge Card \[244.06KB\]](#)

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10749/Top-ten-performance-ranking-for-Mendip-as-it-tackles-climate-change

Mendip announces successful Climate Change projects

The projects that have been awarded money from the Mendip Climate and Ecological Emergency Fund, have now been announced.

Projects selected include, installing solar panels, establishing hedgerows, retrofitting a community hub and installing bat, bird and insect boxes, to name a few.

Mendip District Council allocated £50k to aid organisations with project ideas that sought to contribute to eco-friendly initiatives.

A full list of successful eco projects can be found on Mendip's website here:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/ccf>

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10779/Mendip-announces-successful-Climate-Change-projects

Mendip set to transfer ancient asset to Wells community

The historic Bishop's Barn and Wells Recreation Ground are to be returned to the City of Wells. At a meeting of Mendip District Council's Cabinet (Monday 7th February), members approved the transfer of trusteeship of the Wells Recreation Ground charity to Wells City Council. At transfer, Mendip District Council will no longer have any legal or financial responsibility for the Trust.

Changing the governance of the charity is legally complex, and the process has taken many months to complete. However, subject to Charity Commission authorisation, the move means Wells City Council are all set to become the new 'caretakers' of the Bishop's Barn and Wells Recreation Ground, located in the heart of the city.

Mendip previously agreed a budget of up to £5,000 to cover legal costs involved in transferring the trusteeship. The Trust Fund of circa £525,000 capital money is included in the transfer, and this is solely to be used to improve the Bishop's Barn. In addition, a one-off payment of £30,000 will also be made to the Trust by Mendip, which is equivalent to six years of average income from 6 car parking spaces in South Street Car Park.

After the transfer, Mendip District Council will continue to own, operate, and maintain the car park as part of its normal operations.

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10776/Mendip-set-to-transfer-ancient-asset-to-Wells-community

Mendip helps fund restoration of Shepton Mallet memorial

Mendip District Council has contributed £5,000 towards the restoration of an important historic monument. The James Allen obelisk in Shepton Mallet Cemetery, was crumbling, in disrepair and needed urgent attention. The new-look memorial, which stands 3m tall, was unveiled at a special ceremony during this weekend's annual Snowdrop Festival.

The James Allen Family Memorial is an important part of the town's heritage, which honours the life and works of the world-famous horticulturalist, who bred speciality snowdrops. Work to restore the 116-year-old monument was carried out by local stone mason, Sam Lee of SK Conservation, who specialises in carving, fixing and building conservation, Amelia Crowley-Roth, wood carver and Andy James who engraved the lettering on the obelisk.

The monument was unveiled by Dan Pearson, Snowdrop Festival Patron and committee member. Among the guests were, Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant for Somerset, Tim Allen, Dr Tim Upson from Royal Horticultural Society, Christina Kennedy, Chair of the Snowdrop Festival and representatives from Mendip District Council, including the Council Leader.

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10802/Mendip-helps-fund-restoration-of-Shepton-Mallet-memorial

Consultation

Have your say on unauthorised van dwellers in Glastonbury

Residents are being invited to take part in a public consultation designed to help address the difficulties that arise from the volume of van dwellers on public roads within Glastonbury and neighbouring areas.

Mendip District Council is considering the adoption of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) as part of a planned approach to reduce the risk of public nuisance, which continues to cause community tensions in the town.

The introduction of a PSPO would assist the better management of the number of unauthorised encampments and help to restrict or prevent the adverse effects that may be created by the occupations.

The Council wants to restore balance to the area to regain and maintain a sustainable level, and so reduce the impact on local communities, businesses and tourism.

Details of what the proposed PSPO involves, together with the reasons behind why Mendip District Council is considering adopting the order, and a map of the geographical area affected, can be found on our website: www.mendip.gov.uk/pspo All comments must be returned by 20th March 2022 which is the final date of the public consultation.

