



Somerset County
Councillors Update

April 2020

Mandy Chilcott – Minehead
Christine Lawrence – Dunster



Useful Contacts, Resources & Websites

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Report Pothole/Road Defects	https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/report-a-pothole-or-road-defect/	0300 123 2224
Report Risk to Adult	adults@somerset.gov.uk	0300 123 2224 Emergency 999
Report Risk to Child	childrens@somerset.gov.uk	0300 123 2224 Emergency 999
Refuse Collection etc	Enquiries@somerstwaste.gov.uk https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/	00823 625 700
Interested in Fostering or Adoption	Fosteringinsomerset.org.uk	0800 587 9900
Road Works/diversions etc	Travelsomerset.co.uk One.network	
Talking Café Multi Agency Drop ins for help & advice Beach Hotel Mondays 10am –1 pm	Somersetagents.org/talking-cafes/ E – info@somerstrcc.org.uk	01823 331 222
West Somerset Advice Bureau	www.westsomersetadvice.org also On Facebook West Somerset Advice	0800 802 1808

The World has changed since the last update in ways we could not even imagine a few weeks ago. All of our lives have been affected by the Covid19 virus. It's a time of challenge and uncertainty for us all. I have been contacted by many residents, with a variety of queries and concerns. I have added the table below which gives some of the sources of help and support that are available as well as further information on a range of issues that have been raised – I hope you find it helpful. This is a fast moving situation so the Somerset County Council website (see below) is being updated regularly and details included in this update are subject to change.

As always, please get in touch if I can help you – my details are at the top of the sheet. Stay Safe – Stay at Home – Protect the NHS – Save Lives

Helpful Contact Numbers in relation to Covid-19

To contact your county or district council –	open 8am – 6 pm - 7 days a week	0300 790 6275
Somerset County Council (Covid-19) information & Updates	https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-latest-advice/?fbclid=IwAR0l--rg6PWb5OploSLlc5gCIM0KsscQlubH_nYBMwCBhdnoqesLGGgt-k	
Minehead Coronavirus Support Group	Contact via Facebook Page or email - ineedhelpinminehead@icloud.com	If you do not have internet access call 07385 103187
Community volunteering	https://www.corona-helpers.co.uk/ or email - support@sparksomerset.org.uk	01460 202970
If you feel worried, anxious or scared	www.healthysomerset.co.uk/covid-19/	You can call Mindline on 01823 276892.
Universal Credit Hotline		0800 328 5644
Somerset domestic abuse service	http://www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk/	confidential helpline 0800 69 49 999

To register as vulnerable with the government - whether or not support is needed	https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable	
Business Support – Somerset County Council page	https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-help-for-business/	
Business Support via Heart of the South West Growth Hub	https://www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk/covid-19-guidance-for-business/	
Business Support page Minehead BID	http://mineheadbid.co.uk/support.htm	
List of Minehead Businesses offering delivery or online services	https://www.facebook.com/1731292933664858/posts/2602945053166304/?d=n	
Businesses within the area that are still open for business – delivering or online.	https://www.simplysig.shop/	

Single number for Somerset - 0300 790 6275

A Somerset Corona Virus Support helpline has been launched and is available between 8am and 6pm seven days a week including bank holidays.

The single helpline covers the districts and county and will offer support with personal care and support, transport, housing, waste, financial as well as emotional well-being. The number is 0300 790 6275.

The new number won't cover medical advice, for which people will need to continue to use the 111 NHS online service and only ring 111 if they cannot get help online.

Minehead Coronavirus Support Group

Are doing great work helping everybody to get their essentials that could include shopping or prescriptions. Please find the following leaflet that has a telephone number for those that do not have access to facebook – its 07385 103187. If you are able to volunteer to help please get in touch.



Somerset's Local Authorities

Coronavirus support helpline

0300 790 6275

Available 8am to 6pm, seven days a week

A single number is now available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus related support from Somerset's Local Authorities. Anyone who can't find help within their community can use the helpline to get help and advice surrounding:

- **Emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious**
- **Financial support**
- **Personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions**
- **Housing and support for the homeless**
- **Social Care or Medical transport needs**
- **Waste collection and disposal**



**MINEHEAD
CORONAVIRUS
SUPPORT GROUP**

We Are Here To Help

Working with the
village agents



This started off as a support group on Facebook, we need to reach out to more people in Minehead whom do NOT have access to Facebook.

