

NORTH
SOMERSET

WINTER 2020

LIFE

Stay safe
this winter

‘JUST’ THE FLU?

The flu virus kills thousands every year.
The flu vaccine is the best protection
for you and those around you.

JUST GET YOUR FREE FLU JAB

Ask your pharmacist or GP if you're eligible.



**Bristol, North Somerset
and South Gloucestershire**
Clinical Commissioning Group

**Flu
vaccine**

**help us
help you**

Dear reader...

Early in October I had my annual flu jab at the council offices. It struck me how different this process was to only last autumn. We socially distanced when queuing, wore masks, without the usual chit chat with either medical staff or colleagues, straight in for the jab and then literally shown the door (and extremely efficient the staff were too – thank you!). This experience showed me how much our lives have changed during the pandemic and made me think about priorities as we move into winter.

The first is our direct health. The virus is still there and all the precautions – wearing face coverings, respecting social distancing and handwashing – remain, even though with the worsening weather we may be tempted to lower our guard inside, especially at Christmas and New Year. If we have any symptoms

or need to self-isolate because of our contacts, then we have to do so for everyone's sakes, however inconvenient. Also, if you qualify for the flu jab please have it, it will reduce pressures on our wider NHS.

The second is our community health. We have the wonderful North Somerset Together to help each other get through this and we shall have to re-double our efforts as neighbours this winter to help those in need for so many different reasons. Even if you cannot meet people face-to-face, a phone call or online call will give a few minutes of social interaction, or just doing a little shopping for someone who is self-isolating?

The third is relieving the gloom. It will be the Christmas season, we shall have a Christmas Market in Weston, one of the few, the Curzon Cinema is reopening and there is a

panto at the Playhouse. Please do try and support our local businesses (and hence local jobs) by doing your Christmas shopping in North Somerset. And take advantage of the wonderful countryside we have, to walk, cycle or just sit and admire the views. We shall also need community help for more tree planting this winter.

Please keep safe and Seasons Greetings.

The Executive

Cllr Don Davies (Independent)
Leader of North Somerset Council
Cllr Mike Bell (Liberal Democrat)
Deputy Leader
Cllr Mark Canniford (Liberal Democrat)
Cllr Ashley Cartman (Liberal Democrat)
Cllr Caritas Charles (Independent)
Cllr Catherine Gibbons (Labour)
Cllr Bridget Petty (Green)
Cllr James Tonkin (Independent)

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North Somerset Council does not endorse or recommend any commercial products or services advertising in *Life* magazine.

This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request. Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

Time to apply for school places

Now is the time to apply for a school place if your child is due to start or transfer school next year.

Applications are now open for children who will be starting reception next September or moving onto a middle school.

Parents of children born between...

- 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017 can apply for a reception place at an infant, first or primary school
- 1 September 2013 and 31 August 2014 can apply for a year 3 place at a junior school
- 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012 can apply for a year 5 place at a middle school

The deadline to apply is **11.59pm on Friday 15 January.**

It's very important you apply by the relevant closing date otherwise you may not be considered in the first round of allocations.

Parents can name up to three preferences and may apply for schools both within and outside North Somerset.

Apply online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/admissions

For a paper application form, email admissions@n-somerset.gov.uk



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1920 2020
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www.stmonicastrust.org.uk/villages/sandford-station

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Flagship programme filmed in Weston coming to TV

A flagship television programme filmed in Weston-super-Mare last year will be aired next month.

Hundreds of volunteers came together to help transform a local family's home into a wheelchair-friendly space for DIY SOS: The Big Build.

Up to 100 volunteers a day worked on the house, in the Coronation estate, during the nine-day build in March last year.

The house belongs to the Sweet family, parents Cat and Chris and their three children who have life-limiting illnesses.

It got a two-storey timber frame extension on the back to make room for three wheelchairs and four hoists.

This was a joint project with North Somerset Council, which arranged planning and other permissions and helped sort out assistive equipment.

Cat said: "Having three clinically extremely vulnerable children during coronavirus meant lockdown and shielding were in full force for us.

"Having our house adapted to an accessible and functioning home made this situation not only physically

manageable, but also gave the children the chance to really use all the amazing adaptations.

"Even now, we are blown away by the selflessness, kindness and generosity of the vast number of people who came forward and supported with our build.

"Heroes every single one of them – dedicating their time, skills and resources to change our children's lives. We will be eternally grateful."

The Weston episode of DIY SOS: The Big Build will be on BBC One on Thursday 3 December, and available afterwards on iPlayer.

Blakehay Theatre receives lifeline government grant

A lifeline grant of £323,000 has been given to Weston's Blakehay Theatre to help keep arts alive in the town.

Weston-super-Mare Town Council has received the money from the government's £1.57bn Culture Recovery Fund, to help it face the challenges of coronavirus and ensure it has a sustainable future.

The funding will help pay for physical changes in the theatre to make it Covid safe and enable it to reopen, as well as make change to the business plan.

Portishead Rail moves a step closer

A major scheme to reopen the Portishead to Bristol railway line has reached an important milestone.

The Planning Inspectorate has now started the process of examining proposals for reopening the Portishead branch line, part of the complex Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

Nationally-significant infrastructure projects require a DCO before they can be built.

As part of the process, the Planning Inspectorate is required to hold the examination, which takes about six months to complete.

The application to reopen the Portishead line is part of the MetroWest Phase 1 scheme, a West of England Combined Authority and North Somerset Council project delivered in partnership with Network Rail.

It involves reopening more than 5km of railway, two new stations at Portishead and Pill, and works to upgrade 9km of freight-only railway.

The Portishead line is a key priority scheme for the council, putting jobs and infrastructure into the heart of its economic growth strategy.

The new line will enable an hourly passenger train service while maintaining the current freight operation to and from Royal Portbury Dock.

In addition, the wider Phase 1 proposals (which are not part of the examination), will also bring significant train service improvements to the Severn Beach and Westbury to Bristol lines.

Train services are expected to run on the upgraded Severn Beach and Westbury lines in 2021, with the Portishead line re-opening in 2024.

Builders urged to respond to demand for sustainable construction

Creating an energy-efficient home is now a priority for many homeowners so builders in North Somerset are being urged to respond to demand for sustainable construction.

With government initiatives such as the Green Homes Grant, homeowners are looking for builders who can carry out high quality improvements and energy saving retrofit work.

Futureproof, provided by Bristol-based Centre for Sustainable

Energy and not-for-profit organisation The Green Register, is an initiative to help builders in the West of England respond to this increasing demand for sustainable construction.

Training courses and skills development opportunities are available, offering certification in sustainable building practices.

Futureproof can also help builders connect with homeowners who want this work done.

Get advice if you need it

Covid-19 continues to create new challenges so get specialist advice if you need it.

If you are struggling financially, Citizens Advice North Somerset can give independent advice on employment, debt, benefits and more.

Call **03444 111 444**, email **advice@nscab.org.uk** or visit **www.nscab.org.uk**

Read more about support for local communities on **page 14** and for businesses and employees on **page 16**.



Free support for landlords

Are you a landlord who needs support finding and sustaining suitable tenants?

North Somerset Council's lettings team can give free, comprehensive support to landlords during this difficult time, including advice on legal matters.

Following the Coronavirus Act 2020, private landlords must now give a minimum of six months' notice for a Section 21 eviction.

Rent must also be in arrears for more than six months before it goes to court.

The government's focus to prevent evictions is mediation, so the free service includes tenancy support.

The team provides all documents required to start the tenancy, rent in advance and deposit or bond, as well as tenant matching where the landlord always has a choice of suitable candidates.

Incentive grants worth up to £1,000 are also available for eligible properties, including a 50 per cent contribution towards membership of local landlord accreditation scheme, NLCE.

Additional funding is also available for people who have been, or are at risk of, rough sleeping.

If you have a vacant property or would like more information, email lettingsteam@n-somerset.gov.uk or call 01934 426 483



Shop for local gifts at new indoor market

Pick up unique Christmas gifts by shopping from local suppliers at a new indoor market in North Somerset.

The Weston Collective, a group of independent producers, is now a running weekly market within Weston's Sovereign Shopping Centre.

The market is on every Thursday to Sunday, in the empty unit which was previously used for table tennis games. Food and drink is available every Friday to Saturday.

In addition, Weston Collective will be hosting a Winter Fayre

in the former food hall from mid-November to Christmas Eve.

This will have a winter wonderland theme. Social distancing will be in place.

Other festive events will also take place in the Sovereign Centre in partnership with Culture Weston and Weston College.

Culture Weston will be using a shop unit for rehearsal and performance space and will decorate the next door unit with a 'Memory Bank', sharing customers' memories of Weston-super-Mare.



 TheWSMCollective • www.cultureweston.org.uk
www.sovereign-centre.co.uk

Find out more about supporting local businesses in North Somerset on page 18.



Recycling and waste services to return to council control

Recycling and waste services in North Somerset will soon be delivered by a new company to be set-up by North Somerset Council.

Councillors agreed to end the current commercial contract with Biffa and establish a wholly council-owned company to run the services from April next year.

This includes kerbside collections and operating the three recycling centres in Weston-super-Mare, Backwell and Portishead.

This service has been delivered by Biffa since 2017 but discussions between the council and company led to the council exploring the opportunity of terminating the contract early by mutual agreement.

Staff will transfer over to the new company and will be supported through the process.

North Somerset Recycling Company will come into effect by April and will be designed to prioritise

resident experience and work proactively in neighbourhoods, so residents' experiences of the service are improved.

How residents use the service, including the day of collections, will stay the same for the time being. There will be no immediate changes.

What to do with recycling and waste in severe weather

Waste: put your wheelie bin or bags out on your normal collection day. If it's not collected, leave it out and crews will be back as soon as possible.

Food caddy and recycling boxes: put these out on your normal day. If not collected by 7pm, take them in and put them out again the following week on your normal day.

Garden waste: put out on your usual day. If not taken, take them back in then put out again the following month on your scheduled day. There are no garden waste collections between Monday 21 December and Friday 15 January.



How you can help:

- put bins and containers out by 7am on your usual day
- if collections are missed from a whole street, there is no need to report it as it will already be logged
- remove packaging from inside large cardboard boxes and flatten them down to the length of your recycling box
- extra general waste that doesn't fit in your black bin won't be collected and should be taken to a recycling centre or stored until your next collection
- help neighbours who may have difficulties.

Find out more about recycling on page 30

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/recycling • www.n-somerset.gov.uk/calendars

Talk about money worries

Coronavirus may have affected your finances but most people in the UK find it difficult to talk to others about money.

Talk Money Week, organised by the Money and Pensions Service, runs from Monday 9

to Friday 13 November and is designed to increase people's sense of financial wellbeing by encouraging them to open up about personal finance – from pocket money to pensions.

Building money conversations into our everyday lives will help us build financial confidence and resilience to face income shocks, life events and whatever the future throws at us.