The PSPO is just one of a number of ongoing initiatives in and around Glastonbury delivering schemes to help prevent unauthorised encampments and parking at Glastonbury locations. A Glastonbury Unauthorised Encampment Multi-Agency Group (MAG) was formed last year to work with communities to explore and agree long-term, sustainable solutions. Membership includes representatives from Avon & Somerset Police, Somerset County Council, Glastonbury Town Council, Avon & Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and Mendip District Council.

The MAG has supported new double-yellow lining on Wellhouse Lane, and enforcement being employed on key sites in the town to remove vehicles from the road. This was carried out last month at Morlands Enterprise Park. Permanent infrastructure proposals to prevent unauthorised encampments and parking are also being explored at Bretenoux Road.

And at Stone Down Lane, work is taking place to prevent vehicles from parking unsafely on the roadside and create new disabled parking bays for blue badge holders. During the works there's no access to Stone Down Lane, and access to the Tor is only possible from the south side during the works. A signed diversion is in place.

Visit Mendip District Council's website: www.mendip.gov.uk/pspo to take part in the PSPO consultation, which ends 20th March.

Mendip Homes & Housing

Number of empty homes in Mendip declining

Latest figures from Mendip District Council show the number of empty homes in the district has decreased by almost a quarter. There are currently 392 long-term empty homes (of over 6 months) in Mendip, compared to 509 in April 2020 - that's a drop of 23%. The news comes as the Council takes part in the national Empty Homes Week, 28 February - 6 March. Grants and loans are available from Mendip to support owners in bringing their vacant and derelict properties back into use.

There are grants of between £3,000 and £15,000, and loans of up to £25,000 available to go towards renovation works. And once repaired, it means properties can be rented or occupied by owners.

You may have seen Mendip's social media during Empty Homes Week (28 February - 6 March) in which we showed before and after pictures of properties that have benefited from Mendip's Empty Homes grants and loans.

How to get help with your empty home:

Empty home owners can contact the Private Sector Housing Team on 0300 303 8588, email privatesectorhousing@mendip.gov.uk

Or fill in the online form <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/emptyproperties>

For information on grants and loans,

visit <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/financialassistance>

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10805/Number-of-empty-homes-in-Mendip-declining

£49k funding boost to support landlords improve EPC ratings

Mendip District Council, in partnership with the Centre of Sustainable Energy (CSE), have successfully bid for £49,057 to go towards supporting landlords with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating below Band E, to improve their properties and meet their legal obligations.

The Council and CSE will work together to support Mendip landlords improve their EPC ratings through education, training and events, with the aim of making homes more energy efficient, warmer and cheaper for residents to live in.

If you're a landlord and need help improving the EPC of your property and accessing available grants, please contact the CSE: www.cse.org.uk.

Our Private Sector Housing team are also here to help, please call 0300 303 8588.

Email privatesectorhousing@mendip.gov.uk or visit www.mendip.gov.uk/landlords.

Press Release: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10701/49k-funding-boost-to-support-landlords-improve-EPC-ratings>

Green Homes Grants available for low-income Mendip residents

Residents across Mendip could benefit from free energy efficiency improvements worth up to £10,000 thanks to receiving a share of a multi-million-pound Government-funded Green Homes Grant Programme, working with E.ON and Happy Energy Solutions.

Endorsed by Mendip District Council, under the Green Homes Grants Scheme, owner-occupiers will benefit from energy efficiency installations up to the value of £10,000 with nothing for them to pay towards the costs of works.

Tenants of rented properties can also access grants of up to £5,000 for energy efficiency upgrades, but the landlord will be expected to contribute at least one third towards the cost of works.

To be eligible for the grants, the residents of the property must have a low income (receive benefits or have the household income below £30,000 per annum) and the EPC for the property must be rated D, E, F or G. If there is no EPC for your property, you can still apply, and it doesn't matter who your energy supplier is.