If you need help or support in this difficult time we now have an email address and a contact number to leave a voicemail or even text. Whether you're self isolating for medical needs and are in the vulnerable category or you're showing symptoms of the coronavirus there is help there to get you your essentials.

Please leave a voicemail or text on
07385103187 or email
ineedhelpinminehead@icloud.com and
leave the following details

Name
Location(road name)
Contact number
And what you need help with

We will then arrange someone trusted to get in touch with yourself to help.

Who's at the end of the phone number and email address?
Toni Bloomfield and Paul Bolton

Both a local family. Toni is a town councillor and Paul is a town and district councillor.

Please note this is for residents that DO NOT have access to Facebook. If you do have access and need help or support please continue to use the Facebook group. If you know of someone whom does not have access to Facebook and may need help or support please pass on these details.



Information, Help and Support for the Most Vulnerable Residents

Somerset is in the process of setting up shielding hubs to look after Somerset's most vulnerable people in response to the government's announcement that 1.5m of the most at risk people will be asked to self-isolate for at least 12 weeks, Somerset County Council is working closely with Sedgemoor, Mendip, South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton district councils to set these up - this will include support for every area - including Minehead. It will be a huge task as there will be many that need vital supplies as they are not able to get out to get food or medicines.

If you feel you would like to donate to help others in Somerset during this difficult time, Somerset Community Foundation Trust have set up a fund - Somerset Coronavirus Appeal - to collect donations to help get funding to local charities and community organisations - <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/>

If you know anybody that needs support as a clinically extremely vulnerable person ie If they have a medical condition which makes them extremely vulnerable to coronavirus (COVID-19), you can register them here and let the government know whether or not you need support:- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

Also on a more local level, The Community Council for Somerset are happy to take calls from vulnerable or self isolating individuals on 01823 331222. They will ask for a name, and telephone number if there is one. They will triage the calls and forward to the village agents that operate right around the county - including here in Minehead.

Staying Happy, Healthy and Safe – Coronavirus and emotional and mental health

It is normal to feel vulnerable and overwhelmed as we read news about the outbreak, especially if you have experienced trauma or a mental health issue in the past. People with long-term physical health conditions can also feel more vulnerable to the effects of the coronavirus. It's important to acknowledge these feelings and remind each other that staying healthy is as much about your mind as it is about your body.

If you feel it would help to talk to someone, please contact Somerset Mindline – 01823 276 892 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 11pm and Saturday and Sunday 8pm to 11pm

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-mental-health-information/>

West Somerset Advice

West Somerset Advice are still running a full service either by email or phone. Support includes - helping people to make universal credit claims, advice on money or benefits, answering questions on housing or employment and more.

T- 0800 802 1808 or email advice@citizensadvicewestsomerset.org.uk

Community Volunteering

The response of the community has been overwhelming. The county council is supporting the voluntary sector in these difficult times, and in particular the great work of SPARK Somerset and Corona Helpers. Corona Helpers, is a free online platform, administered by Spark Somerset. People can pledge their support to volunteer or offer help. Further information is available here: <https://www.corona-helpers.co.uk/> call 01460 202970 or email support@sparksomerset.org.uk

Minehead still has businesses that are offering either a delivery service or are operating online.



This is a really challenging time for many businesses, so please support local business where you can - there is a facebook page that has a list of those that are operating. <https://www.facebook.com/1731292933664858/posts/2602945053166304/?d=n>

There is also another website that covers Somerset – these businesses will offer either collection or delivery services to their communities.

<https://www.simplysig.shop/meat-suppliers>

Helpful Links for Businesses

Thank you to Minehead BID who have put together a Covid-19 support page for businesses that has pulled together the key links that businesses may find helpful.

<http://mineheadbid.co.uk/support.htm>

The Somerset County Council, Government Covid-19 Support and Growth Hub pages are relevant for all businesses, again there are lots of links to other pages from here, including the Heart of the South West Hub.

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-help-for-business/>
<https://www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk/covid-19-guidance-for-business/>

Number 28 Bus To Taunton – Coronavirus Timetable Change

The timetable now runs hourly, so please use the following link to check before you travel. The link is a bit glitchy, so I hope it works – but you may need to copy and paste into your browser.

<https://www.firstgroup.com/somerset/plan-journey/timetables/?operator=31&service=28&page=1&redirect=no>

Concessionary Bus Pass Use

During these challenging times I have been asked whether concessionary bus passes can be used outside of the normal times allowed, and in particular before 9.30 to enable those who wish to get to the supermarkets, chemist etc early to use them.