Research shows that people who talk about money make better and less risky financial decisions, have stronger personal relationships, help their children form good money habits for life and feel less stressed or anxious and more in control.

Find out more at
www.maps.org.uk/talk-money-week

Follow #TalkMoney on social media



Make your voice heard

Would you like to give your opinion about council services and get directly involved in decision making?

Residents, students and workers in North Somerset have another opportunity to join the Citizens' Panel – a platform for people to give regular feedback on services and issues to help shape the future of the area.

North Somerset Council is looking for volunteers from across the community who will be asked about a wide range of topics, from bins and roads to social care and planning, with feedback used to inform how services are run.

No knowledge of the council is needed before signing up. Panel members will be asked to join regular online surveys and there will be opportunities to get involved in specific focus groups.

The Citizens' Panel does not replace formal consultations but complements them and offers another way for people to have their voices heard.

Anyone aged 18 or over who lives, works or studies in North Somerset can sign up.

Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/citizenspanel

Comment on consultations

All consultations run by North Somerset Council are listed at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult

Sign up to receive email alerts when new consultations are opened.

Have your say about North Somerset's long-term future

Read about the new Local Plan on page 38.



Go online to question councillors

Social media is providing another opportunity for people to ask questions directly to North Somerset's councillors.

Facebook Live chats take place every month with executive members of the council.

Ask a question in advance by sending the council a private message through its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/NorthSomersetCouncil or on the day during the live event.

Sessions usually take place on the last Thursday of the month starting at 6pm. Videos are saved so you can watch another time if you can't make the live event.

Council meetings are also live-streamed virtually on the council's YouTube channel, at www.youtube.com/user/NorthSomersetCouncil

Meetings include full council, executive, the planning and regulatory committee, licensing committee, and policy and scrutiny panels and can be streamed live or watched later.

Written statements and petitions can still be submitted. Find out more at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/how-speak-council-meetings



Get ready for winter

Winter is often the time to reflect on the last 12 months and make plans for the year ahead – but this year has been unlike any other.

Coronavirus has affected us all differently, whether you were furloughed from work, tried to home school your children, or were a key worker continuing your job throughout the crisis.

Now we are facing the winter season and the usual issues which might arise if bad weather hits our area.

North Somerset Council continues to work to keep essential services running, such as social care, community meals, waste and recycling and highway maintenance.

It also continues to work with its partners to prevent the onward transmission of Covid-19.

This issue of *Life* contains information about keeping warm and well over winter, stopping the spread of coronavirus, communities coming together, support available for businesses, the importance of shopping locally to boost the local economy, and more.

Keep it handy for future reference over the coming months.





Accessing council services

Opening times for council venues usually change over the festive period so check in advance before you head out the door.

Any changes will be listed at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/festive but keep your eye on it as coronavirus restrictions may mean things need to change at short notice.

Going online remains the quickest and easiest way of contacting many council services.

You can report it, request or pay for it at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/connect

Town Hall

The Town Hall reception, in Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare, is only open to visitors who have booked an appointment in advance.

If you have an enquiry, call **01934 888 888**, ask for the service you want, and an appointment will be arranged if it can't be resolved over the phone.

You must respect social distancing guidelines when visiting, sanitise your hands on entry and wear a face covering.

Libraries

Libraries across North Somerset began welcoming back visitors in the summer so you can continue to browse the shelves for some festive reading and use pre-booked computers.

However, there may be changes to services depending on changing public health advice so look online or contact your local library for the latest information before visiting.

The contact-free click and collect service, where staff select books for customers to collect at pre-arranged times, is still continuing at all libraries except Congresbury.

The expanded online library is also still available, including access to digital comics, family history site Ancestry and Encyclopedia Britannica.

Find details of your local library at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/libraries or visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/onlinelibrary



The Met Office has winter weather advice at www.metoffice.gov.uk/weatherready

If weather becomes severe this winter, North Somerset Council will give updates on council services at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/disruption

The council's social media feeds will also be regularly updated.



@NorthSomersetC

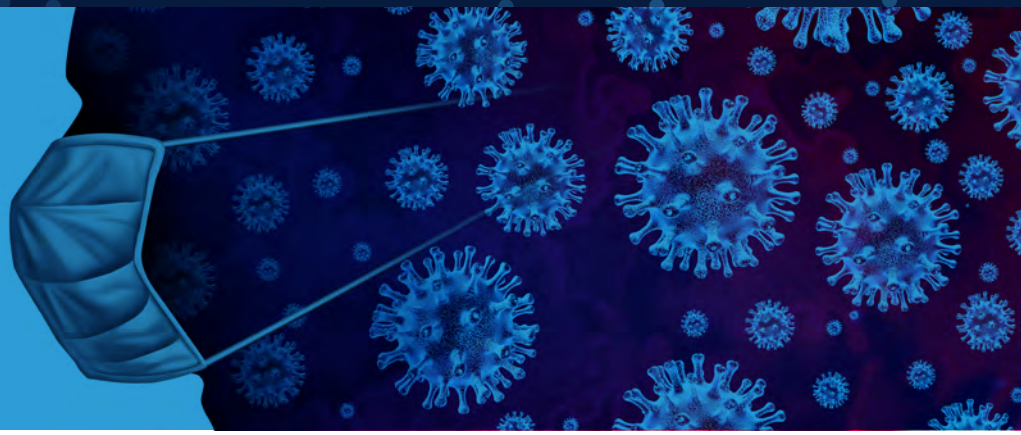


NorthSomersetCouncil





Keep flu at bay this winter



Reducing the spread of seasonal flu will be incredibly important this winter to avoid the double danger of it combined with coronavirus.

Research shows that people can catch both diseases at the same time, with serious and sometimes deadly consequences, so we need to do all we can to protect ourselves and those around us.



Flu, like coronavirus, is a viral infection which is passed on through coughs and sneezes.

Flu can knock you out for several days but for more vulnerable people, including over-65s, those with long-term health issues or pregnant women, it can lead to bronchitis, pneumonia and sepsis.

This year, the effects of social distancing, wearing masks and more frequent handwashing should help to reduce the spread of flu.

However, the best protection is the vaccine.

People most at risk of developing complications from flu or becoming particularly unwell can get the vaccine free of charge from their GP or pharmacy.

High demand at the beginning of autumn meant some GPs and pharmacies used their first stocks quickly.

However, the government confirmed there wasn't a national shortage and there were enough doses in the coming months to vaccinate the 30 million most vulnerable people.

Lots of people take advantage of the NHS flu programme and get protected to help look after themselves and those around them.

Adults who aren't eligible for a free flu jab can get one for about £10 at pharmacies and supermarkets, although availability is limited as stocks are prioritised to those who need it the most.

What is the flu?

Flu – or influenza – is a common and highly infectious virus which is spread by coughs and sneezes.

The main symptoms include a high temperature or fever of 38°C or above, tiredness and weakness, a headache, general aches and pains, and a dry, chesty cough.

If you feel too poorly to pick up a stray £20 note from the floor, you've probably got flu.



As with coronavirus, you can still pass the flu virus on even if you don't have symptoms.

Reducing the spread means fewer people experience complications and there is less demand on GP practices, pharmacies and hospitals.

Most people recover at home in a week or so but people who become particularly ill or who are over 65 should call NHS 111 or their GP for advice.

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/flu
www.nhs.uk/flu

Help stop the spread of coronavirus

Everyone must continue to play their part to protect themselves, their friends and family from coronavirus.

This means frequent hand washing for at least 20 seconds, maintaining social distancing and wearing a face covering.



If you've got symptoms, no matter how mild, you must self-isolate and book a test.



The symptoms are:

- a high fever
- a new continuous cough
- a loss of, or a change to, your sense of smell or taste.

Book a test online at www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119.

For a round-up of council services and support visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus

Read the latest government advice at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Keep warm and well at home

Some people are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather than others so look out for friends, relatives and neighbours.

Ensure you have enough food and medicines to see you through any bad weather spells.

Keep your home heated adequately. The recommended minimum room temperature at night is 18C.

Also ensure you drink plenty of warm drinks and have at least one hot meal a day.

More vulnerable people include:

- those aged 65 and older
- babies and children under five-years-old
- people on low incomes so cannot afford heating
- those with a long-term health condition
- people with a disability
- pregnant women
- people with a mental health condition.

For more information visit www.nhs.uk/keep-warm-keep-well



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If you need medical help but it's not an emergency, call the free NHS helpline 111 or go to 111.nhs.uk

Fully trained advisers will advise you on which health service you need and how to access it.



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Turn to page 20 for more information about preparing for winter and staying warm and well at home.

Read more ways to improve your general health and wellbeing this winter on page 32.



Communities still supporting each other

Nearly eight months after lockdown began in the UK, communities across North Somerset are still going the extra mile to support the most vulnerable residents.

People have rallied round throughout the pandemic, recruiting volunteers from their towns and villages to form local community groups.

North Somerset Council joined forces with these concerned residents, town and parish councils, charities and businesses to launch the coalition North Somerset Together at the start of the coronavirus crisis.

Following the intensity of lockdown and success of North Somerset Together, the council committed to sustaining it as a means of working with communities in the long-term.



North Somerset Together is now the foundation for the council's future work with communities, parish and town councils and voluntary sector partners.

Life takes a look how different communities in North Somerset are continuing to meet local needs...

Hutton

Scores of people living in Hutton, near Weston-super-Mare, swung into action very early on in the pandemic.

It is one of the area's smallest parishes but more than 80 villagers volunteered to come together and support their neighbours.

Since lockdown ended, almost all of these volunteers confirmed they wanted to continue supporting others in the long-term, ready for the second wave and severe winter weather.



This continues to be provided through socially-distanced events in the village hall, enabling people to get out and about and so improving their wellbeing and mental health.

Anyone in Hutton who may need help or would like to support others should visit www.huttonsomerset.org.uk or call 01934 813 871.



Long Ashton

Much-needed care and support continues to be given in Long Ashton thanks to the local Coronavirus Support Network.

The network was there for the community throughout the first wave of coronavirus and continues to provide support.

Volunteers buy groceries for residents, pick up medication, make wellbeing calls, and help care for animals.

The network also became incorporated in June so that it would be in a better position to secure grants in the future.

Anyone in Long Ashton who needs help and support can contact the network on info@lacovid.org or call **01275 595 580**.

Upper Langford

Fresh, healthy foods continue to be delivered to homes in Upper Langford thanks to a small group of residents who believed nutritious food should be available to all.

Farm to Front Door was set up with Two Trees Catering as a mutual aid initiative – those who can pay for the meals subsidise those who can't.

One volunteer said: "We've seen such willingness and generosity from local folk who have consistently ordered week after week.

"This initiative has maintained our faith in communities being able to help one another out, and the power of food in aiding that.

"We are going to keep going for as long as it is needed."

 [@farm_door](https://twitter.com/farm_door)

Volunteers providing vital services

Volunteers have provided vital services to local organisations throughout the coronavirus crisis.

Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS) continues to link individuals wanting to help with those organisations needing support.



North Somerset volunteer Liz Kelly undertook a placement at a local nursing home through VANS.

She said: "When I first received the email about the opportunity at a nursing home, I was a bit concerned about putting myself at a higher risk of catching coronavirus.

"However, once I had my interview I was very impressed with the open and honest conversation we had with each other.

"I was reassured that all possible precautions would be in place when I started."

Find out about volunteering opportunities in North Somerset through VANS. Call **01934 416 486** or visit www.vansweb.org.uk

£500 grant available



Low-income earners on certain benefits might be eligible for a one-off £500 payment if they are required to self-isolate.

The Test and Trace support payment scheme is for people on a low income, who can't work from home, are in receipt of one

of the qualifying benefits, and who would lose their income if they had to self-isolate.

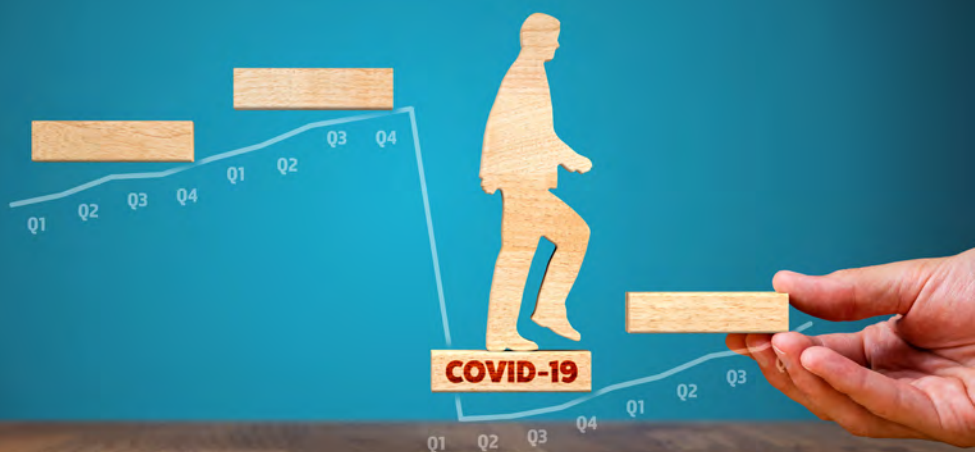
The scheme runs until Sunday 31 January. For more information and to apply visit

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/test-trace-support-scheme

For a round-up of council support visit
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/coronavirus

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Helping businesses back on their feet



Businesses have faced unforeseen challenges this year with coronavirus lockdown restrictions and recession.

The outlook for next year remains tough but North Somerset Council is developing plans to protect jobs and boost the economy following the global pandemic.

The council has agreed strategies to rebuild the local economy in a sustainable, resilient way that will make a difference.

The new Economic Plan sets out 15 commitments designed to create new jobs, bring in investment, generate opportunities for young people, address North Somerset skills gaps, and upskill individuals who are facing redundancy.

One of these key commitments is the new Employment and Skills Strategy, which focusses on empowering young people to achieve their potential, addressing under-employment and low pay, supporting those with barriers to employment, developing workforce skills for emerging jobs and creating conditions which enable businesses to attract and keep the talent they need.

If you're a business owner or an employee facing redundancy, practical support is available to see you through.

Redundancy support for businesses

All businesses in North Somerset which are at risk of making redundancies can get free support.

Businesses can access free information, advice and guidance on their responsibilities as an employer and support their workforce through the redundancy process.

They can also access support with restructuring after the redundancies have happened.

This might include help with workforce planning and a skills analysis, interventions which aid diversification, and access to a talent retention scheme.

For more information email **business@n-somerset.gov.uk**

What if you've lost your job?

If your job has been affected by Covid-19 there are practical steps you can take to get back on track.

- **Get financial support**
Get in touch with your local job centre to apply for Universal Credit.
- **Get careers advice**
The National Careers Service is offering telephone and online support with CVs, help in accessing training, identifying transferable skills and more. Visit **nationalcareers.service.gov.uk** or call **0118 402 2604**



● Upskill and retrain

Local training providers can help you learn new skills and get work ready:



- Weston College is supporting employees at risk of redundancy and those who have lost their jobs. Call **01934 411 147** or email **employability@weston.ac.uk**
- a tailored programme of skills training, retraining and careers guidance is available through Skills Support for Redundancy. Email **skillssupport@serco.com**
- personal development, confidence building and employability courses are available for those who speak English as a second language. Contact the council's community learning team on **07767 671 633**
- those facing multiple challenges to employment – such as caring responsibilities, learning difficulties, or drug and alcohol recovery – can get support through Team North Somerset. This includes support into voluntary work, education or paid employment. Contact **01934 411 573**
- a range of resources and activities to support mental health and wellbeing is available through Second Step. Call **0333 023 3504**

● Find a job

Searching for a job in the current situation can be confusing and challenging. As well the usual competition, you'll have to adjust to remote recruitment and working. Keep the momentum going, review your CV and cover letter and keep applying.

Region-wide support

Businesses in North Somerset and beyond can access free tools and resources to help them grow, innovate and thrive.



The government-funded West of England Growth Hub connects businesses to support streams and encourages collaboration.

The Growth Hub, hosted by the West of England Combined Authority, includes a range of initiatives, including...

- **Peer networks** – this national peer-to-peer networking programme for small and medium-sized enterprises provides an opportunity for individuals to work collaboratively through common business issues

- **Kickstart scheme** – new six-month job placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit. Smaller businesses interested in creating fully-funded job placements can register their interest at **wearegrowth@westofengland-ca.gov.uk**

- **Thrive at Work West of England** – encouraging and supporting businesses to improve employees' mental health and wellbeing.



Find out about these schemes and more at **www.wearegrowth.co.uk**

Support for new business start-ups

Have you got a business idea bubbling away?

If you're thinking of starting up in business, it's important to get the basics right.

A free course delivered by North Somerset Enterprise Agency gives information and guidance on the important issues.

Find out more by emailing **info@nsea.biz**, call **01934 418 118** or visit **www.northsomersetenterpriseagency.co.uk**



For a round-up of business support visit **www.innorthsomerset.co.uk**



BUY LOCAL

Shop Local

Shopping locally and supporting independent businesses will be key to building a strong post-Covid economy.

So this Christmas, pop to your favourite greengrocer, bakery, floristry or local shop to pick up those festive supplies or gifts.

North Somerset Council recently launched its 'We ♥ North Somerset' campaign to champion the natural environment, rich history, local events and businesses that make the area so special.

Supporting local businesses ensures money stays in the local economy and helps friends and families to stay in employment.

Just remember to have good hand hygiene, wear a face covering and socially distance from people from other households when you go shopping.



Go online for local goodies

Quality local products which have been made, grown or produced right here in North Somerset can be picked up from the comfort of your own home.

The Made in North Somerset Marketplace is a new online platform for buying high-quality goods, whether fresh bread, cheese, chocolate, eggs, beer, cider or gin, or unique arts and crafts.

It has been developed by North Somerset Council and builds on the Made in North Somerset business network and annual festival which has run for the last eight years.

Local producers and makers have been badly impacted by the global pandemic because many outlets for their products, such as restaurants, cafes, galleries and markets, were closed for many months.

Instead, this new virtual marketplace gives them a collective platform to sell their wares directly to customers, offering a delivery or click and collect service.

Buying from the site means you are helping support these businesses and their employees, keeping money in the local economy and reducing food miles.

The council is also working with Business Improvement Districts, the Chamber of Commerce, and town councils to launch Virtual High Streets.

The first to open was Nailsea's, at **www.wearenailsea.co.uk**

Others are due to be set up for Weston-super-Mare, Clevedon and Portishead.

Buy local online on the Made in North Somerset Marketplace at **made.innorthsomerset.co.uk**

Local producers or craftspeople who would like to be listed on the site can email **business@n-somerset.gov.uk**



ocal this Christmas

Vacant retail space to be transformed

Vacant retail space in Weston-super-Mare is set to be transformed into community use thanks to a £1.7m grant.

Weston General Stores is the new project which will turn vacant space into workplaces for entrepreneurs and trading space for retailers, as well as offering business support and skills, learning and employability opportunities for local people.

Funding is from the national £900m Getting Building Fund, to be used for investment in local, 'shovel-ready' infrastructure projects.

This project will support local working, new trading opportunities and help increase footfall in the town centre throughout the week.

The repurposed space could become workspaces for people working away from the office, meeting rooms, events space, trading space, bookable community space or a health centre.

Weston's £1.7m share is a part of the £13.7m Getting Building Fund allocated to the West of England Combined Authority.



Places to go and things to do

Sleeping Beauty – A socially-distanced pantomime – Saturday 12 December to Sunday 3 January, Playhouse Theatre, Weston-super-Mare. All tickets £20.

eat:Weston – 10am-4pm, Sunday 13 December, Italian Gardens, Weston-super-Mare. A Christmas market with a wide range of local food and drink producers. Covid-19 safety measures will be in place.

The ornate Victorian Gothic Revival house **Tyntesfield**, near Wraxall, is stunning at Christmas. Book your ticket in advance at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/tyntesfield

See wild animals up close at **Noah's Ark Zoo Farm** in Wraxall. Online booking only at www.noahsarkzoofarm.co.uk

Clevedon's beautiful pier is open daily. Visit www.clevedonpier.co.uk for information.

The Curzon cinema, in Clevedon, has reopened with Covid safety measures. Visit www.curzon.org.uk

Events and venues listed were correct at the time of *Life* going to print. Please contact them directly to check they are still open.

Get up-to-date listings at www.vist-westonsupermare.com, www.nailseatown.com/whats-on, or www.discoverclevedon.co.uk



Prepare for the worst winter weather

Severe winter weather could be on its way so now is the time to make sure you prepare.

A cold, draughty or damp home can have a detrimental effect on your health so understanding how to use your heating system efficiently will combat this.

Make small checks around the house and consider installing energy efficient measures which can keep you warm in winter, cool in summer and save you money.

A wide range of agencies offer advice:

- For information on heating your home, including switching supplier, smart meters, renewable energy and reducing fuel bills, visit www.cse.org.uk/advice
- If your home is not connected to a gas network, a grant is available to set up a connection. Visit www.warmwest.org.uk or call **01656 747 623**.
- A community bulk oil buying scheme is available through www.wern.org.uk or **01275 333 701**
- Switching suppliers could help you save energy and money. Citizens Advice can help. Visit www.nscab.org.uk or call **0344 411 1444**
- Smart meters could reduce your energy bills by keeping track of how much you're using. Energy suppliers must now offer every household a free gas or electricity smart meter so contact your own energy supplier or visit www.smartenergygyg.org.uk
- Financial help may be available if you're struggling to pay your energy and water bills. If you are in fuel poverty, contact your own energy supplier, visit www.cse.org.uk or call **0800 082 2234**.
- If you're having difficulty paying your water bill, visit www.wessexwater.co.uk or call **0345 600 3600**
- Visit www.gov.uk for information about national schemes, including the Warm Home Discount scheme, Charis Grants for Park-Home owners (or call **0330 555 9424**), the Winter Fuel Payment and Cold Weather Payment.