To find out if your property has an EPC see:

find-energy-certificate.digital.communities.gov.uk/

You can submit an application at the following website: www.heatsomerset.co.uk/

The scheme runs until March 2022, operating on a first-come, first-served basis.

Press Release: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10600/Green-Homes-Grants-available-for-low-income-Mendip-residents>

Struggling to pay for your rent? Your Council can help you

Tenants who find themselves struggling to pay for their rent are encouraged to contact Mendip District Council's Housing Options Team for advice and support, as early as possible, to help prevent them becoming homeless.

The Council's experienced and knowledgeable Officers are on hand to assist tenants facing financial difficulties, and find solutions to ensure residents do not become homeless.

Mendip District Council received funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to create a Tenancy Hardship Scheme. The scheme is ringfenced to support low-income renters, with Covid-19-related rent arrears, through a one-off payment, to reduce the risk of them being evicted and becoming homeless.

To access the Tenancy Hardship Scheme, please contact the Housing Options Team by calling 0300 303 8588 or visit the Council's website at <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/covidarrears>.

Where to get help:

You can contact the Housing Options Team 0300 303 8588. Visit the Council's website for information about debt prevention:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/debtprevention>.

Are you, or someone you know, at risk of homelessness? Local services and support are available. Call 0300 303 8588 or make a homeless application online: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/housing>.

Perhaps you're rough sleeping, or concerned that someone is rough sleeping in Mendip? You can make a referral to StreetLink either online or by contacting the rough sleeper referral line on 0300 500 0914. Visit, www.streetlink.org.uk.

Mendip's social housing plans

Mendip District Council's pledge to provide much-needed social housing across the district is moving forward. Mendip has spent many months working with Registered Providers (Housing Associations), and other local organisations to progress the social housing programme. The plans align with the Council's corporate objective to Make Mendip a fairer place. And because the homes will meet higher sustainability standards, so the various schemes will demonstrate delivery on its climate and ecological commitments too.

Press Release: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10711/Mendip-push-on-with-social-housing-plans>

Mendip households urged to set up council tax direct debit to receive rebates quickly

Mendip District Council is urging bill-payers to set up a direct debit to pay their council tax from April, to ensure they get their £150 energy rebate payment as quickly as possible. In Mendip, around 76% of households pay by direct debit - but it still leaves more than 12,500 households who do not currently pay their council tax through this convenient arrangement.

Getting the rebate money to council tax payers without a direct debit in place will take longer to process as council staff will need to attempt to contact them about the rebate scheme, and undertake pre-payment checks, resulting in delays.

All eligible households in England in council tax bands A to D, should get the £150 payment from their District Council from April this year.

- If you think you might miss part or full payment of your council tax, please email us: mendipcounciltax@secure.capita.co.uk or call 0300 303 8588 (local rates apply). Alternatively, you may wish to speak to Citizens Advice Mendip on freephone 0808 27 87 842.

Their website is www.citizensadvicemendip.org.uk

- Find out how to set up a direct debit here: <http://help.mendip.gov.uk/council-tax/Direct-debit-setup>
 - Find your property band here: www.gov.uk/council-tax-bands.
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Help for businesses

Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grants

The Omicron Grant application is also now live for companies registered for business rates and who were trading as of 30 December in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism. Please note new restrictions and exclusions apply following updated Government guidance. The Council is advising all businesses to review the latest guidance at <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/businessgrants>.

Whether you're applying for the Omicron Grant or Covid 19 Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), if possible, please try not to contact the Council for general progress updates. By following the instructions online, this will allow us to process large volumes of applications quickly and efficiently, helping our Mendip businesses to bounce back faster.

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10733/New-250k-funding-boost-for-hospitality-businesses-in-Mendip-open-now>

Opportunity Boost Scheme to open doors to employment

A new grant has been launched to help people in Somerset overcome financial barriers when seeking employment and returning to work.

The Opportunity Boost Scheme will provide grants worth up to £500 to help with the cost associated progressing into work, such as transport costs, childcare, work clothes, learning resources and training courses.

