

October 2025 Update to Rode Parish Council
from cllr Adam Boyden, Somerset Councillor, Frome North

Parking on pavements

Following up the issue raised at the last meeting in September, any notes on windscreens should reflect the advice below.

Somerset Council's parking service have confirmed that there are no bye-laws in Somerset that prohibit parking vehicles on the pavement. Currently only London, parts of Scotland and Wales have a default position of no parking on the pavement. The previous Government did a consultation in 2020 (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking/pavement-parking-options-for-change>), but never reported the results! The current Government might publish the outcome shortly.

As to what can be done, Somerset Council can serve a penalty if a vehicle is parked on the pavement where a yellow line exists, and Somerset's enforcement contractor can be contacted to attend – please call 01823 219035 or email somersetparkingenquiries@nsl.co.uk.

Where no yellow line exists, the Council has the power to introduce a prohibition of stopping (waiting) on the verge or pavement. To do so a *Traffic Regulation Order* would need to be drafted, advertised, consulted upon and signs installed for each individual location, which takes time. However, the police do have the powers to deal with vehicles parked causing an actual *obstruction or hazard*. People should report parking on pavements using the online form if it causes pedestrians to enter the road – please see <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/parking-issues/>.

Fundraising

Also at the last meeting, I mentioned that Frome Town Council were going to appoint a professional fundraiser for the skate park project. The Town Council have recently advertised in the Frome Times (25th Sept) and elsewhere to commission an organisation or individual with a proven track record to seek funding for approx. £400k for a new skatepark, with a deadline of 13th October for proposals to be sent to FTC officer Hannah Stopford (email hstopford@frometowncouncil.gov.uk). So it is not yet decided who the appointed fundraiser would be yet, but it may be helpful to talk to Hannah for tips on how to commission one for the Village Hall project.

Planning Service emergency measures

Somerset Council's 12 week action plan to reduce the significant backlog in planning applications, launched on 28th July, is coming to an end next week. The temporary measures announced in July (see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/council-takes-action-to-tackle-planning-application-backlog/>) and in a Parish Information Sheet emailed to all parish clerks on 25th July, included limiting updates on applications, reducing non-essential meetings and site visits, and introducing a triage system to speed up decisions. This is having an effect, reducing the number of 'live' applications to 1,400, but a report with details will be presented to *Climate and Place Scrutiny Committee* on 23rd October (agenda reports will be at - <https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=202&MId=7776>).

Vale of Frome Local Community Network

Somerset Council's *Vale of Frome Local Community Network* is a local forum for parish and town councils, public sector bodies and community groups to come together with Somerset Council to agree local priorities for action. The last (AGM) meeting in July in Frome had a discussion on the purpose of the LCN, a presentation on the consultation on the Local Transport Plan, and a report from the highways working group. Max Wide (Frome Town Councillor) was re-elected Chair, and I am Vice Chair again. There was a follow-up drop in session on the Local Transport Plan later that week, which I could not attend.

The next LCN meeting is currently in **Rode Memorial Hall** at 7-9pm on Thursday 23rd October, with a draft agenda to include:

- Health and social care, and Integrated Care Boards' reorganisation
- Connect Somerset update
- Somerset Local Nature Recovery Strategy consultation

Also the LCN Link Officer James Moore has helped facilitate Buckland Dinham Parish Council's bid for SALC funds to improve a footpath and cycle link, so that is good news. Please let me or James (email james.moore@somerset.gov.uk) know if you have any projects that would benefit from his help.

Road closures and diversions in Frome and Beckington

A reminder that the A362 at Portway in Frome is now closed to traffic until Friday 21st November to allow essential work on the railway bridge by Network Rail. A pedestrian route is open through the works. There will be no train services in Frome on 1st and 2nd November

Also that Bath Road through Beckington is also closed to traffic from the Woolpack Inn towards Goose Street until 5th December, to allow Wales & West to work on the gas main. The road diversion is via the Warminster Road and A36, and the D2 Frome-Bath bus will be using this, with some temporary parking restrictions around the Woolpack to allow buses to turn, but Faresaver's Frome-Trowbridge/Chippenham X34 service is not able to as double decker buses cannot get through the tree lined road. Please see <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/2025/10/05/road-closures-frome-beckington/#page-content>.

