

Rode
SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL
report
by Dawn Denton

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Business in Rode: Emma Rawlings, the CEO of the Somerset Chamber of Commerce, is keen to expand opportunities for SMEs in and around the Frome North area. She is planning some local events in the new year, and I will be supporting her to help local business communities to connect and grow. She was in the area this past week meeting with local business owners and excited about the opportunities to connect our businesses in a wider Somerset strategy.

SpeedWatch: the county is on high alert this month with many SpeedWatch teams out and about. Please be aware of the local speed limits in the area to prevent being flagged as an offender.

Somerset County Council Finances: After the recent projection for an overspend on this year's budget of £22m the basic budget gap for the next financial year is currently £75 million, of which SCC and the 4 Districts have identified savings of £20 million to bring the current gap down to £55 million. More savings will have to be identified.

Local Community Networks: A public consultation on the development of Local Community Networks (LCNs) closed on 26th October with results due to be fed back to the Executive on 16th November.

Winter gritting: Salt barns are fully stocked for this winter and the 23 Somerset gritters have carried out a trial run across the county's network. The team is on standby to treat 900 miles of road and this year a call is going out to farmers across Somerset to support the Council's winter services with snow ploughing duties should conditions become challenging. Farmers are paid for any work they undertake to support their communities. If you can help, please contact somerset.winter@milestoneinfra.co.uk. Last year Somerset's fleet of nearly gritters went out on 59 occasions covering 45,000 miles to help prevent ice forming.

National Award (1): Work over the past 3 years that has improved the health and wellbeing of Somerset's homeless population has been named as a runner up in the finals of the Royal Society for Public Health's prestigious Health & Wellbeing Awards 2022 in the 'Health Equity' category. Somerset was shortlisted for its work protecting the county's homeless population.

National Award (2): Somerset County Council's Contact Centre has been recognised for its outstanding work supporting residents who call up the council for help. The

SCC Contact Centre was named the South West Contact Centre Forum 'Contact Centre of the Year – in house' winner for 2022. The Contact Centre team deal with more than 300,000 interactions each year which can range from a few minutes in length to well over an hour to achieve the right outcome for the person contacting the Council.

Public Health Nursing Team: Following a five-year campaign parents-to-be in Somerset are now less likely to smoke. Over the last five years Mums2Be Smokefree has helped nearly 1,700 expectant parents to quit smoking. As a result, babies in the county are less likely to be admitted to a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit due to smoking in pregnancy. Free long-term support, medication, home visits and telephone contact were found to help support and motivate people to stop smoking. Currently 78% of those who used the service have quit at 12 weeks and of those 82% were non-smoking at their baby's birth. This has helped reduce the number of NICU admissions.

Think Travel options: There is now a new one-stop travel information website <https://somerset.thinktravel.info> which has been launched by Somerset County Council to support local people to access public and community transport. The new travel planner shows you what transport is available and covers public transport, community transport, the Slinky demand responsive transport service and car sharing.

Ukraine refugees in Somerset update: In total, 1,561 Ukrainians have been matched and either arrived in Somerset or issued visas:

- 1,263 Ukrainians have arrived in Somerset
- A further 298 visas have been issued.
- In addition, a further 125 visa applications are being processed.

A further 2,567 sponsors who have 'expressed an interest' in participating in the scheme but are not yet matched to guests. (It is the individual sponsor's role to match with a guest and apply for the scheme). In total 714 property offers have been made by sponsors, of these 667 Property checks that have been completed. In addition, 1,103 DBS have been completed and 1,240 Welfare checks from 558 households.

Covid boosters: Residents aged 50 years and older, residents in care homes for older people, those aged 5 years and over in a clinical risk group and health and social care staff are being reminded of their booster for coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine. Appointments are available from the National Booking Service. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>