The funding for scheme has been provided through the Somerset Recovery Fund, and the initiative is being delivered in partnership between Somerset County Council and Citizens Advice Somerset.

To qualify, applicants must live in Somerset, be aged 16 or over, not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking, and have a pre-Covid salary of less than £25,000.

Applications are now live and will close on Friday, March 25. To apply, visit [Somerset Recovery Fund, Opportunity Boost Scheme project, Now Open. – Citizens Advice West Somerset \(westsomersetadvice.org.uk\)](#)

Mendip Business Hub

Mendip Business Hub is a new online Council service which works with businesses in the district by providing expert advice, guidance, and support. It is a one-stop-shop for information, networking opportunities, consultancy, and events.

Learn more about the Hub and its service here: [Mendip Business Hub](#)

Support for the vulnerable

£3.8m to support Somerset households with food and bills

Somerset residents struggling to pay the bills this winter could be eligible for support with the cost of food, energy, water, and other essentials.

Somerset has been allocated £3.8m from the Government's Household Support Fund which will be used to ensure there is a wide range of support available to those who need it between now and the end of March.

Proposals for how the money will be used have been developed by the Community Resilience Partnership, a collaboration between Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton District Council, South Somerset District Council, Somerset County Council and partner organisations in the voluntary and community sector. Some £1.7m will be distributed via Somerset Citizens Advice, supported by a network of local partners from the voluntary and community sectors, to help households with food, utility bills, and other essentials.

Applications can be made here: [Emergency Support - Citizens Advice Somerset](#)

You can call the Citizens Advice Somerset Adviceline on 0808 2787 842 between 10am and 4pm from Monday to Friday.

See <https://www.cse.org.uk/projects/view/1367> for more information about the Safe & Warm Somerset helpline.

Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP)

Mendip's Severe Weather Emergency Provision was activated on Friday 18 February until Monday 21 February. Severe Weather Emergency Provision has two aims:

- To ensure that no one dies on the streets due to severe weather
- To ensure that every effort is made to engage individuals with support

This provision is for people sleeping rough in Mendip only.

Visit: www.mendip.gov.uk/swep

The chosen staff charity for 2022 is Orchard Vale Trust ...

This Wells-based charity supports adults with learning disabilities to live life to the full through community support, day services and residential homes.

Learn about Orchard Vale Trust here: www.orchardvaletrust.org.uk.

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10731/Mendip-staff-raise-1-4k-for-Time-is-Precious-throughout-pandemic

Budget 2022/23

Mendip's final budget will 'weather the storm' of local government cuts and ensure good quality services for residents

Mendip District Council approved its budget for the next financial year at Full Council last night (Monday 21st February 2022). The budget will be the last ahead of the creation of a new unitary authority in April 2023. It will allow the Council to continue to invest locally in Mendip, improve services and tackle key local issues while also managing the significant loss of funding from the Government.

The proposed budget for 2022/23 allocates resources to priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Strategy, as well as providing a range of services including waste collections, fly-tipping enforcement, and leisure and tourism services.

The District Council's budget is funded through the Council Tax, a share of Business Rates and income from services such as car parks, government grants, and its commercial property investments.

Core central government funding reductions during the past decade, are in the region of 60%. Inflationary pressures also have impact (allowances made for inflation in the 2022-23 budget total around £400k). And there are significant increased service costs.

But despite these ongoing financial challenges, Mendip's budget is balanced, and the Council has fully-funded spending plans for the year, prioritising and investing in services and supporting spending on key projects such as social and affordable housing delivery, multi-user paths, a cleaner, greener Mendip, creating energy-efficient homes and encouraging economic development.