Q&A on Frome Community Hospital

Following the campaign against cuts to beds at Frome Community Hospital, and the launch of the NHS Somerset 'Big Conversation' ([see here](#)), I have received some answers to my questions to NHS Somerset about the implications for Frome, relating to the temporary nature of the changes and implications for staff, the potential for replacement ambulatory care services to replace the 8 lost bed spaces, the costs of care, and public consultation and engagement. Please see here <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/2025/10/12/qa-on-frome-community-hospital/#page-content>.

River Frome water quality

I and other councillors attend the regular meetings of the Environment Agency's steering group for the Farleigh Hungerford Bathing Water site on the River Frome. At the last meeting in July we also discussed discharges from Beckington sewage treatment works. The EA is monitoring the river water for bacteria weekly during the bathing season and researching the sources of pollution. Water quality at Farleigh had met Bathing Water standards so far this year, largely due to the dry weather.

I then arranged a side meeting with Wessex Water's Director of Infrastructure Development Matt Whealdon and other councillors on 14th July to discuss their emerging plans to improve discharges from Rode, Beckington and Frome sewage treatment works (STW) from combined sewer overflows. Investment in Rode, to increase storage and install UV treatment, was due in the current 5 year period but needed investigation and had not been programmed in yet. Matt also emphasised the need to prevent rainwater from entering the sewer system in the first place, which would reduce the need for expensive and carbon-intensive storage tanks, but this needs national legislation (and funding) to progress. I could not make the subsequent arranged visit to Rode STW due to work commitments, but please let me know any news. The next Steering Group meeting is on Weds 15th October at 10am online.

Somerset Council's plan to protect services and achieve savings

In July, Somerset Council's Executive approved the next phase of the Council's Transformation Plan to safeguard public services, 'Inspiring Innovation', which builds upon the work undertaken over the past 2 years which has focused on stabilisation through a £34m reduction in the Council's pay bill. Like many other councils across the country, Somerset Council's financial position remains critical due to the broken system of funding for local councils which has not accounted for rising demand and costs for core services like social care. In 2025/26 it is estimated that some 66% of the Council's budget will be spent on children and adults in every local community who need our care. The Inspiring Innovation plan will help Somerset address the budget gap of £190m over the next five years and achieve financial sustainability. See <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/executive-approves-next-phase-of-plans-for-somerset-councils-transformation-to-protect-public-services/>.

In September, Somerset Council appointed Newton Consulting as a strategic partner to help deliver the *Inspiring Innovation* transformation programme, to improve services and achieve savings. This partnership approach (instead of outsourcing) aims to maintain control and achieve value for money and staff development, and support the council's focus on modernising and strengthening public services in very challenging financial times. The first phase will cost up to £1.5m, with the total contract value capped at £20m over the full term, with any further phases subject to future decisions. In line with best practice, the contract is expected to return between £2.50 to £3 for every £1 invested. Please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/somerset-council-appoints-strategic-partner-to-protect-and-improve-public-services/>.

Somerset Council adopts Mendip Local Plan update

At the last full council meeting in September, Somerset Council agreed to adopt the Mendip *Local Plan Part 2 Limited Update with the Main Modifications*, in line with the conclusions of the examination Inspector's report. This follows the successful Judicial Review brought by Norton St Philip Parish Council against the Local Plan Part 2 which had its five site allocations removed, and consultation and examination of the subsequent Limited Update.

The adopted Limited Update has 9 new site allocations capable of delivering 569 dwellings by the end of the Mendip Local Plan Period in 2029 – these are in Frome (18 dwellings at North Parade Car Park), Glastonbury, Street, Wells, Midsomer Norton/ Westfield and Coleford. Please see item 8 here <https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=214&MIId=7597> and <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/adopted-local-plans/?district=Mendip>.

