

NORTH SOMERSET

SPRING 2022

LIFE

Get set for SEE MONSTER



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Dear reader...

As I write this, I look out at the daffodils just starting to open in the garden, I always find their glowing yellow such a sign that we are moving into spring and can put behind the gloom of winter, with a great deal to both celebrate and look forward to.

We are so honoured to have been selected to host SEE MONSTER, a truly international arts event and my words won't do justice to this brilliant project. Instead, please look at pages 10-11. We can also all get involved in celebrating what will be a unique event for all of us – our monarch's Platinum Jubilee. I shall certainly be enjoying it in Pill, where it coincides with our Pill Rag. I do hope that everyone can get to enjoy the celebrations in some way with their friends and neighbours. Please see pages 12-13 and do let us know what you are doing locally.

North Somerset has only recently hosted a Royal Visit and we share photos and details of the Princess Royal's visit. I sadly had to miss the events as I was isolating with Covid.

We are still very much in recovery from the pandemic. Many are still falling ill, families and friends suffering the after-effects and very sadly bereavements, and many of our businesses have been hit hard by its repercussions. Inside we signpost how the council is working to help our residents and businesses.

Of course, so many other challenges remain – the climate emergency (and to return to botany, our wild plants are now flowering up to a month early as a result), adult social care, criminality, sewerage, our roads and inequality to name but six. We detail the latest news from your council on such matters. We also explain how we have set our budget for next year to address these and other cost pressures. We are all feeling the impacts of inflation, supply and staffing issues, the council is too. Regrettably, despite making savings of £5m, these pressures have meant we have had to increase council tax by 2.99 per cent, below inflation but still an extra cost pressure. Properties in bands A to D will see a £150 rebate funded by central government to

alleviate some of the pressures of extra heating costs.

There is much to look forward to as we move into spring, so do enjoy it. Yet we also realise that life is also becoming increasingly difficult for many whatever the weather and we are working very hard to give as much help as we can.

Cllr Don Davies

The Executive

Cllr Don Davies (Independent)
Leader of North Somerset Council

Cllr Mike Bell (Liberal Democrat)
Deputy Leader

Cllr Steve Bridger (Independent)

Cllr Mark Canniford (Liberal Democrat)

Cllr Ashley Cartman
(Liberal Democrat)

Cllr Catherine Gibbons (Labour)

Cllr Bridget Petty (Green)

Cllr Mike Solomon (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.



Could you join the audit committee?

Would you like to have your say on how council services are delivered?

North Somerset Council is recruiting up to two independent members for its Audit and Governance Committee.

The committee is responsible for assessing and providing guidance on the effectiveness of the council's overall programme for risk management, internal control, financial strategy, policy and processes.

Applicants will ideally have a background in finance and/or risk management in a public sector environment, but other careers and levels of experience will be considered.

The role is for up to four years and each year you will need to attend four public, formal meetings, plus a number of informal workshops. The majority of these will be online.

This is a voluntary role with training provided and expenses paid.

To find out more and apply contact Lucy Teteris, PA to the director of corporate services, on **lucy.teteris@n-somerset.gov.uk**

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 8 April**, with interviews expected to be held on **Friday 29 April**.

Community lottery coming to North Somerset

Help raise money for local good causes and be in with the chance of winning a top cash prize when a community lottery launches next month.

Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS), supported by North Somerset Council, is launching the online community lottery on Tuesday 5 April.

Tickets cost £1, with 60p of this going towards community and voluntary groups, charities, not-for-profit organisations and other good causes in North Somerset.

The weekly draw will have a jackpot of £25,000 for six matching numbers, with other prizes of £2,000, £250, and £25.

Local organisations from the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector can set up their own page within the scheme.

They will then receive 50p in every pound spent by players. A further 10p will go into a general good causes fund. The remainder will be put towards prizes, operating costs and VAT.



If players do not want to support a specific cause, 60p of their ticket price will go into the general good causes fund, to be distributed by VANS.

Lottery management company Gatherwell will run the scheme.

Organisations interested in registering should email **info@vansmail.org.uk** **www.vansweb.org.uk**

When to report an abandoned vehicle

An abandoned vehicle is one that appears to have been given up on, with no apparent owner.

However, 95 per cent of all vehicles reported to North Somerset Council are not actually abandoned.

Abandoned vehicles are often confused with nuisance vehicles which might be poorly parked, causing an obstruction, broken down, untaxed or involved in residential parking disputes.

North Somerset Council only has powers to deal with abandoned vehicles so if the vehicle is untaxed but not abandoned, the council won't be able to remove it.