Help your community when snow falls

Falling snow can be fun but can quickly cause problems when transport is delayed or more vulnerable people suffer cold-related injuries or health complications.

Snow can also damage property and infrastructure, leading to interruptions in utility supplies, power cuts and even a danger to life.

Here in North Somerset, a dedicated band of volunteers work to help their local areas stay safe in times of emergency.

As part of the wider Community Resilience programme, there are now more than 100 equipped and trained volunteer snow wardens who are ready to respond if snow falls.

Snow wardens keep essential paths clear so residents can still access schools, shops, pharmacies and other important facilities, as well as monitoring local grit supplies.

To become a snow warden complete a short online training module and fill out the online registration.

You will then receive a free hi-viz vest, snow shovel, gloves and ID badge.



Find out more about snow wardens at
www.communityresilience-ns.org.uk

Do you need to be given priority?

Do you or a loved one need to be given priority in the event of a power or water cut?

Energy suppliers and utility companies keep a register of more vulnerable households which are given priority in the event of a loss of service. You can sign up for the free priority register if you...

- live with a child aged under five
- are of pensionable age
- are disabled or chronically sick
- have a long-term medical condition
- have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication needs
- are in a vulnerable situation – such as a temporary change in your circumstance.

Get in touch with your utility suppliers for more information and to register.

- Western Power – www.westernpower.co.uk or 0800 096 3080
- Wessex Water – www.wessexwater.co.uk or 0345 600 3600

Hot meals to your door

Hot meals are delivered daily to vulnerable people across North Somerset – whatever the weather.

Community meals are delivered to people who have difficulty preparing a meal themselves, whether in the short or long term.

This might be because they are too frail to cook or because they're recovering from an illness or hospital stay.

Delivery drivers also provide a valuable welfare check at the same time. Drivers continue to wear PPE and, where possible, meals are left on doorsteps to keep self-isolating residents safe.

For more details and to set up a meal delivery please contact the team on **01275 882 155** or email commmeals@n-somerset.gov.uk



Winter home checklist

Have you:

- had your boiler serviced?
- had your chimney/flue swept?
- Checked any exposed pipes are insulated?
- made sure everyone knows how to turn the mains water off?
- ensured gutters are clear and drains flow freely?



How to get around this winter



Buses and trains have run at reduced capacity for many months to help passengers maintain social distancing and limit the spread of coronavirus.

You can continue to help control the virus this winter by walking or cycling if possible and only using public transport when you really need to.

If you do head out on public transport, real-time updates could help plan your journey before stepping outside.

This will be even more important when the worst winter weather approaches.

Commercial operators run the majority of North Somerset's public transport services so it's up to them whether a service can operate safely in severe weather.

North Somerset Council's integrated transport unit works closely with operators to collate the latest information.

Senior passenger transport officer Lee Murphy said: "When poor weather is forecast, we engage with bus operators to ensure timely and accurate information is available.

"This means monitoring social media feeds and discussing plans with them and sharing updates through our own social media.

"Where appropriate, we also display updates on the electronic real-time information screens at bus stops.

"If snow arrives overnight, we will aim to get our first update out at about 7am."

Follow your local bus operator on social media or visit their website to get the latest information during times of disruption.

Remember also, you must continue to comply with the latest government advice about face coverings, social distancing, and not travelling if you have any symptoms.

For information about public transport in the West of England, including the latest coronavirus advice, visit www.travelwest.info

Plan your journey in advance

Real-time information on the whereabouts of buses and trains can help you plan your journey at any time of the year.

Visit www.travelwest.info/journeyplanner or download the free UK Bus Checker app to your smartphone.

Schools

Schools and colleges make their own decisions about whether to reduce opening hours or shut completely during bad weather.

The decision will be made at the earliest opportunity so check their website for updates.

School transport is usually run by independent operators so if a school does remain open, the operator will determine whether buses can run safely.



Find the latest information at:

NStravelandroads

NSpublictransport

@NStravel_roads



Drive safely in severe weather

Major routes in North Somerset are kept passable in most conditions thanks to a dedicated team of highways officers who work round the clock.

Highways engineers work on schemes all year to improve the condition of the area's roads.

From October to April they also become winter specialists and provide cover seven days a week.

If you head out in your car this winter, be prepared...



Care for your car

Many garages offer free 'winter checks' for cars so consider booking yours in.

Also check fluid levels, that bulbs are in good working order, wipers are working effectively, and check the tyres for tread and pressure.

If it snows, consider if your journey is essential – do not travel unless you need to.

If you do drive, stick to the main roads if you can and carry a bag of essential items should you get stuck.



Check salting routes

Find out which roads near your home or work are gritted by visiting the interactive map online.

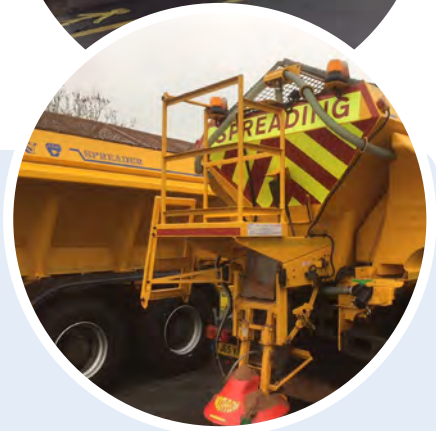
Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/winterroads and put in your postcode to check the map and help plan your journey.



Follow the gritters

Six gritters operate in North Somerset and work round-the-clock when the temperature drops.

Each gritter tends to operate in its named area, so look out for Burrington, Bleadon-cold, Nailski, Portishead, Weston-scooper-Mare and Sleetholm.



Each gritter can spread between five and 12 tonnes of salt every time they go out, and travel on average 62 miles per run.

Follow on social media for updates:


NStravelandroads @NStravel_roads





Your favourite walks

Spending time outdoors is great for our physical and mental health and North Somerset has many beautiful areas to explore on foot or bike.

As part of the We  North Somerset campaign, the council asked on its Facebook page where people love going for a walk.

Here are some suggestions and the edition of *Life* where you can find it.

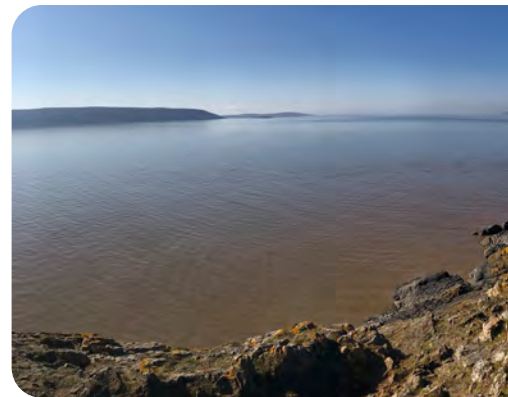
So go out and take advantage of this beautiful countryside right on our doorstep.

All walks from 2012 onwards are available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/walks

Uphill, Walborough Nature Reserve and tidal trail

(September 2015)

Stunning views can be enjoyed from the top of the hill. Also look out for wildlife – deer, weasels and little egrets as well as cows.





Strawberry Line, from Yatton or Winscombe

(April 2013, October 2013, May 2016)

An accessible walk and cycle route along the old railway line, suitable for all ages.



Weston-super-Mare, Anchor Head and Marine Lake

(February 2014)

Enjoy a seafront walk – great for the children and pushchairs.



Poets Walk, Clevedon

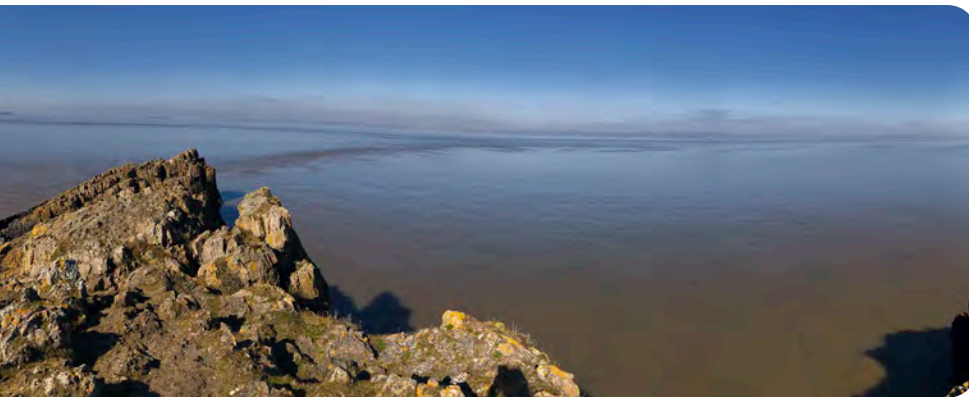
(September 2016)

Follow in the footsteps of poets in this short, circular walk.

Ty Sculpture Trail, Wraxall

(May 2017)

Seek out the small stone sculptures along this woodland trail.



Sand Point

(May 2019)

Blow away the cobwebs and stretch your legs on this beautiful headland, taking in the views across the Bristol Channel.



Goblin Combe

(Summer 2019)

Spot rare ferns and beautiful butterflies in this peaceful woodland.

Leigh Woods

(Winter 2017)

Ancient woodland on the edge of North Somerset provides a tranquil spot.



Walks were correct at time of printing.

Please note, there might be some slight changes since then. Use common sense and follow the route markings and signs you see.

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Follow North Somerset Council on Facebook for other **#FridayFavourites** to celebrate all we love about our local area.

 NorthSomersetCouncil

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Scientists say it's time to act on climate change



Bold changes must be made to meet the climate emergency challenge.

World leaders have said we've only got 10 years left to avoid a climate catastrophe.

Last year North Somerset Council developed an action plan to become carbon neutral by 2030 and support residents to lead greener lives.

Ambitious changes must be made to achieve this, from how we heat our homes, use buildings, create new infrastructure, manage waste and move around the area.

It is a big task and means it must be tackled throughout the entire organisation, it is not just the job of one department.

The council is introducing a programme of carbon literacy – an awareness of the costs and impacts of everyday activity and being motivated to reduce emissions.



Sustainable infrastructure

Sustainability will be an essential design feature for all future major infrastructure projects at North Somerset Council.

Buildings such as schools, and schemes like roads and bridges, will be planned and built to have as little impact on the environment as possible.

Carbon reduction will be central to decisions made, and designers will be looking for opportunities to create schemes that will enhance North Somerset, improving the area with more trees and hedges, and quality habitats for the animals who live here.

Travel

More than 40 per cent of North Somerset's greenhouse gas emissions currently come from road transport.

Replacing short journeys with walking and cycling would reduce emissions, improve air quality, improve people's physical and mental health, and improve the look and feel of town centres.