Somerset-wide Local Plan update

The Somerset-wide Local Plan, for a 20 year period up to 2045, will replace all four existing local plans in the four former districts with one single Local Plan for Somerset, is progressing. A briefing was provided to Somerset Councillors recently. I can update as follows:

- The number of homes this Local Plan will be required to include by the Government's formula is a total of 74,000 new homes over 20 years (please note Somerset Council considers this too high and is pushing back), minus existing commitments means land for 36,200 new homes needs to be found. This would I understand be something like a 32% increase to every settlement in the county.
- The evidence base is being gathered (a few have been completed, but many more documents are due soon).
- After the 'Call for Sites' over 1600 sites are being assessed for their potential suitability/availability and achievability, and a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) will be published in December 2025 (this will identify potential suitability for allocation, but will not infer any site has any status in the future Local Plan).
- Detailed assessments of potentially suitable sites, and a draft spatial strategy, will then be drafted, and a Draft Local Plan is currently scheduled to be released for public consultation in April 2026, although this is likely to be delayed further.
- Crucially, a range of *spatial strategy options* is being considered for how housing should be distributed across different types and sizes of settlements (and open countryside) around the county, as well as how public transport and accessibility, job opportunities, past housing growth, and climate change and flood risks, should be taken into account.

An update on progress, programme, work done and work ahead is reported as item 6 at the Planning and Transport Policy Sub-committee on October 8th at 2pm - see

<https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=934&MId=7627>.

Please also see further updates on the Local Plan webpage - <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/somerset-local-plan/>.

Supporting Businesses to Go Green

Somerset Council is offering £170,000 in grants to help small and medium businesses reduce energy use and carbon emissions. Grants range from £2,000 to £15,000, with match-funding required. The scheme is funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Local Growth Fund, and includes practical advice such as energy audits and sustainability plans through the Go Green scheme. For details and how to apply please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/council-supports-businesses-to-go-green/> and contact: greenbusinesssupport@somerset.gov.uk.

Have your say: Sunday parking charges

A public consultation on new and revised Sunday parking charges in Somerset Council car parks has begun and runs until **20th October**. Currently, charging varies across the county's car parks, with some charging on Sundays and others not. The proposal aims to create consistency across Somerset and ensure the parking service remains fully self-funded. Somerset Council car parks in Frome currently charge a flat rate, and this would be replaced by the hourly rates that apply the rest of the week (so, if you park for less than 3 hours on a Sunday you would save money in future). Final decisions would only be made after further consultation, with any changes implemented in 2026. Please see <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/parking/copy-of-consultation/>.

Have Your Say: Somerset's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Somerset Council has launched a public consultation on its draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). This aims to protect and restore wildlife and habitats and reverse habitat decline across the county, guiding long-term environmental action. The consultation runs until **31st October**. Please see <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/climate-and-environment/local-nature-recovery-strategy/>.

The Strategy:

- Outlines opportunities and priorities for what, where and how we can protect and grow nature;
- Maps a series of specific actions that can be delivered now to have the most impact for nature across the region; and
- Lays out the journey for realising the long-term recovery and growth of nature across the region.

Residents, landowners, and businesses are encouraged to share ideas on priorities and actions to support nature recovery in your area. In Section 5.5 of the draft Strategy, Parish and Town councils are encouraged to use the Strategy to support sustainable local development, protect biodiversity, and enhance green spaces, shape the positive management of their local green spaces for nature and people, help to inform environmental and land use policies and Neighbourhood Development Plans. Parish Councils also now have an enhanced duty under the Environment Act 2021 to 'maintain and enhance' biodiversity, and may wish to consider creating a Local Nature Action Plan (LNAP), informed by the Strategy.

Have your say: Transforming support for Somerset's children and families

A public consultation has been launched to help shape future children's services and keep families safely together in Somerset. This follows national proposals to transform children's social care in which the Government's goal is to have families and practitioners from social work, police, health, education and beyond working together to promote the wellbeing of children and keep them safe from harm. Somerset Council's public consultation runs until **27th November** aims to gain insights into what's working well and what changes and improvements are needed to support families to stay together and thrive, increasing the number of children that can stay safely at home. Please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/transforming-support-for-somersets-children-and-families-have-your-say/>.

Funding for Electric vehicle charging in Somerset

Somerset Council has secured £3.78m from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund to expand Electric vehicle charging points across the county, including in on-street locations in both urban and rural areas. The Council is in the process of appointing a contractor, and will be soon be asking the public (and Parish, City and Town Councils) for suggestions on chargepoint locations via its website. It would be helpful for parish councils to give this some early thought beforehand. See <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/milestone-for-electric-vehicle-charging-network/>.