Every report is looked into so the council spends a lot of time, money and resources investigating vehicles which aren't actually abandoned.

Here's who to contact instead:

- untaxed vehicles should be reported to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Visit www.gov.uk/report-untaxed-vehicle
- vehicles without a valid MOT or insurance should be reported to Avon and Somerset Police. Call 101 or visit www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/vehicles-without-mot-tax



Simon Annable / Shutterstock.com

- vehicles causing a hazard or obstruction should be reported to Avon and Somerset Police. Call 101 or visit www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/parking-issues

For more information about abandoned vehicles visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/abandonedvehicles

For general information about parking and access issues visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/parkingandaccess



Help blitz littering

Littering can have devastating effects on natural habitats and marine life – but it doesn't exist without people so we all need to be responsible.

Keep Britain Tidy is launching its Great British Spring Clean campaign from Friday 25 March to Sunday 10 April to encourage everyone to do their bit to end waste and improve places.

Cigarette butts and single-use plastics are the most common offenders.

Smokers often flick cigarette butts away without a thought that this is littering.

These small cigarette filters often end up in drains and then into the water stream.

They contain harmful chemicals that endanger the local environment and marine life.

Plastic, especially wrappers and packaging, can take hundreds of years to degrade.

Single-use plastics such as shopping bags and bottled water are within the top most littered items in the world.

North Somerset Council supports litter picking volunteers with its Adopt a Street campaign, to encourage people to keep their local environment clean and litter free. See page 30 for more information.



Residents help shape a liveable neighbourhood

Residents are helping to shape a new Liveable Neighbourhood in Weston-super-Mare.

The Liveable Neighbourhood scheme aims to improve street space for people living and working in the town centre around Baker Street, by reducing traffic, addressing parking issues, adding planting and providing better walking and cycling access.

Initial engagement with local residents included door-knocking and leafleting, and a series of in-person events drawing more than 140 people.

Alex Rowbotham, sustainable travel and road safety officer

at North Somerset Council, said, "Residents know their neighbourhood better than anyone.

"Parking was a priority issue, with 65 per cent of residents struggling to park on their own street.

"Residents also created maps to identify traffic rat-run routes.

"We propose to address these issues with parking and traffic calming measures, plus changes to traffic flow and priorities."

An online consultation opens in March so visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult to comment.

Work continues on long-awaited walk and cycle route

Work is under way to complete the missing sections of the long-awaited walking and cycling route from Weston-super-Mare to Clevedon.

The £3.1m Pier to Pier Way will go via quiet lanes and new traffic-free sections.

New connecting paths around Tutshill are now being built.

Other improvements include a section of the coastal defences path south of Clevedon, and improvements to cross Southern Way in Clevedon and Queensway in Worle.

The work is expected to be completed later this year.

Once opened, the Pier to Pier Way will reduce the journey distance from Weston to Clevedon by 6.5km.

It's expected to serve 70,000 one-way trips a year, which will result in an estimated 145 tonnes of carbon dioxide being saved.

It is being jointly funded by North Somerset Council, National Highways, the Department for Transport through Sustrans, and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Find out more about the scheme and cycling in North Somerset at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/cycling





Handy person service helps out

Are you over 60 or a disabled person living in North Somerset who needs small jobs carried out around the house?

The Handy Person service is designed to enable eligible people to access small essential works around the home.

Jobs are carried out by AMS Electrical and could include small electrical or plumbing work, carpentry, clearing paths, installing grab rails, fitting key safes and much more.

The service costs £15.60 an hour and can be used for a total of six hours a year, with a maximum of three hours in any one visit.

The cost of hourly labour is subsidised by the council, with the remaining cost of labour and all parts paid by the householder.

Larger jobs which are not subsidised by the council can still be carried out on a private basis.

Call AMS Electrical on 01934 520 116 or email info@amselectricalservices.co.uk

Town Hall remains appointment-only

North Somerset Council's Town Hall reception in Weston-super-Mare remains open on an appointment-only basis.

The reception, based in the Walliscote Road building, has been closed to the public since the pandemic began.

During this time, most people have been helped over the phone without the need to travel into Weston.

If you need council support, call 01934 888 888 and ask for the service you want.

You will either be helped over the phone or an appointment will be made for you.

Weston Library, based in the Town Hall, remains open 9.30am-6pm Monday to Friday, and 9.30am-4pm on Saturday. Monday to Saturday 9-9.30am is self-service.

Second Banwell bypass consultation to launch soon

The route for Banwell bypass was decided last summer following a public consultation and since then North Somerset Council has been drawing up designs, along with features and improvements it hopes can meet as many local priorities as possible.