North Somerset Council's sustainable travel team continues its work around cycling and walking, including supplying bikes to people needing to get to work.



Rewilding and rebuilding habitats


Rewilding began in North Somerset earlier this year and there are more opportunities to get involved this month.

North Somerset Council is letting grass grow taller in certain areas to create extra habitats for bees, insects and small mammals to flourish, as well as planning 50,000 new trees over the next couple of years.

In February, volunteers helped plant 5,000 young trees and more sessions are planned for November.

If you would like to volunteer, you will need to pre-register because of Covid-19 health and safety guidelines.

Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/rewilding for information on dates and locations, or email volunteering@n-somerset.gov.uk

 **NatureandClimate**
NorthSomerset

Financial help to make your home more energy efficient

Financial help is available to help make homes warmer, save money and reduce carbon emissions.

● Green Homes Grant

The government's Green Homes Grant scheme means householders can get vouchers for up to two-thirds of the cost of energy saving home improvements.

For most people, the maximum available will be £5,000 although low-income households could get up to £10,000.

Work is divided into primary and secondary measures and you must install at least one primary measure (such as insulation) before getting funding for a secondary one (such as double glazing).



Work can only be carried out by accredited suppliers through the Trustmark scheme. Don't agree to work from cold callers. Rogue traders will rush you into a decision and ask for up-front payment, so be on your guard.

The cut-off date for completion of work and redeeming vouchers is Wednesday 31 March.

For more details and to apply visit www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk or call 0800 444 202.

● Home Energy and Renewable Loan

Install renewable and low carbon technology or improve your home's insulation thanks to a low-cost loan of up to £8,000.

The Home Energy and Renewable Loan, through Lendology, could be used to fund work through the Green Homes Grant scheme.

Homeowners will also be given a £250 payment towards an A++ rated kitchen appliance or reduce their council tax bill for the year.

The loan has a typical APR of 4.2 per cent. For more information visit www.lendology.org.uk or call 01823 461 099

What is a climate emergency?

Most countries around the world adopted the Paris Agreement in 2015, agreeing to limit the global temperature rise to well below 2C above pre-industrial levels. However, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said in 2018 that we were on course at least a 3C rise instead.

This would be catastrophic, leading to extreme heatwaves, wildfires, floods and droughts; losing the ability to grow food crops; coral reefs being destroyed; global sea levels rising; and tens of millions of people displaced.

In September, the United Nations reported that 75 per cent of the Earth's land surface and 66 per cent of the oceans had been significantly altered by human actions.

This is through over-fishing, cutting down forests and grasslands for livestock food and rearing, and buildings roads and cities.

As a result, an estimated one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction.



Read North Somerset's low carbon action plan at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/climatechange

Keep the cycling momentum going

Cycling rates skyrocketed this summer as people dusted off their old bikes and sales of cycles boomed during lockdown and beyond.

Locally in North Somerset, there was a 29 per cent increase in people using local cycle paths compared to last summer.

As the nights now draw in, there are still plenty of ways to keep going on two wheels.



Whether you pop to the local shop on your bike to pick up supplies or enjoy a traffic-free route for some exercise, cycling can boost both your physical and mental wellbeing.

Bright, crisp winter mornings can be invigorating and give you a daily dose of vitamin D, while the right clothing and preparation can help you stay warm.

Organised, social rides also take place over the winter if you would prefer some company. Visit www.letsride.co.uk

For a faster pace, find a local club at www.britishcycling.org.uk/clubfinder

North Somerset Council is also working to bring people together who want to get active. Find out more at go4lifens.wordpress.com/walk-run-cycle

Keep up-to-date with cycling news and find a route at www.betterbybike.info



Join the Love to Ride challenges

Two cycling initiatives are taking place this winter to encourage you to keep cycling.

Earn points every time you cycle and see how friends, family and colleagues are doing on the leader board – with prizes up for grabs.

Light up the Night runs until Monday 30 November. Charge your lights, adorn high vis and light up the night as you cycle.

The Winter Wheelers challenge then takes place from Tuesday 1 to Thursday 31 December, to give you a little more encouragement when it's dark and cold.

Prizes are available throughout the month.

Find out more and sign up online at lovetoride.net

Top tips for winter cycling

- Wear warm, breathable, adjustable layers and a waterproof if needed
- Wear bright and florescent clothing during the day and reflective items after dark
- Always carry lights to avoid being caught out by early evenings, and daytime when cloud cover and poor weather causes low light levels
- Check your bike – during winter your bike will need more cleaning and maintenance. Consider booking it in for a service.



Help others to travel sustainably

Are you passionate about walking, cycling and reducing car use?

Could you help work colleagues feel the same? Share your enthusiasm and make a difference by becoming an active travel champion at your workplace.

North Somerset Council, with support from TravelWest, has many free incentives to help people leave the car at home and travel more actively.

It is now seeking 20 people to become active travel champions, encouraging others to make more sustainable journeys.

The council will support you with free training, support for events, maps, loan bikes, travel advice and more.

This might involve organising Dr Bike safety check sessions, running a free active travel breakfast, or making sure the emergency puncture repair kit is well stocked.

Dafne Pedroni, a travel and waste officer at Weston General Hospital, is also the active travel champion there.

Dafne said: "We didn't have a designated person to deal with green travel so I took on the challenge. Very soon I started to feel as if I was doing something very good for our health and environment in our community.

"I don't cycle to work every day as I live quite far away but on a sunny day you can see me going around the hospital grounds on a bike promoting cycling to work.

"It's been inspiring. We run the loan bike scheme and staff are enjoying the benefits."

Free resources available

- **Emergency cycle repair kit** – fully-equipped repair kit worth £150 for your organisation
- **Maps, leaflets, and information** – a regular supply
- **Bike/walk breakfast** – host a breakfast for colleagues, with shopping vouchers provided by the council
- **Borrow a bike** – available for anyone living or working in North Somerset for up to four weeks.
- **In-person events** – receive support to organise and promote free bike servicing and active travel events at your workplace
- **Online events** – get the tools to organise online personalised travel planning for colleagues or arrange for a travel adviser to attend a team meeting
- **Workplace travel audit** – a comprehensive survey of your workplace with recommended improvements
- **Electric pool bikes** – free business loan for three months



Find out more about becoming an active travel champion at travelwest.info/businesses/active-travel-champions or call Kerry on 01275 884 605.

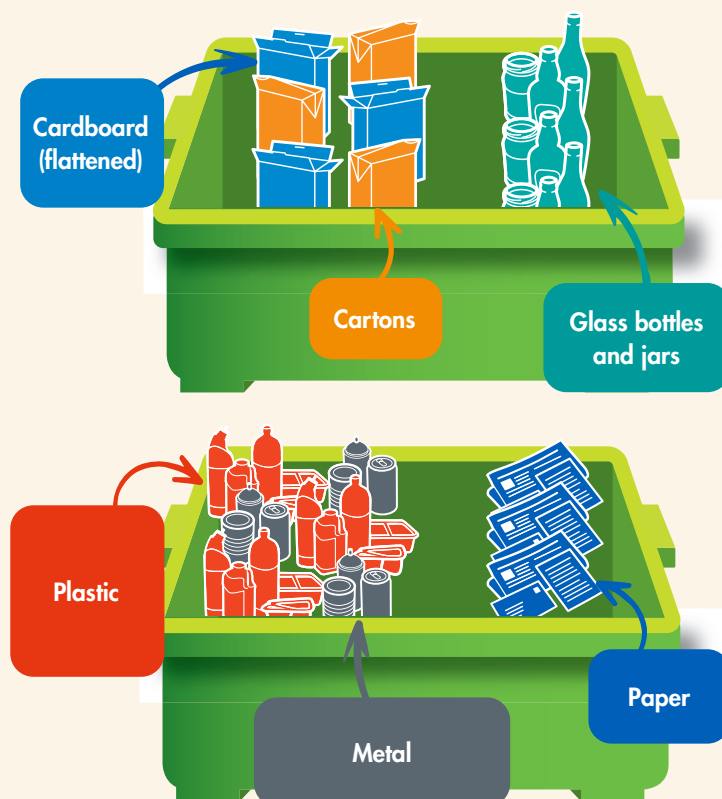


Sort your festive recycling and waste

Re-usable and eco-friendly Christmas items are good for your purse as well as the planet.

Christmas is often a time for excess but if re-usable items are used where possible then it can help reduce the amount of waste going to landfill as well as build long-lasting family traditions.

Sorting your recycling carefully also means the right waste ends up in the right place and can help speed up crews during this busy period.



Cards

Non-glittery cards go in your recycling box with other cardboard. Or cut the pictures out for next year's gift tags.



and should be placed in your box with other cardboard items. Avoid all metallic wrap, foil, cellophane and glittery wrap. Newspaper and reusable ribbon or reusable gift bags work just as well.

Food waste

Plan meals in advance and stick to a shopping list to reduce food waste. Include leftovers in your planning, such as turkey curry or turkey pie. All food waste, including turkey bones, can go in your food recycling bin.

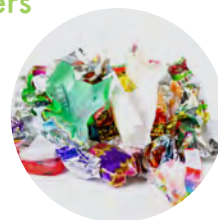


Napkins

Paper napkins, like tissues, are not recyclable and should go in your black bin. Could you use washable cloth ones instead?

Sweet wrappers

Scrunch foil wrappers together into the size of a tennis ball and recycle alongside metal cans. Soft plastic wrappers are not recyclable so need to go in the black bin.



Wrapping paper

If you can rip the paper or scrunch it in your hand without it bouncing back, it is recyclable



Crackers

Traditional crackers are made from mixed materials so are unsuitable for recycling. Look for reusable alternatives or consider if you really need them at all.



Christmas is usually the busiest time for collections

Last year's busiest day, on Monday 30 December, produced 103 per cent more recycling than normal.



During last year's festive fortnight, there were 609 tonnes of extra recycling compared with only 170 tonnes of extra non-recyclable waste.

Extra vehicles will be out collecting again this year. More cardboard than ever is expected as more people shop online because of coronavirus.

Make sure all cardboard is flattened and cut down so it fits in your recycling box. If you have lots, it is better to put it out over a few collections rather than in one go.

Changes coming to garden waste service

From next April an annual £50 charge is being introduced for garden waste collections.

Council finances are under pressure, even more so this year, but it is not an easy decision to introduce this fee-charging service.

The income from charging for garden waste will make the service self financing, therefore freeing-up resources to protect essential services.

Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation this spring. Your views are helping to shape the design of this new chargeable service.



As part of the changes, there will be more advice and support for home and community composting.

All current garden waste users will receive a letter early in the new year. It will detail how to sign up and what options are available if you choose not to.

Recycle your electricals

Small, old electrical items are one of the fastest growing waste streams so a campaign was launched in North Somerset in September to tackle it.

Seventy-five per cent of materials in small electrical items can be recycled or reused, such as precious materials like gold, aluminium and steel, and everything with a plug, battery or cable.