Mental Health survey

In September, Anna Sabine MP launched a town-wide 'Hackathon' aimed at addressing the growing challenge of mental health in children and young people, with events and a young people's mental health survey which is still 'live'. There are two surveys, one for children and young people to share their experiences, and one for adults who would like to share their understanding or concerns around young people in their life. Please see and share - <https://www.anna4fes.uk/campaigns/mental-health-hackathon>.

Help for financial challenges

Somerset's Household Support Fund has been extended to help Somerset residents struggling with the cost of living. Residents are encouraged to access the Household Support offer online, or via 0300 123 2224. Somerset Council's Council Tax Reduction, Discretionary Housing and Exceptional Hardship payment schemes can also help reduce bills for low income households.

Council urges people to report rough sleeping

Friday 19th October was World Homelessness Day, and Somerset Council is encouraging residents to report rough sleeping when they see it, via the **Streetlink** service - <https://thestreetlink.org.uk/>. Rough sleeping is the most visible form of homelessness, including sleeping outside but also other places unsuitable for sleeping such as an empty building or a car. Outreach workers from the Council and its partners go around the county regularly to identify people who are sleeping rough with the aim to support them to find permanent accommodation. Please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/council-urges-residents-to-report-rough-sleeping-when-they-see-it-worldhomelessnessday/>.

Council leader condemns attacks on faith buildings

Somerset Council Leader Bill Revans has strongly condemned recent attacks on faith buildings in Somerset, emphasising that hate has no place in the county. During a Full Council meeting in Bridgwater, he pledged to promote unity and safety across all communities. Please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/hate-has-no-home-in-somerset-council-leader/>.

Somerset Increases Local Recycling

Somerset Council reports a rise in recycling processed within the county, with 99% of plastics recycled in the UK and a 57% reduction in landfill waste. These results reflect the Council's (and residents') commitment to sustainability and transparency. The figures emphasise the importance of recycling everyday items like shampoo bottles, foil, and toothpaste tubes, which are now being diverted from waste to proper reprocessing. You can explore the full report on the Council's Recycling tracker page at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/recycling-tracker/>.

Autumn/winter hours at Recycling Centres

Please remember that all 16 recycling sites in Somerset, including Frome, have now moved to autumn/winter opening hours, so are now open every Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 4pm. Monday to Friday, recycling sites including Frome are open from 9am to 5pm (some others are closed on some days so please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/find-your-nearest-recycling-centre/>). Sites return to summer opening hours in April.

Somerset Council launches 20-year plan to boost the county's economy

Somerset Council has published its *Somerset Economic Prosperity Strategy 2025-2045* – aiming to make Somerset a leader in energy, aerospace, manufacturing, and digital sectors. Key goals include increasing skills and productivity, lifting 10,000 people out of economic inactivity, transforming deprived communities, and achieving net-zero emissions. The strategy builds on £4 billion investment in the Gravity Enterprise Zone and the £5.3 billion spending from Hinkley Point C, with plans to develop tidal energy and enhance innovation. Please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/somerset-economic-prosperity-strategy-2025-2045/>.

Somerset Council commits to increasing social housing

Somerset Council will use an underspend of £3.3m in its Housing Revenue Account to buy additional council housing. This aims to provide short-term emergency accommodation and help reduce long waiting lists for social housing. Around 15 properties are expected to be purchased, with locations chosen based on demand. The move supports both immediate needs and longer-term housing sustainability, ensuring better quality and control compared to temporary placements like B&Bs. Please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/news/somerset-council-bolsters-social-housing-stock-to-support-local-needs/>.

Lib Dem motion calls for urgent housing reform in Somerset

Liberal Democrat councillors have proposed a Council motion urging the government to grant councils stronger powers and long-term funding to build more affordable homes. The motion, at the recent Full Council meeting, highlights decades of underinvestment, declining social housing, and the need for practical measures to accelerate the development of greener, affordable homes for families. Despite over 2,600 new homes built in the past year in Somerset, councillors warn that demand far exceeds supply and call on the government for urgent action to prevent more families from facing homelessness. Please see item 11 here [Agenda for Full Council / https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=214&MIId=7597](https://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ielistDocuments.aspx?CId=214&MIId=7597).

