

SOMERSET COUNCIL

Rode Parish Council

Cllr Dawn Denton

September 2025

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

****Flood engineering:** James Divall (Head of Service: Climate & Natural Environment) has advised that the outstanding work in Rode is in the service plan for 2025/26. He is keen to focus on addressing the current SRA projects (including the Rode works) rather than take on new projects. James' team is working with County Highways to look at options and next steps to see what can be done, seek the permissions if required to operate near or on the highways, assess the impact of finishing the job and whether what is left actually will make the difference needed. They will be in touch with CALM to get all the necessary information. I have been told that Adam Boyden and I will be updated at every step. I will continue to chase.

****The Sportsman:** I have not heard anything from Andy Ley (Service Manager - Development Engineering) since June. His last email advised that his team met with a maintenance contractor and they are chasing for confirmation of their acceptance of the job and a potential start date. I will make contact again this month and hope to have an answer soon or I will elevate.

****Church Farm:** Mary-Ellen Munnelly (S106/CIL Officer – East) has been chasing the developer and has been advised that the company is in direct contact with the residents. I will ask for an update and advise accordingly.

****Slip road on A36:** I have not had any replies to my communications with Chris Hilldrup (National Highways Route Manager SW) since May. I will continue to chase and will look at how to elevate.

****Ambient Voice Scribing at Frome Medical Practice:** A concerned resident contacted me about the use of the Ambient Voice Technology at the Frome Medical Practice. Her concern is that the technology was being used without advising patients, asking for their consent and thus giving them the option to opt-out. I made contact with the Medical Practice to ask for a meeting to discuss this, and have to date not had a response. But the Practice has since put information out on their social media channels and in the local media. There is still not enough information about the use of this technology and how this is being communicated to residents, especially those not able to access information digitally. I will continue to engage the Practice on behalf of the residents.

****Wessex Water:** Along with a group of local (Conservative & Green) Somerset Councillors, I met with the Matt Wheeldon (Director of Infrastructure Development at Wessex Water) about local planning applications, spills into the River Frome and farming run-off. Matt is currently lobbying the government for funding to help communities remove rainwater from the system to reduce flooding and drainage issues, and is meeting with residents and parish councils in the local area to answer questions about sewage works, river health, flooding and other water concerns.

****AI Road Safety Cameras (Frome Bypass):** Following six fatalities on the A361 Frome Bypass in five years, Somerset Council and Avon & Somerset Police are trialling AI cameras to detect dangerous driving. Installed in August for six months, the cameras identify behaviours linked to the “Fatal Five”: speeding, seatbelt non-compliance, distraction (e.g. mobile phones), drink/drug driving, and careless driving. Offenders will initially receive warning letters and educational materials. The technology, already used elsewhere in the UK, is being tested alongside recent safety upgrades at the A361/A362 junction.

****Fire Risk from Gas Canisters:** Somerset Council has issued a warning following a near-serious fire at a recycling facility caused by gas canisters being placed in blue recycling bags. In the past six months, almost 1,500 canisters have been wrongly disposed of, leading to four fires in one month. Residents are urged to take small canisters, vapes, lithium-ion batteries and devices to recycling sites for safe disposal. Only empty aerosols may go in blue bags.

****City, Town & Parish Preparedness Survey:** Somerset Council and Somerset Prepared are inviting all parish, town and city councils to complete the first Preparedness Survey to help assess emergency risks across the county. The survey asks councils to score the significance of local hazards and reflect on their preparedness in terms of planning, people and resources. Responses will inform support for community resilience, establish a baseline for tracking progress, and allow councils to request specific help. The survey closes 19 September 2025, with findings shared at the Community Resilience Day on 15 October. Complete the survey here: <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/climate-and-environment/city-town-parish-preparedness-survey/>

****Digital Slinky Transport:** Somerset Council is expanding its Digital Slinky demand-responsive transport service. First piloted in Somerton and Langport in May 2024, the service is now being rolled out to Sedgemoor (covering Bridgwater, Burnham-on-Sea and nearby villages) from 18 August, funded through the Government’s Bus Service Improvement grant. Taunton and Wellington will follow in September, with further expansion dependent on future funding. Digital Slinky allows passengers to book via an app just one hour in advance, rather than 24 hours, with phone bookings still available. The service runs Monday–Friday, 7.30am to 5.30pm. Information on how to register and book can be found here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/slinky-services/>

****People Strategy 2025–2028:** Somerset Council has set out a new People Strategy aimed at supporting staff through transformation and improving recruitment, retention and morale. The strategy focuses on three priorities: Reset and Refocus (strengthening the basics), Attract and Retain (building fair, motivated teams), and Improve and Thrive (embracing innovation). While deliberately high-level, much of the detail is deferred to Directorate Workforce Plans due later in 2025.

****ALL OPEN CONSULTATIONS: Citizen’s Space**

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