If they are the size of a kettle or toaster, or smaller, they can be put in a loosely tied bag in your recycling box.

Or take them, as well as all larger electrical appliances, to your nearest recycling centre.

For more hints and tips, recycling advice and questions, follow the team on social media.

 @ns_recycling  NSrecyclingandwaste



Take the first step to better health



Sticking to healthy lifestyle goals and exercise routines during winter can be tricky as the weather gets colder, evenings get darker and food gets richer.

However, the continued threat of coronavirus and onset of normal flu season means now might be the time to give your body its best chance of fighting illness.

Eating a balanced diet, keeping active, cutting back on alcohol, maintaining a healthy weight and being smoke-free keeps the immune system balanced and ready to fight infection and viruses.

Here are some ideas to get you started...



Free support a phone call away.

Free healthy lifestyle and wellbeing support continues to be available to North Somerset residents.

North Somerset Council's Health Trainers can help you develop new habits and think about the impact of these changes.

Weston-super-Mare couple Helen and Dave Gosling used the service for help with healthy eating, regular exercise and quitting smoking.

Dave, aged 67, said: "With Covid-19 starting, I must admit I lost my drive to diet and soon put back on a stone.

"But thanks to our health trainer I can honestly say I am back on track. She has helped me get back to my goal weight."

To book a telephone or video appointment, call **01934 427 661**, email **health.trainers@n-somerset.gov.uk** or visit **www.n-somerset.gov.uk/healthtrainers**



Getting active

Moving your body more, in whatever way you enjoy, improves both your overall physical and mental health.

Regardless of body size or composition, everyone would benefit from taking regular physical activity and eating more healthily.

Exercising in cooler weather even has some advantages.

A winter's chill might invigorate you more, it's a great opportunity to get sunlight, and just small bouts of exercise a day can help prevent simple bacterial and viral infections.

If the weather is too poor to venture outside, home workouts could provide the perfect alternative.

Free instructor-led workouts can be found at **www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio** and **www.go4life.org.uk** has ideas and inspiration.

Some organised walks are also still taking place in North Somerset. Visit **www.walkingforhealth.org.uk** to search for your nearest one.

Every mind matters

Long nights and cold weather can impact our mental health and the presence of coronavirus is just adding to the pressure this year.



Being at home for long periods and avoiding other people undoubtedly caused strain but there are simple steps we can take to improve how we feel every day.

Relationships boost our mood and help us through difficult times so it's important to stay connected, whether in person, by phone or online. Talk to others about your worries and, where possible, keep doing the things you enjoy.

Try the NHS Mind Plan interactive quiz at www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wellbeing



Stub out those cigarettes

Stub out the cigarettes to help you breathe more easily.

Stopping smoking brings immediate benefits to your health and wellbeing and according to smoke-free charity ASH, more than a million people have stopped since Covid-19 hit Britain.

Covid-19 is a respiratory disease which can cause life threatening complications, affecting the heart as well as the lungs.

As smoking damages your heart and lungs, it can therefore put you at greater risk of developing severe illness.

Smokefree North Somerset advisers can help, with free, practical support, advice and access to medication.

Call **01275 546 744**, text HELP to **0780 000 1316**, email smokefree@n-somerset.gov.uk or visit www.smokefreenorthsomerset.co.uk

Could you cut down on alcohol?

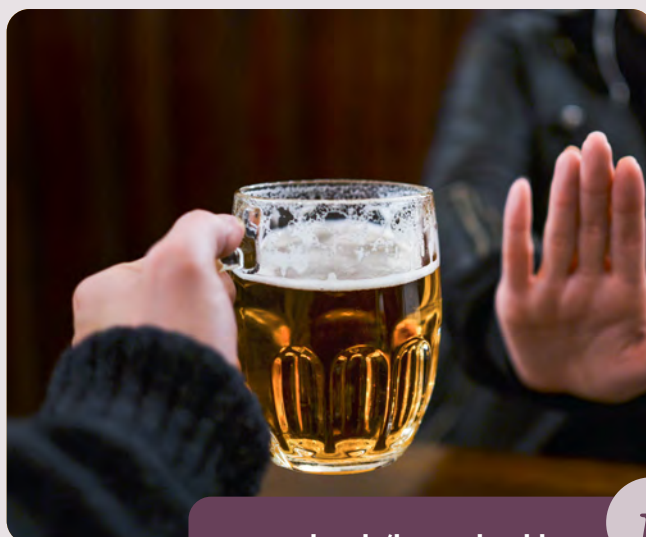
Traditional festive celebrations will be curtailed this year to help stop the spread of coronavirus so it might be an opportunity to cut down on alcohol too.

While alcohol might be a common way of coping during stressful times, its over-use can have both short and long-term effects on your health.

Reducing alcohol consumption will bring a variety of benefits, including improved sleep, weight loss and improved mental health.

The New Year is a time for reflection and change and so if you're thinking about drinking less in 2021, you could kick things off by joining Dry January.

For information and tools to help you cut down visit www.nhs.uk/oneyou/for-your-body/drink-less



www.nhs.uk/better-health





Where your money goes

Local authorities have been at the forefront of the coronavirus pandemic response – protecting vulnerable people while carrying out critical functions of everyday life.

However, even before the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, balancing the budget books was getting harder and harder because of reduced government funding.

Every year North Somerset Council publishes its statements of accounts to give local residents information about the council's income and expenditure.

This round-up looks at the previous financial year, from April 2019 to March 2020.

As a public authority, the council is responsible for ensuring its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and it is used economically, efficiently and effectively.

This means having robust systems and processes in place and valid reasons for its actions and decisions.

The statement of accounts is a complex financial document so here in *Life* is a summary.

The figures listed here are from the council's draft accounts, which remained subject to an audit at the time of *Life* going to print.

A full version of the statement of accounts is available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/accounts

The audited accounts will be uploaded once the audit is finished.



Income and outgoings

Income for North Somerset Council comes from central government grants, council tax and business rates.

This money is used to cover the cost of providing services. In 2019/20, this added up to...

Income: where the money comes from

Service-related government grants	£180.8m
Council tax	£113.1m
Fees and charges	£51m
Business rates	£38.1m
Non-service/technical adjustments	£12.1m
General government grants	£10.8m
Total	£405.9m

Expenditure: what it's spent on...

Adult social care	£101.3m
Development and environment	£70.7m
Schools	£66m
Housing benefits	£45.3m
Financing and investments	£37.8m
Children and young people	£37.4m
Other corporate services	£26.8m
Public health	£9.6m
Transfers to general and earmarked reserves	£6.2m
Housing services	£4.8m
Total	£405.9m





Capital investments

Capital investments have been a prominent feature of North Somerset Council's finances for the last few years.

This year, more than £50m has been spent improving existing assets as well as delivering new facilities, such as new primary schools in Locking Parklands and Chestnut Primary in Yatton, as well as completing the new Food Works^{SW} food and drink facility in Weston-super-Mare.

Investment in new major transport projects has continued, with progress being made on the Portishead MetroWest Rail and the new North South Link Road in Weston.

There has also been more than £7m investment in the existing road network and street lighting.

About 18,500 streetlights are being replaced to save energy and reduce maintenance costs. Non-LED lanterns are being replaced with low energy LEDs to conserve energy and help the environment by reducing carbon emissions.

Capital spending in 2019/20

What the money is spent on:

Roads	£14m
Strategic/regeneration projects	£11.4m
Schools	£11.2m
Infrastructure	£4.6m
Other capital investment	£4m
Other transport	£2.9m
Housing	£2.8m
Total	£50.9m

Where the money comes from:

Government grants and contributions	£44.5m
Sale of assets (capital receipts)	£2.9m
Borrowing	£2.5m
Reserves and balances (revenue)	£1m
Total	£50.9m

Balance sheet at financial year-end

The balance sheet shows the council's financial position at 31 March 2020, at the end of the financial year.

It is a snapshot of the assets the council owns, the liabilities it owes and the reserves it has available to fund future expenditure.

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the value of the council's property and other assets at the year-end but was otherwise relatively limited.

Despite this impact, the council maintained prudent levels of reserves at to the year-end.

The council's net assets...

Property, plant and equipment	£353.5m
Money owed to the council and investments	£162.6m
Investment property	£45.5m
Other long-term assets	£13.5m
Other long-term liabilities	-£24.4m
Money owed by the council	-£113.6m
Long-term borrowing	-£161.5m
Pension liabilities	-£268.2m
Net assets	£7.4m

Which are financed by...

Earmarked reserves	£41.6m
Other usable reserves	£15.1m
General fund balance	£9m
Unusable reserves	-£58.3m
Total reserves	£7.4m



Photo courtesy of Nick Whimster Photography



Covid-19 pressures

Coronavirus continues to have a big impact on North Somerset Council.

Despite this, the council will continue to do all it can to support those directly affected, keep vital services running, and ensure those who need help get it.

An event of this magnitude has undoubtedly impacted the council's finances, though, and it will continue to do so in the months ahead as the situation evolves.

The true cost of the pandemic on the council budget continues to be reviewed but recent reports show that it could cost more than £29m, through a combination of additional expenditure and reductions in income.

These additional costs include giving emergency assistance to those in need or shielding and supporting care homes in the area.

At the same time, the council has received less income for its services because some facilities were closed, such as car parks and leisure centres.

Central government has provided some funding towards these pressures but the council is still facing a shortfall in its finances this year.

There are also concerns this could continue into next year if the pandemic goes on.

Budgeting is a year-round process and work has already begun on next year's finances.

This is more difficult than even before because the council is still responding to the pandemic.

There are unknown factors which could influence how much the council needs to spend on services or how much income it will receive to pay for them.

More details about the 2021/22 budget and its impact on council tax will be available in *Life* next spring.

Join the conversation



Residents, students and people working in North Somerset can get involved in local decision making and have their say on the way the council runs things.

Find out more about the new Citizens' Panel on page 9 or visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/citizenspanel



A full version of the council's audited statement of accounts for 2019/20 is available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/accounts

Paper copies of the annual accounts are available by writing to Melanie Watts, Head of Corporate Accountancy, North Somerset Council, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ.

For more information call the finance team: **01934 634 618**

Shaping North Somerset's future



Have your say on how North Somerset will grow and develop over the coming decades.

North Somerset Council is creating a new Local Plan and the first stage got under way this summer with a consultation on the challenges that need to be addressed.

Local residents, community groups, businesses and other interested parties such as developers were given the chance to comment on a range of issues, including the climate emergency and how to provide the right type and number of houses to create new communities.

The council has been analysing all responses received and using them to prepare for the next stage of consultation.

This will focus on the choices around the location of future development in the area.

The number of new homes that must be built in an area is decided by central government using a formula based on household growth and local affordability.

The government's housing target for North Somerset is currently 20,475 new homes over the next 15 years.