The budget paper was approved, with one amendment. All finance reports featured at Full Council can be viewed online: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9890/Full-Council-Monday-21-February-2022

Elections 2022

Call for voters in Mendip to register in time for elections this May

With local elections for the new unitary council in Somerset, and city, town and parish councils taking place in May, voters in Mendip are being reminded to make sure they are registered to vote and are able to take part on polling day, Thursday 5 May. It's quick and easy to register to vote, but after the deadline of 14 April, it will be too late.

If you're not registered, you won't be able to have your say on issues that directly affect your day-to-day life in Somerset.

These crucial elections are for the councillors at county level who will oversee the transition to a new unitary council, which they will then lead to deliver all the promises and ambitions of the unitary business case.

The city, town and parish councillors elected have a vital role too, ushering in a new era of community empowerment. They will be pioneers, drawing on an array of new opportunities, driving real change locally.

To register to vote, visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote before midnight on Thursday, 14th April or [Electoral Services](#), you can also call us on call 0300 303 8588.

Be a champion for your community

The clock is ticking down on the deadline for candidates to come forward if they want to stand for election in Somerset in May. These are crucial elections for Somerset with the creation of a new, unitary council in April 2023 – the first major change to the way the county is governed in almost 50 years.

New councillors will build a new and very different kind of local government, that will shape the county for decades. New councillors will have more power to drive the changes people want, whether standing for their county, or more locally in city, town, and parish council elections.

If you are interested in standing for election, at county or city, town, and parish level you can find out more here:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor>

<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/local-elections>

Key dates:

Notice of election published – 21 March 2022

Nominations accepted from – 22 March 2022

Deadline for candidates' nominations – 5 April 2022

Statement of persons nominated published – 6 April 2022

Deadline to register to vote – 14 April 2022

Close of postal vote applications – 19 April 2022

Polling Day – Thursday 5 May 2022

Count of votes and declarations of results – 6 & 7 May 2022

Pre-election period

The Notice of Election will be posted on 21st March. This means the pre-election period (previously known as purdah) will come into force from **21st March – 5th May**. The period of sensitivity preceding the local elections means particular care should be taken in the weeks preceding the elections - in this case from 21st March.

Consultation on constituency boundaries

The 2023 Boundary Review also requires that the number of constituencies in England increases from 533 to 543. The Commission is holding a secondary consultation on its initial proposals for new constituencies, which takes place from now until 4 April 2022.

To have your say, submit your views in writing via the consultation website or speak at a public hearing in your region. [BCE Consultation Portal \(bcereviews.org.uk\)](https://bcereviews.org.uk)

From our Partners

The Glastonbury Multi Agency Group (MAG) - update

Improvement scheme to go ahead on road serving Glastonbury Tor

Work on a scheme to improve road safety near the north entrance to Glastonbury Tor is taking place. The Glastonbury Multi Agency Group (MAG) has worked with the National Trust, local farmers, and residents to develop a plan for Stone Down Lane to prevent vehicles from parking unsafely on the roadside and create new disabled parking bays for blue badge holders.

The new infrastructure comprises a bund of earth and boulders placed along a section of the road and work began on Monday 28 February. It'll take three weeks. During this time there will be no access along Stone Down Lane for vehicles or pedestrians - a diversion will be in place. The north entrance to the Tor will be inaccessible during this period.

Have a question?

The MAG includes representatives from the District, County and Town Councils, and Avon and Somerset Police. Please visit our dedicated webpage which hosts a FAQs sheet along with all the updates issued so far.

[Glastonbury Unauthorised Encampments \(somerset.gov.uk\)](http://somerset.gov.uk)

If you have any further questions regarding Glastonbury unauthorised encampments or the MAG, please phone 0300 123 or contact:

Glastonburyencampments@somerset.gov.uk



Town Deal Briefing for Local Businesses, Thursday, 3 March

Hosted by Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Mendip District Council, the event was held at Abbey House, Glastonbury from 5.30pm until 7.00pm.

