

CLARE PAUL

BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

DECEMBER 2020

Covid-19 Restrictions: Revised Government regulations mean that Somerset will enter Tier 2 restrictions on from December 2nd. The main requirements of this Tier are:

- No mixing of households indoors, excl. support bubbles. Max of 6 outdoors.
- Pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants.
- Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals.
- Venues must stop taking orders at 10pm and must close by 11pm.
- Retail, indoor leisure, accommodation, hairdressers, places of worship will all be able to open
- Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities will remain open

Tiers and regulations will be reviewed again on December 16th and full details found at www.gov.uk/guidance/full-list-of-local-restriction-tiers-by-area

Coronavirus infection rates: As at 27th November, the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 5,110 (up from 2,738 on 1st Nov) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 228 (208). The rate per 100,000 currently stands at 99.1 for Somerset with Mendip at 138.4, Sedgemoor at 115.3, South Somerset 89.1 and SW&T at 67.7. The current number of total deaths across the County is currently 3% below the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 1.0 and 1.3. ***It is vitally important to remember at all times the Hands-Face-Space message.***

Christmas bubble guidance: Here are the main points to be aware of:

- You can travel between tiers and UK nations to and from your Christmas bubble between **23 and 27 December**.
- Once at your destination you should follow rules in that tier.
- **Three households** can form a Christmas bubble together.
- You can only be in one and cannot change your Christmas bubble.
- You can only meet your Christmas bubble in private homes or in your garden, places of worship, or public outdoor spaces.
- You can continue to meet people who are not in your Christmas bubble outside your home according to the rules in the tier where you are staying.
- If someone is in your Christmas bubble, you can visit each other's homes and stay overnight.

<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

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.

Christmas shopping online: Somerset's Trading Standards are advising online consumers to only buy from 'reputable' traders. The COVID-19 lockdowns have led to a rise in consumer spending online and 87 per cent of UK consumers are estimated to have purchased a product online. The public spends around £2bn a week on online purchases. A new information video is available to explain how issues and problems can be dealt with <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dA75JeXrcu0>

Domestic Abuse: During the first three months of lockdown, Somerset Integrated Domestic Abuse Service saw over 10,000 people reach out for information and help to their website – an increase of more than 8,000 in the same period during the previous year. Covid-19 has exacerbated the problem for both male and female victims, with lockdown increasing the amount of time they spend at home with their abuser, potentially escalating the threat of domestic abuse and restricting their freedom. Help can be accessed by calling 0800 6949 999 or if someone is in immediate danger by calling 999.

One Somerset: The final supporting submissions for One Somerset will be sent to the Secretary of State, MHCLG by 9th December. It is then expected that he will carry out consultation in Spring 2021 and make a decision in early summer. Further details can be found at www.onesomerset.org.uk

Export Growth Plan: Somerset County Council are raising awareness of the new opportunities emerging for local companies to export goods and services. The South West is one of three areas chosen in the UK to benefit from the Export Growth Plan funding with a range of support. The Department for International Trade (DIT) is offering one-to-one engagement with businesses where specialists can provide support for companies who want to export goods. This can be accessed by emailing DITSW@mobile.trade.gov.uk

Climate Emergency Strategy: The five councils in Somerset have given the green light to implement the recently launched plan for Somerset to go carbon neutral by 2030. The Somerset-wide Climate Emergency Strategy considers how climate change will impact the County of Somerset and describes some of the key actions to tackle our carbon emissions including developing an energy plan for the County, developing an electric vehicle strategy, Improving walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, improving resilience to climate change impact such as flooding and working with businesses and residents to reduce their own emissions. A copy of the approved strategy can be found at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/climate-emergency>