Frome Bypass AI Cameras Target Dangerous Driving to Improve Road Safety and Save Lives

AI cameras are being tested on the A361 Frome Bypass by Somerset Council and Avon and Somerset Police to reduce serious collisions, which have included 6 fatalities in five years. These cameras can identify unsafe driving behaviours like mobile phone use and careless driving. Initially, offenders will receive warning letters and educational materials. The initiative supports the [Fatal Five campaign](#), targeting speeding, distraction, seatbelt use, drink-driving, and careless driving. Recent safety improvements include road markings and signage upgrades, with longer-term plans to review the junction's safety. The goal is to curb dangerous driving habits and save lives on this busy route.

Encouraging Volunteer Groups to Pursue Prestigious Recognition

Charities and volunteer groups in Somerset are encouraged to apply for the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS), the highest national recognition for voluntary groups. The application period is open until **1st December 2025**. The award celebrates outstanding volunteer efforts benefiting local communities across a wide range of causes, from health and social care to arts and the environment. In the last round, 11 groups from Somerset were nominated. Applications can be made through a simple process detailed on the KAV website <https://kavs.dcms.gov.uk/>. The award helps raise awareness and provides valuable recognition for groups making a difference in Somerset.

Tributes for former MP David Warburton and councillors Des Harris and Nick Cottle

Sadly, August saw the passing of Somerset Councillor Nick Cottle (Glastonbury), former MP for Somerton and Frome David Warburton, and former District Councillor Des Harris, and I pay tribute to them here <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/2025/09/05/tributes-to-david-warburton-des-harris-and-nick-cottle/#page-content>.

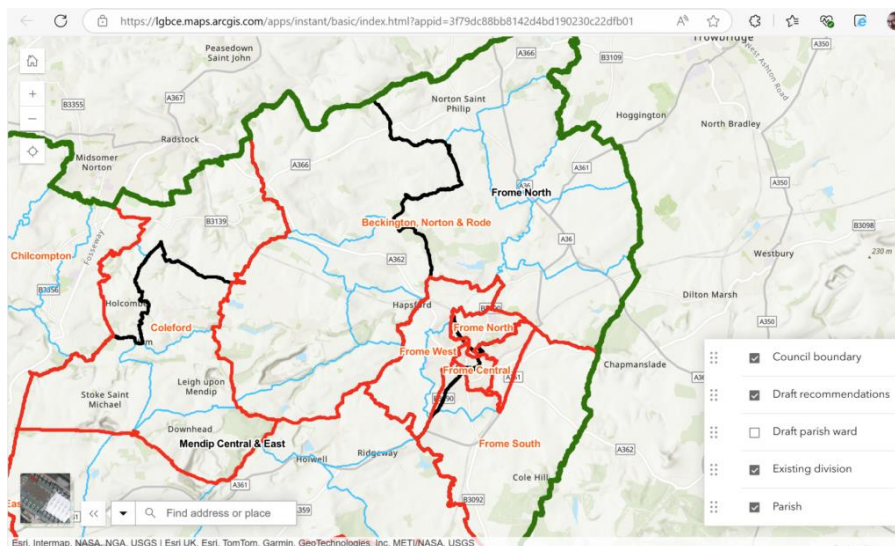
Report a problem to Somerset Council

For handy links to report problems to Somerset Council on the road, pavement, parking, lights, waste and recycling. or to order more recycling boxes or bags, please see

<https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/2025/05/16/reporting-a-problem/#page-content> or call **0300 123 2224**.

New Council ward boundaries proposed

The Boundary Commission has proposed changes to Somerset Council's ward boundaries from 2027, including a new large single-member 'Beckington, Norton and Rode' ward with 11 parishes (see the red boundary in the map below), in place of the two-member Frome North division. I had previously proposed the continuation of three two-member wards for the Frome area but this was dismissed for reasons explained in the Commission's report. The consultation closed in August and the Commission's final report of their recommendations will be published in early December, before being taken through Parliament – please see <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/somerset>.



Somerset Council news can all be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/newsroom/>.

Somerset Council Consultations - which anyone can complete and take part in shaping the future of Somerset are all at [Somerset Council - Citizen Space - Consultations](#).

Please let me know if you have any questions or issues that need dealing with.

Best wishes, Adam Boyden

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Web: see the latest news at <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/>