It will be a significant challenge to deliver this number of homes in North Somerset as there are so many constraints such as flood zones, the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and

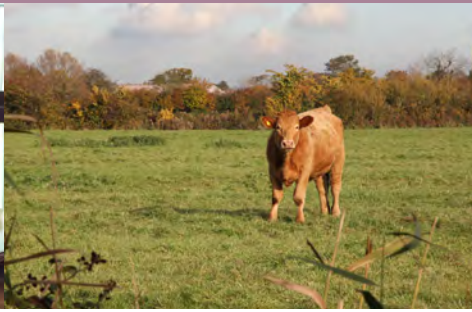


the Green Belt, which all limit the amount of land available for housing.

The new Local Plan will identify where development can and cannot take place and which services and infrastructure are required to support it, to prevent unplanned growth in places with no supporting facilities.

The Local Plan 2038 choices consultation launches this autumn. To take part, register at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/newlocalplan





Responses to the summer's challenges consultation

More than 900 people responded to this summer's challenges consultation, making a total of 3,400 comments.

Important issues which the Local Plan must address include:

- ✓ promote sustainable development
- ✓ respond to the climate emergency
- ✓ new development close to jobs and facilities
- ✓ reduce car use and encourage walking and cycling
- ✓ new transport infrastructure and high quality public transport
- ✓ a range of housing, particularly affordable housing
- ✓ avoid development of land liable to flood
- ✓ prioritise previously developed land
- ✓ protect and enhance local green spaces and biodiversity
- ✓ much higher quality design of new development
- ✓ revitalise town centres
- ✓ consider amending the Green Belt.

Many respondents also drew attention to the unknown impact of life in a post-Covid society, with greater numbers of people working more hours from home rather than the office, resulting in changes in commuting and shopping patterns.

These priorities have informed options for possible future development locations, to be explored further in this autumn's choices consultation.

Have your say this autumn

As *Life* went to print, details of the choices consultation were still being finalised.

It will look at options for where new housing, employment and community use could be located in North Somerset over the next 15 years, in the areas which best reflect the priorities identified in the challenges consultation.

It's likely that the consultation will ask respondents to consider four broad approaches for growth in North Somerset, remembering that the total number of new homes to be built is determined by central government, not the local authority.



Find out more and register to take part in the Local Plan 2038 choices consultation at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/newlocalplan



£1.1m High Street heritage programme launches

Photos: Paul Blakemore

Weston's historic town centre is set to be further improved and revitalised thanks to a new £1.1m grant.

North Somerset Council has been given the funding from Historic England to create a new heritage programme which would expand on the existing Heritage Action Zone.

This new programme will last four years and focus on the southern end of the High Street, around Oxford Street and the northern end of Walliscote Road.

This area is full of interesting post-war modernism, 1930s Art Deco and Victorian buildings.

Projects will look at transforming disused historic buildings into shops, houses and community centres. The funding will also help traditional businesses adapt to better compete with online outlets.

Rebecca Barrett, regional director at Historic England South West, said: "Investing in heritage delivers good results for people – it means looking after and celebrating

the places at the heart of our communities, and the buildings and public spaces which define their character."

The programme will include:

- restoring and repairing original street features, improving lighting, paving and street furniture, and bringing back original architectural characteristics
- developing and managing a shop front enhancement grants scheme to improve exteriors of retail units and reinstate historical features
- working with property owners to support the sympathetic, appropriate and high-quality conversion of upper floors, empty units and potentially bringing new homes to the town centre
- working with Culture Weston, Arts Council England, Historic England and the local community to support the development of cultural and community engagement programmes.

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/heritageactionzone



New vision for Weston's next decade

How will Weston-super-Mare grow and change over the next decade?

The long-term vision of the town has been set out following months of public events, consultation and engagement with thousands of businesses, visitors and residents.

Architecture studio Turner Works worked with North Somerset Council to build a new strategy in response to the changing face of the High Street.

Coronavirus is accelerating fundamental changes in town centres and so, now more than ever, there is a need to encourage people back to the High Street.

Earlier in the year Turner Works ran a number of public events under the Super Weston initiative, finding out about the history of the town, what people would like to see, and asking for wish lists and ideas.

As a result, the new Placemaking Strategy includes themes and ambitions for the town, focussed around wellbeing and recreation, being green and low carbon, making it a great place to live, work and study, and helping the visitor economy and town centre adjust to fundamental changes accelerated by coronavirus.

The Placemaking Strategy helped North Somerset Council gain a £1.7m government grant this summer.

This money will be used to fund Weston General Stores, a project focusing on transforming vacant retail space into a multitude of uses for the community.

Empty spaces could become workplaces for entrepreneurs, trading spaces for retailers, or spaces for learning and employability opportunities for local people.

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/westonvision



Another step forward in securing future of dilapidated pier



Dilapidated and disused Birnbeck Pier could become home to lifeboats once again.

The RNLI is looking to return to the Grade II* listed Victorian pier and Birnbeck Island in Weston-super-Mare, which it first moved onto in 1882.

Birnbeck is the only pier in the country to connect the mainland to an island but it has deteriorated over many years, moving onto Historic England's national at-risk register in 1999.

North Somerset Council has been working with Historic England and earlier this year it made a financial offer to the pier's private owner.

This offer was not accepted so in September North Somerset Council served a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO).

This CPO would allow the council to purchase the site in a back-to-back deal with the RNLI,

immediately transferring the property to the lifeboat charity.

If the owner appeals against the CPO, it will go to the Secretary of State for approval, a process which could take up to 18 months.

Weston-super-Mare is one of the busiest RNLI lifeboat stations in the country. Between 2014 and 2019 the volunteer crew launched 242 times, assisting 72 people and saving 26 lives.

The RNLI will fund the repair of the pier and lifeboat station.

The pier was designed by noted Victorian engineer Eugenius Birch and construction took place between 1862 and 1867. It closed to the public for safety reasons in 1994.

Read the Compulsory Purchase Order of Birnbeck Pier in full at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/birnbeckcpo

Unique fostering programme provides innovative support

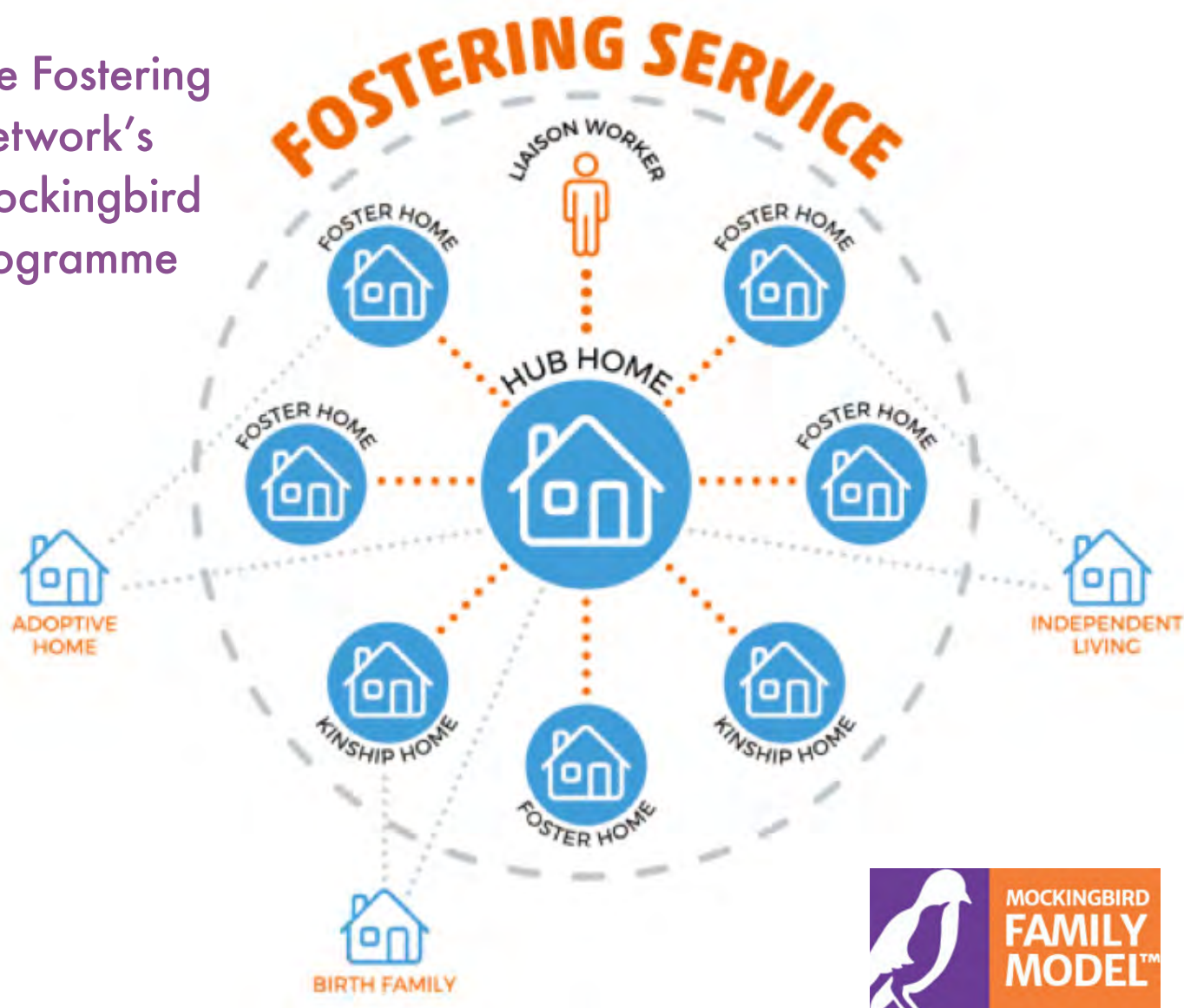


An innovative way of supporting foster families in North Somerset launched at the perfect time to help them during lockdown and the ongoing coronavirus crisis.

A pilot scheme of the Fostering Network's Mockingbird Family Model launched in North Somerset at the end of last year and the council's fostering service has seen remarkable changes as a result.

The programme works on a hub and spoke model, with a main 'hub' family offering peer support, training and extra encouragement to other carers and children within their 'constellation'.

The Fostering Network's Mockingbird Programme



During lockdown this took the form of online video chats, quizzes and even dance competitions.

In normal circumstances the programme would also include sleepovers and short breaks, regular joint planning and training and social activities.

The programme improves the stability of fostering placements and strengthens the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families.

Mark Reynolds, from the fostering team, said: "Relationships are central to the programme.

"The hub home builds strong relationships with all those in the constellation, empowering families to support each other and overcome problems before they escalate or lead to placement breakdown, and increasing protective factors around children.

"The constellation also builds links with other families important to the children's care plans and to

resources in the wider community which can provide them with enhanced opportunities to learn, develop and succeed."

North Somerset is currently the only fostering service in the South West to be delivering this Mockingbird programme.

Now, because of its success, North Somerset Council has been given permission to launch two further constellations, with even more hoped for in 2021.



**The
Fostering
Network**

Has coronavirus got you thinking about your career path?