Press Release: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10783/Local-businesses-invited-to-learn-more-about-Glastonbury-Town-Deal-opportunity

Glastonbury Town Deal – a roundup of activity

10th February – **Central Somerset Gazette interview** published with Dr Lynne Sedgmore CBE, Temporary Chair of the Glastonbury Town Deal Board

11th February – **Press release issued** "Local businesses invited to learn more about Glastonbury Town Deal opportunity"

Businesses based in and around Glastonbury will be able to learn more about the opportunities that the Town Deal investment could bring for local contractors and suppliers at an event in the town on Thursday 3rd March.

Hosted by Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Mendip District Council, the event will be held at Abbey House, Glastonbury from 5.30pm until 7.00pm.

For further information: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/10783/Local-businesses-invited-to-learn-more-about-Glastonbury-Town-Deal-opportunity

18th February – **Interview on Glastonbury FM** with Cllr Simon Carswell, who provided an update on how things are progressing with the Glastonbury Town Deal.

A community-focused open day event was held on Friday 25th February at the Town Hall in Glastonbury, giving local residents and businesses an opportunity to find out more about the Glastonbury Town Deal projects. Visitors to the event will be encouraged to submit their comments and suggestions on the project proposals, providing input to the Business Case process currently underway. The event showcased the 12 projects that are set to benefit from the £23.6 million investment and highlighting some of the opportunities these could bring for the local community.

Various media interest and interviews regarding the Glastonbury Town Deal open day event

BBC Somerset – Live interview with Julie Reader-Sullivan in the morning on the breakfast show

Somerset Live – Facebook Live filming and interviews from the event, speaking to Glastonbury Town Deal board members and project representatives

Greatest Hits Radio (previously called The Breeze) – pre-recorded filming and interviews from the event, for use on radio bulletins and social media

Mendip Times – in attendance to take photos and gather information

The Saxonvale Development - Mendip District Council working with Acorn Property Group

Mendip District Council has taken an exceptionally strong leadership role in the delivery of the Saxonvale project, having committed significant funds and time to it, because of the unique opportunity to assemble the site and promote a scheme which has good prospects for delivery.

All other attempts to assemble the site had failed, and the Council is to be applauded for its courage in bringing the project forward for the good of all communities in the town, its immediate surrounding areas and across the wider Mendip district.

When purchasing the site, the administration considered very carefully how it could ensure that the most attractive outcomes would be delivered, and this included speaking to a number of development companies. There was clear agreement that Acorn had the best track record and vision for delivering a scheme which would create a bespoke and exciting, sustainable and heritage-based living environment for the benefit of Frome, to include 300 new homes (including 72 affordable homes), at least 45,000 sq ft of employment / community floorspace, and high-quality public realm. It would also use innovative building methods because of the site challenges.

It was clear, unfortunately, that the other developers were most likely to pursue an unremarkable housing estate approach, failing to acknowledge the diverse heritage and range of buildings, with the result that a generational landmark opportunity would unfortunately be missed. It was for this reason that the Council entered into the sale and overage agreement with Acorn (this is, in essence, a legal agreement under which the land will be sold to Acorn in phases once satisfactory detailed planning consents are obtained - and certain other important preconditions met - with the ability for the Council to participate in super-profit if the project performs beyond expectations).

The sale and overage agreement will be determinable, without cost to the Council, if Acorn are unable to obtain detailed planning consents and it was heartening to note the significant pre-application consultation undertaken by them demonstrated that there was major support for their proposals: this was clearly reflected in the Local Planning Authority's resolution to grant an outline planning consent for the project not just once but twice.

This statement does not comment on the merits of other proposals, as it will be for the Local Planning Authority to determine whether any of them presents a deliverable scheme which is acceptable in land use terms, addresses evidenced lack of provision of the facilities included in it, and complies appropriately with the provisions of the Local Plan, all of which the Acorn scheme clearly does.

Somerset Waste Partnership

SWP manages waste services for all Somerset councils. On social media, follow @Somersetwaste. Advice and ezine sign-up: www.somersetwaste.gov.uk

Avoid a Jubilee jam

Check the dates Easter, bank holidays and the Platinum Jubilee between now and June mean plenty of waste changes, including five Saturdays of collections.