SCC have now spoken to all local bus operators in the County and I am pleased to advise that they are happy to accept concessionary passes all day Monday to Friday as they already do on Saturdays and Sundays. (usually only after 9.30 on a weekday)

In doing so I am of course mindful of the current government guidance on social distancing, but for many for the time at least its the only form of transport that many have access to.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

County Bus Ticket

The County Council have made the decision to cancel all annual student bus pass direct debits from 1 April. We also intend to issue pro-rata refunds to all those who paid in full. As all payments have been cancelled County Ticket passes will not scan on bus ticket machines. We have taken this decision as colleges and sixth forms are closed and we are aware of the financial hardship many are finding themselves in due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Parking

Somerset County Council is suspending parking enforcement across the county. The County Council is standing down its Civil Enforcement team in line with Government guidance during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

The change means the Council can redeploy officers to support community work such as helping shop for foods and collect medicines for vulnerable people.

The Council is urging all drivers who **have** to go out only to park in permitted areas, such as parking bays, car parks and uncontrolled areas. As long as vehicles are parked considerately and do not cause an obstruction no action will be taken.

No payment at on-street pay and display machines is required for the time being. Parking areas with time limits near essential shops and pharmacies should be respected to allow access by drivers undertaking essential journeys.

It is vital that drivers do not block the path of emergency vehicles and others involved in delivering services to those in need. A small team of Civil Enforcement Officers will remain available to deal with any parking problems that could affect key access routes to premises such as hospitals and supermarkets.

There are no changes to residents' parking areas. We would ask everyone to park sensibly and considerately.

Please check with your district council for information on car parks in your local area. Please remember not to make unnecessary journeys and to follow the Government rules to stay home, protect the NHS and save lives.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

How partner organisations in Somerset are working together to support homeless people

The five councils in Somerset are working to ensure that all homeless people or rough sleepers are housed in a single room to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus – COVID 19.

Many people will be concerned about those in our communities who are homeless or rough sleepers and how the authorities are supporting them during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The five councils in Somerset are working together to support the government's strategy to bring in those on the streets, protect their health and wellbeing and stop wider transmission. This approach will reduce the impact of COVID-19 on people facing homelessness during this public health emergency.

The councils are working closely with partners, the voluntary sector and others to offer self-contained accommodation to rough sleepers and many people who are currently living in homeless hostels so that they are able to self-isolate.

People can contact the Coronavirus help support line on **0300 790 6275** if they need support and advice about being homeless or sleeping rough. The line is open 8 – 6 – 7 days a week

Stay home save lives

As the weather improves, there may be a temptation for many to visit friends and family. Don't. Please continue to follow Government guidelines to stay at home. This will save lives. We need to limit the opportunities the virus has to spread. If you are going outside to enjoy exercise and the good weather, you must stay locally and use green, open spaces near to your home. We need people to avoid visiting local hot spots and meeting up with friends and family. This will help to reduce the burden placed on all of our public services and save lives.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Non-Urgent Elective Operations

NHS services are likely to come under intense pressure as the coronavirus spreads, and they need to ensure that they have as many beds available as possible to care for patients with severe respiratory problems when the number of infections peak.

Therefore, in line with well-established plans for situations like this, every hospital in Somerset is suspending all non-urgent elective operations for at least three months, which will enable them to train their staff, adapt certain areas and increase critical care capacity within their hospitals.

Emergency surgery will continue, and urgent cases and cancer treatments will be carrying on as normal wherever possible. Many people waiting for treatment will be disappointed or worried, they will be contacting everyone affected as soon as possible.

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection. If you have symptoms of coronavirus infection, however mild, please stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started. The symptoms are either a high temperature or a new continuous cough. If you live with other people, they should stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person got symptoms. This action will help protect others in your community while you are infectious.

Everyone must stay at home to help stop the spread of coronavirus. This includes people of all ages – even if you do not have any symptoms or other health conditions.

Hospital Discharges

People who require care are being discharged more quickly from hospital than normal. Due to the ongoing crisis, emergency changes have been made to how the NHS and Social care work with people who require discharge from hospital. The NHS estimates it will need 15,000 beds to deal with the crisis, and the government has recently published new statutory requirements to ensure these beds are available for those who need them most.

The health and wellbeing of our residents and communities is our top priority, and our health and Social Care teams are working together to ensure we are meeting our new statutory obligations and keeping patients safe.

We'll find support for those who need it, but they won't be able to choose where. As there is a very short time between transfer and discharge under the new requirements, it's unlikely that we'll be able to offer patient or family choice in terms of discharge in the cases where it has been decided the patient needs a care home placement.