If your employment or circumstances have changed this year, now could be the time to start a new career and help make a real difference to your community.

North Somerset Council currently looks after about 250 children and young people.

A shortage of foster carers means that some children might be placed with private organisations and moved outside North Somerset, away from their schools, friends and familiar surroundings.

There is a particular need for foster families who can support children aged 12 and over, and also brothers and sisters so they can stay together.

Foster carers receive fees and allowances. You must have a spare bedroom and time in your life to support a child or young person.

Contact the fostering team for an informal chat to find out more about the different types of fostering and if you are eligible.

Call **07824 085 744** or email fostering@n-somerset.gov.uk

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/fostering

 [@fosteringnorthsomerset](https://twitter.com/fosteringnorthsomerset)  [fosteringNS](https://www.facebook.com/fosteringNS)

www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/mockingbird

i



Guard yourself against countryside crime

Stunning countryside surrounds us in North Somerset but this also means rural residents might be more vulnerable to certain types of crime.

As winter gathers pace and the nights get longer, now might be the time to be on your guard against suspicious activity.

The type of crime committed against more rural residents is unique and must be tackled slightly differently to more urban crime, but everyone has a responsibility to work together to combat it.

The more common types of countryside crime include:

- theft of major equipment, such as tractors, all-terrain vehicles, diesel, chemicals, chainsaws and other plant machinery
- worrying, killing or stealing livestock
- hare coursing – dogs being used to kill animals for entertainment
- poaching
- heritage crime.

Other crimes which take place in the countryside, but are not unique to it, include:

- arson and vandalism
- fly-tipping
- domestic abuse
- anti-social behaviour.

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse can take place anywhere but a more isolated, rural location may mean there's more chance of it going on unseen.

Each week two women are killed by a current or former partner and it is estimated that a typical victim of domestic abuse endures up to 35 assaults before speaking up.

In rural areas abuse lasts 25 per cent longer, on average.

This year, lockdown caused stress and uncertainty for many families but also meant those experiencing domestic abuse were trapped at home with their abuser.



Domestic abuse will never be tolerated, no matter how unusual or difficult the circumstances, and support continues to be available to those in North Somerset who need it.

If you need help, call **999** in an emergency. If you can't speak, press **55** when prompted.

Next Link has a specialist rural support worker as part of its Reaching Out service.

If you need support for yourself or someone else, call Next Link on **0800 4700 280** (available 24/7) or access the live chat facility online at **www.nextlinkhousing.co.uk**

For a round-up of all support services and discussion forums visit **www.saferstrongerns.co.uk/domesticabuse**

Anti-social behaviour

Rural beauty spots and public spaces in North Somerset were hit with vandalism and anti-social behaviour this summer.

When lockdown restrictions were relaxed many people visited local beauty spots and, while the majority of visitors acted responsibly, there were some issues.

These included littering, vandalism, damage to the environment, alcohol-related disorderly behaviour, and urinating and defecating in public places.

In June, anti-social behaviour forced North Somerset Council to close Abbots Pool nature reserve, in Abbots Leigh, following concerns of alcohol consumption and people swimming in the pool.

Isolated incidents might not seem serious but continued anti-social behaviour can have a devastating impact for people affected by it.

It often goes unreported, especially in more rural communities.

North Somerset Council is working with Avon and Somerset Police and other agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour in the area.

Harry Mills, North Somerset Council's anti-social behaviour and community safety officer, said: "By all working together, our objective is to swiftly tackle problematic and disruptive behaviour, to ensure that communities feel safe and secure.

"However, we cannot do this alone and need the help and support of communities throughout North Somerset."

Anti-social behaviour is defined as that which causes, or is likely to



cause, harassment, alarm or distress to another.

This covers a wide range of unacceptable activity, whether the harm is to an individual, community or environment.

It also includes fear of crime or concern for public safety, public disorder or public nuisance.

Hare coursing

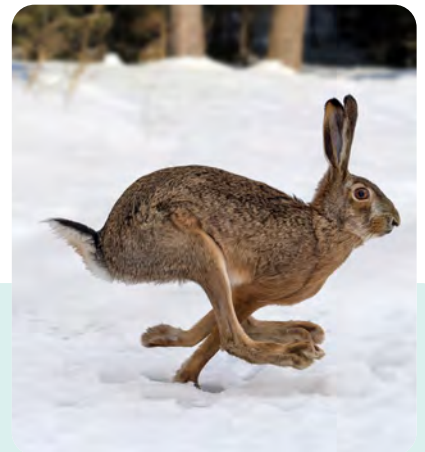
Hare coursing – dogs killing hares for entertainment – is illegal throughout the UK.

Various crimes are associated with it, including trespass, criminal damage, illegal gambling and wildlife crime.

Organised criminals use the opportunity to scout for other criminal opportunities on the farm, with the prospects of thefts occurring a few weeks later.

Anyone who has experienced, witnessed or has any information about anti-social behaviour can report it online at www.saferstrongerns.co.uk/reportasb or call the police on 101.

Always call **999** in an emergency.



Coursers often have a sophisticated information network and invariably know about vulnerable properties in the area, short cuts and escape routes.

Hare coursing activity rises in late summer once fields have been harvested and hare numbers are still high.

CrimeStoppers.



Anyone who has experienced, witnessed or has any information about any rural crime but doesn't want to report it directly to the police can call Crimestoppers on **0800 555111** or www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Any relevant information is passed onto the police and could be very valuable. Speak up, stop crime and stay safe. Crimestoppers is 100 per cent anonymous, always.

Could you share your home?



Could you open up your own home and provide a family life to a vulnerable adult?

The Shared Lives scheme has successfully run in North Somerset for the last 10 years and now more people are needed to continue its expansion.

Shared Lives launched in 2010 with nine carers providing long-term placements in their own homes for 12 individuals.

It has now expanded to 60 carers providing support to more than 100 people.

The type of placement has also expanded, from purely long-term care to also providing respite and day support for adults with a wide range of care and support needs.

These might include people with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, adults recovering from health conditions, those transitioning to more independent living, those with mental health needs, elderly and frail people, or people with dementia.

The scheme has benefits for all involved. It means the carer can work from home and it provides

vulnerable adults the opportunity to live in a family home rather than a care institution.

Shared Lives carer Lisa* said: "It's the kind of work where you get a smile every day, and that's why I do it.

"I wouldn't do anything else. The people you have become family, it's a home for them."

Ian* is one of the people benefitting from the scheme.

He said: "I used to live in a residential home but now I live with a family. I get to do lots of new things, like cooking and going to the pub.

"They treat me like an adult. I like living here."

Previous experience is not necessary to become a Shared Lives carer, as each brings their own unique skills and experience to the job.

However, you must have a desire to help people, life experience and a commitment and positive approach to supporting vulnerable adults.

Applications are welcomed from all family types and all walks of life.



Are you looking for a new opportunity and would like to provide meaningful support that can make a difference?

Contact Shared Lives on **01275 888 368** or **sharedlives@n-somerset.gov.uk** to find out more. * names have been changed

North Somerset Life

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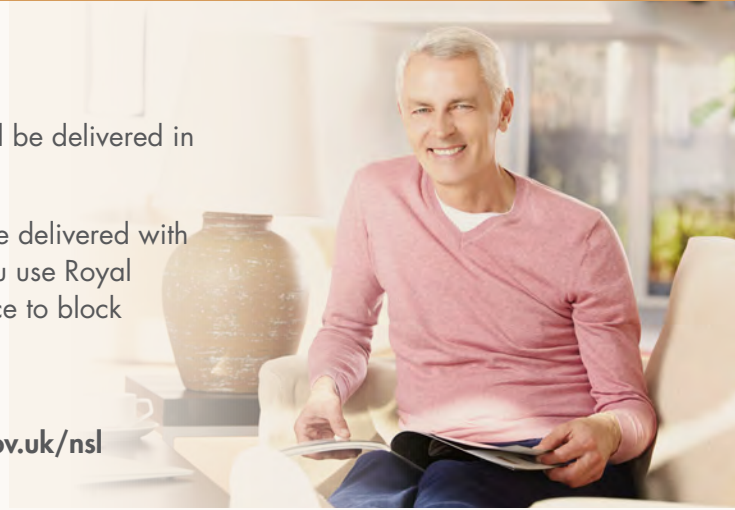
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editor@n-somerset.gov.uk or
01275 884 139

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tim.brown@n-somerset.gov.uk

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www.n-somerset.gov.uk/nsi



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Subscribe online and stay informed at
www.northsomersetlife.co.uk

Contacts

Call us

For all council services, call **01934 888 888**
(Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

Direct numbers for other popular services:

For waste and recycling,
road issues, planning and
building control:
01934 888 802
(Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

For council tax and benefits:
01934 888 144
(Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
For social services:
01275 888 801
(Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm)

Do it online – report it, request it or pay for it at:
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/connect

Or go straight to these popular web pages by adding these shortcuts: **www.n-somerset.gov.uk/myaccount /planning /schooladmissions /wastecollections /termdates**

Tide times

Check tide times online at
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/tidetides

Tide predictions are computed by the Proudman Oceanographic Laboratory and adjusted for Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and British Summer Time (BST) differences.

- For Clevedon – add 10 minutes.
- For Portishead – add 18 minutes.



Festive recycling and waste collections



Recycling and waste collection days will change over the festive period to allow for bank holidays. Check your calendar online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/calendars to make sure you put the right containers out on the correct day.

If your normal collection day is:

Thursday 24 December
Friday 25 December

Monday 28 December
Tuesday 29 December
Wednesday 30 December
Thursday 31 December
Friday 1 January

Monday 4 January
Tuesday 5 January
Wednesday 6 January
Thursday 7 January
Friday 8 January

Your revised collection day will be:

As normal
Monday 28 December

Tuesday 29 December
Wednesday 30 December
Thursday 31 December
Saturday 2 January
Monday 4 January

Tuesday 5 January
Wednesday 6 January
Thursday 7 January
Friday 8 January
Saturday 9 January

All collections will return to normal from Monday 11 January.

Garden waste

Garden waste will not be collected between Monday 21 December and Friday 15 January so that vehicles can be used for collecting excess festive recycling and waste. If you're signed up for the garden waste service you can place your real Christmas tree (up to two metres high minus the pot and decorations) out for collection on your first garden waste collection from Monday 18 January. Check your calendar as garden waste collections are monthly from December to February.

Recycling centres

Recycling centres in North Somerset are closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Winter opening hours apply on other days at the three sites in Portishead, Weston-super-Mare and Backwell. Check www.n-somerset.gov.uk/recyclingcentres before you travel.

Extra recycling

Excess festive recycling can be placed out for collection in separate, loosely-tied bags or another box. Put all glass in your box for safety. Place recyclable wrapping paper with your cardboard and cut all cardboard down to the size of the box. If you have a large amount, put a little out each week to help crews finish collections from every household. Sometimes different vehicles are used to collect recycling over this period but it will still be recycled as normal.