Do check if an unexpected recycle or rubbish truck might disrupt your Platinum plans. First up are the Good Friday 15 April collections that move to Saturday 16 April. With no collections on bank holiday Monday 8 April, Easter week pick-ups are a day later, including Friday collections on Saturday 23 April.

Bank holiday Monday May 2 means the week's collections are a day later, with Friday pick-ups on Saturday 7 May.

And here are the Jubilee changes ...



WASTE COLLECTION CHANGES

Usual day	JUNE	Revised day
Thursday 2		Saturday 4
Friday 3		Monday 6
Monday 6		Tuesday 7
Tuesday 7		Wednesday 8
Wednesday 8		Thursday 9
Thursday 9		Friday 10
Friday 10		Saturday 11

Unitary News

Future Somerset Council 'on track' for success

Highlights from the fifth Advisory Board Meeting, held virtually via Microsoft Teams
03.02.22

A unitary Council for Somerset will be in place in just over 12 months. Preparations are ramping up to ensure residents continue to receive the local services they rely on from day one, on 1 April 2023.

Some 350+ services currently run by the five Somerset councils (the County Council and four District Councils), will be delivered by a single, new authority.

So what needs to be achieved in the coming weeks and months ahead, and how will the new Council work?

To answer those key questions, step forward the new Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Programme Director, Alyn Jones. Addressing an audience at the February LGR Advisory Board, he said: "We've a huge programme of work to do, and we must now motor-on through every aspect of our business case.

"Timing is tight, but we're energised, and we're on track."

A blueprint is being drafted which will set the direction of travel for the new local authority, and outline the aspirations, opportunities and benefits that a single Somerset Council will bring to the county's residents, communities and businesses.

Alyn Jones said: "We must set a strong budget, identify and prioritise 'must have' projects, while also ensuring the all-important County Council, city, town and parish elections, take place in May."

More than 130+ people attended February's virtual Advisory Board. The meetings provide an informal environment in which residents, councillors, public sector partners and other interested groups can feed in to the new Council process and share ideas about the shape of the future Somerset Council.

LCN pilots push on

Also on the Advisory Board agenda this month were Local Community Networks (LCNs). Three LCN pilots are under way across Exmoor, the Frome area, and in the Wincanton, Castle Cary and Bruton area. Guest speakers from each pilot gave presentations on their progress to date, and answered questions.

LCNs will be 'committees of the council' with powers, including spending. They'll shape policy and take action to improve their local area. It's envisaged up to 20 LCNs will be established on April 1st, 2023, consisting of residents, councillors, town and

parish councils, community groups and partners such as the NHS, education, and the Police and Fire Service.

Discussions around LCN boundaries will be the next big conversation. Options for initial consideration go out to consultation during summer 2022, with geographies (lines on maps) finally agreed by year end.

Communication matters

LGR Communications Lead, Steve Coomber, wound up the two-hour session with a communications update. He reported that crucial messages about the May elections, the biggest and most significant in Somerset for many years, will be going out to encourage residents to vote, and candidates to stand. And as the LGR programme shifts to 'implementation stage', residents will be hearing much more about the vision and culture of the new Somerset Council, the service approach, plus benefits.

Next meeting

The next meeting will be held in person on Thursday, 17 March 2022, 4.30pm at Williams Hall, Dark Lane, Stoke St Gregory, Taunton TA3 6EU.

An agenda will be made available seven days before the meeting, as will confirmation as to whether the event will be recorded, or live streamed. You'll find the latest updates [HERE](#). All PowerPoint slides presented at the fifth LGR Advisory Board on 4 February can be found [HERE](#).

Together we are delivering your New Somerset Council

Somerset's County and District Councils are working together to deliver the new council for Somerset that will bring together existing council services. The five councils will also work with partners, City, Town and Parish Councils and residents to create a new council which delivers for everyone.