People who normally fund their own care won't need to pay – the NHS will cover the costs temporarily – until the coronavirus emergency is over.

Registering a Death

We are now able to carry out death registrations over the phone. Following emergency legislation passed by government, changes to the process will further protect staff and members of the public during the Covid-19 social distancing period.

A Medical Certificate of Cause of Death will be completed by a doctor and sent electronically to the Registration Service rather than be issued in paper form to the next of kin. The informant should then phone the Registration Service on 01823 282251 to arrange their telephone appointment. They will have the option of setting up a verification word for the registrar to use at the start of the call as extra reassurance. Once booked, an email will be issued confirming the time and date of the phone appointment, along with a checklist of the information that will need to be prepared in advance. This information is also on our page

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/births-ceremonies-and-deaths/register-a-death/>

A process is in place for those who don't have access to the internet, and they should seek further advice from their funeral director.

A streamlined version of the Tell Us Once service will still be available. This electronically notifies a range of government agencies and departments about the death. Informants are being asked to limit the number of copy certificates to 2 at this

time, and a secure payment facility is available over the phone. Certificates and any other paperwork will be posted to the informant, while the relevant paperwork will be sent electronically to the authority undertaking the burial or cremation.

Registration Service managers are working with key partner agencies such as the Coroner, funeral homes, doctors and Health Trusts to ensure a joined up approach. While the online appointment booking system is temporarily on hold, the service aim to have this available to the public again as soon as possible.

Birth, notice of marriage and civil partnership appointments are at the time of writing not available.

Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (SIDAS)

Somerset domestic abuse website www.somersetsurvivors.org.uk or you can call the local confidential helpline on 0800 69 49 999. Don't suffer in silence – help is at hand Support continues to be available for Somerset residents affected by domestic abuse with the County Council working closely with partners to make sure services continue during the current health emergency.

It is vital that people stay at home or self-isolate to help tackle the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic but that can put strains on relationships.

The County Council wants to reassure residents that its vital services continue to run – and that includes help for those affected by domestic abuse.

STAY HOME - STAY SAFE - STAY SCAM AWARE.

Trading Standards have created an A4 information sheet with advice on scams relating to Covid-19. This is primarily for people who may be elderly or vulnerable and cannot access the plentiful information on social media Please share this with anybody that you think would find it helpful.

www.facebook.com/tsconnected

<https://twitter.com/tsconnected>

STAY HOME

STAY SAFE

STAY SCAM AWARE

Devon, Somerset and Torbay
Trading Standards Service

Commissioned by Devon, Somerset and Torbay Councils



The outbreak of COVID-19 has seen an increase in scams and doorstep traders who are trying to exploit fear and uncertainty during this difficult time. As individuals and communities, we urge you to keep safe and vigilant in the current environment and look out for scams in your neighbourhood, which often target elderly and vulnerable people.

Types Of Scams



Testing Kits and Cures

There is currently no cure for COVID-19 and limited access to testing kits outside the NHS. When these kits are available, always ensure you are purchasing from a reputable supplier.



Doorstep Crime

There are many genuine community groups and charities that are assisting the most vulnerable, however, be alert for individuals who may be taking money under the false pretence of helping.



Donation Scams

There have been reports of thieves extorting money from consumers by claiming they are collecting donations for a COVID-19 'vaccine'.



Refund Scams

Some companies are offering fake holiday refunds for individuals who have been forced to cancel their trips. People seeking refunds should also be wary of fake websites set up to claim holiday refunds.



Financial Scams

Criminals are seeking to take advantage of the financial uncertainty many people are facing. These include calls/emails pretending to be from your bank, mortgage or internet provider, as well as increases in loan shark activity.

How To Stay Safe

- If you need help, try and use people you know and trust. If you cannot do this, always ask the person for ID, preferably in the form of a driving licence and make a note of their details
- Don't assume everyone is genuine. It is okay to say no and refuse an offer
- Don't open links or attachments from suspicious emails or text messages
- Never give out your personal bank details, pin, passwords to anyone over the phone, online or on your doorstep
- Don't ring the number the caller has given you to check it's genuine. Always try to look the number up for yourself
- If buying online, only make payments if there is a padlock symbol in the browser window frame and you have carefully checked the site and website address for inconsistencies
- If you are unsure, please seek advice from someone you know and trust

We are calling on communities to look out for each other. If you see or hear anything suspicious contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 1133**
For more advice visit our website: www.devonsomersettradingstandards.gov.uk

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