

Rode
SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT
Cllr Dawn Denton

JULY 2022

It has been a busy and exciting month settling into our roles as County Councillor. We are 68 days into the new administration. We have received training in almost every department at the council and have been invited to attend committee, council and scrutiny meetings. My diary has not been this full for a very long time and I am thrilled to be connecting with so many people.

There are some County matters I would like to report back on this month:

Local Government Reorganisation: Unitary Council vesting day has the full government support and will remain 1st April 2023.

Somerset's Integrated Care System: The Health and Care Act 2022, was brought into operation Somerset Integrated Care Board (ICB) from 1st July. An Integrated Care System (ICS) brings together NHS organisations, local councils, and wider partners in a defined geographical area to deliver more joined up approaches to improving health and care outcomes. This should make access to health care more assessable and enable the delivery of better, more joined up care for local communities. For more information: <https://nhssomerset.nhs.uk/about-us/integrated-care-in-somerset/>

Financial position: Just two months into the new Administration at County Hall the latest figures published by the County Council shows a potential £14.4 million overspend for the current financial year if action is not taken to limit spending. We are very aware that an urgent review of spend is necessary before this number escalates.

Arts and Culture strategy: The creation of a Somerset Cultural Strategy has got me very excited. The project will focus on raised awareness and promotion of culture and creativity to enrich communities and improve the quality of life, health, wellbeing and the local economy for Somerset residents, local businesses and visitors (for events such as the Frome Festival which had a record breaking year of ticket sales). I met with the Health Connectors based in Frome this week and this area of wellbeing is vital across the area. For more information, support and community groups, please go to: <https://healthconnections mendip.org/mendip-directory/>

Food and energy bills support: If a Somerset resident is struggling to pay the bills, they could be eligible for support with the cost of food, energy, water, and other essentials over the coming months. This includes food vouchers for school holidays, Free School Meals, one-off payments to residents on Pension Credit and urgent

essentials including fuel, food, and white goods. For more information, visit: www.somerset.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/somerset-household-support-fund

If a resident is unable to access the internet, please ring: **0300 123 2224**

Road safety and horse riders: Somerset County Council's Road Safety Team has teamed up with The British Horse Society (BHS) to highlight potential safety issues faced by equestrians on Somerset roads. With an increasing number of reported incidents involving horses and vehicles, the campaign is designed to better educate road users on how to pass horses safely and encouraging them to adhere to the BHS's Dead Slow behavioural change messages:

1. Slow down to a maximum of 10mph
2. Be patient, do not sound your horn or rev your engine
3. Pass the horse wide and slow, at least two metres if possible
4. Drive slowly away.

Grass Cutting and Surface Dressing: SCC's Highways Team have started work on two summer highways maintenance programmes covering verges and road surfaces. Each year more than 9,400km of roadside verge is cut. There is a conscious balance between promoting habitat creation and protecting wildlife, and the overall road safety of all road users. Cutting is due to be completed in September. The 2022 programme, progress and maps are at www.travelsomerset.co.uk/grass-cutting

Ukrainian refugees: As a community that has opened their hearts and homes to the Ukrainians, you have, as a collective embraced the struggled and support, together. If you need more information and support: www.somerset.gov.uk/ukraine/refugee-resettlement/

Local Community Network: I attended my first LCN meeting in June. Frome is running a pilot LCN for children and families and each parish around Frome has been invited to attend. The focus is to work on local issues together. The next meeting is on Wednesday 3rd August at 7pm at the Frome Town Hall. For more information: <https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/local-community-networks/>

Buses: I met with Peter Travis last week about the current bus situation in and around Rode. Thank you, Peter, for updating me and I look forward to supporting future initiatives.

Thank you to Rode for making me feel so welcome in my new role. I am really enjoying getting to connect with so many of you. If you need to get in touch with me, dawndentonfrome@gmail.com

Thank you.