Website: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/>

- Meetings: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/meetings/>
- News: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/news/>
- Frequently Asked Questions: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/faqs/>
- Local Community Networks: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/local-community-networks/>

Upcoming dates:

Meetings: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/meetings/>

National issues and campaigns to be aware of ...

Living with COVID-19 - useful link

The government has published its plan for living with COVID-19. This means:

- You are no longer be legally required to self-isolate if you test positive for COVID-19. New guidance will advise people who test positive to stay at home and avoid contact with other people.
- You are no longer legally required to self-isolate if you are an unvaccinated close contact and will no longer be advised to test for 7 days if you are a fully vaccinated close contact.

The current set of 'Working Safely' guidance for businesses will be replaced with new public health guidance on 1 April. As with other infectious diseases, there will continue to be actions that the employers can continue to take to reduce the risk to their staff and customers.

[Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

HMPO Passport Turnaround Times

Applicants should allow up to 10 weeks when applying from the UK, to plan ahead and check passport expiry dates in advance of any planned travel.

It costs £75.50 to renew or replace your passport if you apply online or £85 if you fill in a paper form.

You must be aged 16 or over (or turning 16 in the next 3 weeks) to get an adult passport. There's a different process to [get a passport for a child](#).

There are different ways to [renew or replace your passport if you're outside the UK](#).

How long it takes

[Check how long it will take to get a passport](#) before you apply. It takes longer to apply by post than online.

If you need a passport urgently, you can [find out more about the Online Premium or 1 week Fast Track services](#).

Do not book travel until you have a valid passport - your new passport will not have the same number as your old one.

THINK! Highway Code Assets

The Highway Code: 8 changes you need to know from 29 January 2022

Rules for all types of road users have been updated in The Highway Code to improve the safety of people walking, cycling and riding horses.

[The Highway Code: 8 changes you need to know from 29 January 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022)

Events

Parish Forum Date

8th March 2022 @6:15pm

Making Space for Nature at your Village Hall or Playing Field

Tuesday, March 8th 10.30am-12pm – free webinar

To help nature recover, more people need to take action for nature in their lives and communities. Community halls and their associated land provide a fantastic opportunity to provide habitats for wildlife that are also of benefit to local people. The Community Council for Somerset (CCS) have joined up with Somerset Wildlife Trust to provide training and support for anyone involved in managing a community building or recreation field in order to take positive action for wildlife in these spaces. A follow up session will take place in October, where guidance will be given on pulling together your plans and getting things happening in your community.

[Community Buildings: Making space for nature Tickets, Tue 8 Mar 2022 at 10:30 | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/community-buildings-making-space-for-nature-tickets-29252441007)

International Women's Day: Help break the bias

This International Women's Day (Tuesday 8th March) the focus is on what we can all do, collectively, to break the bias and create a more equal world. Knowing that bias exists isn't enough, action is needed to level the playing field.

[IWD: IWD 2022 campaign theme: #BreakTheBias \(internationalwomensday.com\)](https://www.internationalwomensday.com/campaign-2022)

Youth Engagement – can you help?

Mendip is seeking to widen our youth engagement, to ensure their voices are heard and represented in local government.

- ❖ Do you, in your capacity as city, town and parish councils, have any formal/informal links with local community youth organisations?
- ❖ What structures, mechanisms and processes do you have in place to ensure young people are engaged and heard in your area?
- ❖ Do you have some great examples of your connections with youth groups?
- ❖ May be you are not formally engaged or linked-in, but know of an amazing, active youth group in your community. We'd appreciate their name and/or contact details.

Please help us build a picture of youth engagement across Mendip, we'd be most grateful for your time and input on this.

Please email: media@mendip.gov.uk placing 'Youth Engagement' in the subject line. Thank you.

Mendip Monthly is compiled and issued by Mendip's Marketing and Media Team.

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