

SOMERSET COUNCIL

Rode Parish Council

Cllr Dawn Denton

April 2025

****SOMERSET PRESS RELEASES:** All Somerset County Council press releases: **Newsroom**

****OPEN CONSULTATIONS:** **Citizen's Space**

****FLOOD ENGINEERING:** Sean Papworth was away until mid-March. I have not received an update from him, but will chase.

****SPORTSMAN:** The Service Manager for Development Engineering is able to direct resources to Rode, and this work will be added to a remedial works programme as part of the current highway maintenance programme. And the contracting needs to be reviewed accordingly.

****CHURCH FARM PATH:** Planning Obligations team has advised that the developer is working on some drainage remedial works that may need digging up as part of the path. They are waiting for confirmation from Wessex Water before this is tackled. Once the drainage works have been completed, they will repair the footpath.

****SLIP ROAD:** I will continue to chase this month.

****UPDATE ON THE BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW FOR SOMERSET:** The deadline for stage 1 of phase 2 of the consultation was extended by the Boundary Commission (at the request of Somerset Council) to 4 March 2025. Somerset Council's submission was agreed at the Constitution and Governance Committee on 3rd March for submission by the deadline on the following day.

Submission papers: <https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=7579>

Supplement 1 - Appendix A has the details of the proposed structure of electoral divisions. The overall electorate of Somerset, based on the projected 2030 figures is 467,274; the target figure for 96 divisions per member was 4,867, and the Council has endeavoured largely to stay within 10% of that figure. <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset>

Timeline Moving Forward

3 June 2025 - 11 August 2025

Public consultation on the proposals

2 December 2025

Publication of the recommendations

TBC

Ask Parliament to approve our recommendations

2027

New arrangements apply to local elections

****SOMERSET RECYCLING SITES ON SUMMER HOURS:** All 16 of Somerset Council's recycling sites have reverted to their spring/summer opening schedule on 1 April. Sites will be open from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm at the weekend.

****SOMERSET COUNCIL ONE OF ONLY 6 ENGLISH COUNCILS:** Somerset Council is only one of 6 English councils to have been given permission for an increase above the 4.99% Council Tax Cap - approving a 7.5% Council Tax increase, in addition to needing government support to close this years remaining gap of £43m. The £43m budget gap will be bridged using a Capitalisation Direction which is a form of one-off assistance (that was also requested last year) offered by the Government which allows the Council to continue to sell off assets or borrow money in order to use the proceeds to fund this year's budget gap for day-to-day running costs.

The Council also applied to the Government for financial support and whilst it asked for permission for a 22.84% increase in Council Tax, it has been allowed to increase Council Tax by 7.5%. This sees a band D property paying an additional £129 a year. For many homes in Somerset this will be in addition to very large increases in some Town and Parish elements of the Council Tax including an annual increase of £111.73 (Band D) in Bridgwater making it one of the most expensive in the country.

****NEW AND INCREASED CAR PARKING CHARGES:** Somerset Council's new parking policy will see residents across the county pay more for parking. At the Executive Meeting on 3 March, it resolved to:

- EXPAND Sunday charges covering the whole county.
- NEW on-street parking charges – e.g. parking bays/Blue Anchor

Following considerable challenge from Councillors it was decided to not proceed with NEW overnight charges.

These proposals have been supported by the Councils Executive and are all now subject to a formal consultation process. Once resources have been secured the draft parking orders will be prepared – it is anticipated that this will happen in May with bespoke notices being produced for each location with specific changes being identified. This will provide more of the detail. The public 6-week statutory consultation will then follow, possibly commencing in mid to late May. The final decision will be made by the Executive possibly during August or September – dates yet to be confirmed.

****SUPPORT & IMPROVEMENTS TO BUS SERVICES:** The council has received confirmation of a new £6 million tranche of Government funding for 2025/26. Initiatives under Somerset's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will incorporate improved services for Yeovil and Bridgwater including evening journeys, continued evening services for Taunton and on-going support for vital bus routes across Somerset including in Frome, Dulverton and Wiveliscombe.

More about local bus improvement measures across Somerset:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/council-unveils-major-package-of-bus-service-improvement-measures/>

****NEW PLANS FOR SAFE CYCLING & WALKING ROUTES:** The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for Wellington, Chard, Burnham and Highbridge have been

published. The Council has already created and published plans for Yeovil, Taunton, Bridgwater and Frome.

The LCWIPs are focused, 10-year plans for developing a cycle and walking network within each local area. The aim is to secure funding over the next decade for significant new safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians across all Somerset's towns. Access and comment on the area plans via the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans page - <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans/>

****OPEN CONSULTATIONS:** <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/>

Somerset Tree Planting Register (closes 31 Jan 2033): Somerset Council published a 10-year Tree Strategy in June 2023 to enhance and protect Somerset trees and woodland across the county. Amongst its ambitious aims, the strategy sets out a plan for planting 240 hectares of new trees and woodlands each year across the county until 2033. From Somerset's famous apple orchards to Exmoor's mighty oaks, the aim is to increase the county's tree coverage from its current 8% to the national average of 13% and more if possible.

We know there are many groups, farmers, residents, organisations and businesses that are involved in planting trees and hedgerows, so it's important that we record and celebrate their efforts. By mapping your tree planting, it will help us to know if the county is on target to meet its important planting goals. Your views matter to build a map of new trees across the county.

Fire Service Consultation relating to responses to Automatic Fire Alarms (closes 9 April 2025): Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service has started a consultation with options to change how we respond to automatic fire alarms. <https://www.dsfire.gov.uk/about-us/AFA-consultation>

A family Feedback Survey on digital Social Care Records (closes April 2025): A Digital Social Care Record (DSCR) is the digital recording of care information and care received by your relative, from their care provider, replacing traditional paper records. This is sometimes called an *electronic care plan*, *electronic care record* or *electronic care management*. This allows everyone involved in a person's care to see appropriate information to help with that care. The Digitising Social Care Records initiative is being managed by NHS England

Somerset School Nurse Feedback (closes May 2025): Feedback will be used to better understand how we serve you well, where we might need to improve and what you value most from our service.

Dawn Denton: dawn.denton@somerset.gov.uk