

BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

NOVEMBER 2020

Corona Virus Update: Revised Government regulations mean that Somerset will now enter a period of enhanced lockdown measures aimed at stopping the spread of the Corona virus. The measures will be reviewed on or before the 2nd December. Whilst numbers in the County remain relatively low there has been a marked increase in the number of positive tests. As at 1st November, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 2,738 and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 208. The rate per 100,000 currently stands at 65.5 for Somerset with Sedgemoor at 94.8 and SW&T at 70.6. The current number of total deaths across the County is currently 17% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 1.3 and 1.6.

It is vitally important to remember at all times the Hands-Face-Space message.

Covid-19 survey: The purpose of the Somerset Covid-19 Survey is to understand the barriers people are facing adhering to the government guidance to stop the spread of the virus. Somerset Public Health team and the Somerset Covid-19 Engagement Board want to hear from as many people as possible across the county so that they can use the feedback to further shape the local response to the pandemic. The survey will cover a includes Covid-19 testing, whether people have become more isolated as a result of the pandemic, how the guidance around local alert levels and the Hands, Face, Space campaign has been understood, as well as views on how others are adhering to the guidance. The survey will close on Friday 13 November. To take part go to: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/covidsurvey>

2021 Primary School Places: Applications for Primary School places in 2021 need to be made through Somerset County Council's website: www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions The deadline for submissions is Friday, 15 January 2021.

Winter Gritting: SCC's fleet of 23 Gritters will be maintaining the extended gritting service of last year, with approximately 900 miles of road up for treatment in 2020/21. SCC treat over a fifth of Somerset's roads and the main priority is to keep the busiest routes clear whenever ice or snow is expected. For more information about Somerset County Council's winter service programme, including a searchable map showing all the roads treated, please visit www.travelsomerset.co.uk/gritting and follow [@TravelSomerset](https://twitter.com/TravelSomerset) on Twitter.

Climate Emergency Strategy: The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy which identifies key priorities to reduce the carbon footprint across the County and achieve Carbon neutrality by 2030 has been written with the assistance of over 5,000 residents who took part in the survey and drop in events. The strategy will now be presented to the SCC Full Council meeting on 18th November for endorsement.

One Somerset: The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, has written to all council leaders in Somerset inviting them to submit their business cases for Local Government Reform by 9 November 2020 with final supporting submissions to MHCLG by 9th December. It is then expected that the Secretary of State will make a decision in early summer 2021.

Somerset Youth Parliament: Somerset Youth Parliament and Somerset County Council are encouraging schools, colleges and youth projects across the county to have their say, make a difference and ensure young people's voices are heard on key issues. The online British Youth Council survey encourages all young people aged 11 to 18 years to vote on issues which are most important to them. These top issues will then be debated and voted on by elected Members of Youth Parliament, helping create the next UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) manifesto. Individuals, schools, clubs and youth projects are able to register and find out more online at www.byc.org.uk

Family Safeguarding: A new way to support children and families in Somerset has been launched with the aim of strengthening families to overcome their issues and thereby reducing the number of children needing to come into care. Somerset County Council, in partnership with The YOU Trust and the Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS), has created the 'Family Safeguarding Team' – a new way of working that will transform how support is given to children and families in the county. A really helpful YouTube video has been created to explain the approach, which can be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/u2WMlCx8KTY>

Stepping Stone Placements: More homes are urgently needed in Somerset to provide vital support to young people as they move from care into adulthood. With more than 300 young care leavers in Somerset currently the demand for placements far outweighs availability. 'Stepping Stones' providers receive a weekly fee, starting at £185 per week, plus a little extra for food and utilities (up to £27.50) paid weekly by the young person from their allowance. Providers are also eligible for the same tax exemptions and relief as foster carers, but have much more flexibility to work full or part-time alongside their care role. If you have a spare room and would like to help, please visit www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk or call 0800 5879900