Consultation remains an important part of this process and so you will have the opportunity to see and comment on the designs so far.

The design of the bypass will only be finalised once the council is ready to submit a planning application. This means the current designs can still be changed.

Keep an eye on the website for updates about when the second bypass consultation will launch. Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/banwellbypass

Get the latest news straight into your inbox

Stay up-to-date with council news, events and services by signing up to the monthly *North Somerset Life* email newsletter.

Subscribe online and stay informed in-between printed issues of the magazine by visiting www.northsomersetlife.co.uk



Have your say on No

Have your say on how North Somerset will grow and develop over the next 15 years.

North Somerset Council has created a new draft local plan and residents, community groups, businesses and other interested parties now have the chance to give their views on it.

The new Local Plan Preferred Options document identifies where development can and cannot take place in North Somerset, guiding investment and funding for new housing, jobs, transport and community facilities until 2038.

This draft plan follows two public consultations in 2020 which received more than 4,500 responses.

Responses from this latest consultation will help shape the next version of the plan.

That version will then be the document which the council proposes to submit for examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

It will be subject to a further round of consultation before it's submitted.

The plan takes seriously the council's commitment to tackling climate change and environmental issues by addressing the location and form of development, promoting renewable energy, minimising car use, encouraging green infrastructure and

biodiversity, avoiding sensitive areas such as areas at flood risk, and minimising waste.

Richard Kent, head of planning at North Somerset Council, said: "Central government decides the number of new homes that must be built in an area using a formula based on household growth and local affordability.

"Our new local plan will identify where development can and cannot take place.

"It will determine what sort of development will be permitted, where it may be located, and which services and infrastructure are required to support it.

"There are undoubtedly some very difficult choices to be made but without a local plan, we could end up with unplanned growth in the wrong places with no supporting facilities."



What is a local plan?

A local plan determines how an area grows and develops – but the total number of new homes which must be built is determined by central government.

Creating great places

Creating great places where people want to live, work, study and explore is an important part of the council's vision for North Somerset.

In Weston-super-Mare, the 10-year placemaking strategy – Super Weston – reimagines and reinvents public spaces in the town centre and presents a new regeneration vision for the next decade.

In Portishead, North Somerset Council is working with the town council, Aberdeen Standard Investments and local businesses to re-imagine the Wyndham Way area to better integrate it into the town.

A Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared to tie-in with the new local plan and placemaking work.

In Clevedon and Nailsea, the Two Towns project is a collaboration between the town councils, North Somerset Council and Design West.

It aims to shape a vision and shared priorities for the two towns and make them even better places to live and work in, by bringing together residents, local businesses, councillors, young people and cultural leaders.

North Somerset's growth

The new North Somerset Local Plan will guide investment in the infrastructure that supports new homes, workplaces and community facilities up until 2038.

Once adopted, all applications for planning permission in North Somerset will be assessed against the local plan.

Join the conversation 

Public consultation on the draft local plan starts this month.

North Somerset Council wants to hear views from as wide a range of people and organisations as possible – including communities, businesses, developers and other stakeholders.

It would also like views on how the 10 per cent shortage in housing numbers can be addressed.

The consultation runs from **Monday 14 March** until **Friday 29 April**.

Find out more and register to take part at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/newlocalplan



Tackling the climate emergency

Climate change is a global issue which will have significant impact on the quality of life in North Somerset.

North Somerset Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has developed a strategy and action plan to reduce the area's greenhouse gas emissions and work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The new draft local plan includes updated policies to reflect the council's climate change priorities and new approach to sustainable development.

We all need to make significant changes to how we live and work to tackle the climate emergency and create a healthier, happier, greener North Somerset.

Protecting the natural environment

Policies aimed at protecting and enhancing the natural environment are included in the new draft local plan.

This includes ways of protecting the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other important landscapes within the area, and initiatives to increase biodiversity.



SEE MONSTER

set to arrive this summer

Work to begin the installation of a flagship, cutting edge arts and cultural project is expected to start this month in North Somerset.

SEE MONSTER, located at the Tropicana in Weston-super-Mare, will be the biggest outdoor art installation ever seen in the area and hundreds of thousands of people are expected to visit.

It is part of the nationwide UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK project – a free, national collection of 10 large-scale, public art engagement projects to showcase the UK's creativity and innovation.

It will be installed for the summer and open for eight weeks.



What is SEE MONSTER?

SEE MONSTER will see a decommissioned North Sea offshore platform transformed into a flagship public art installation.

The unpredictability of the British weather will be the main theme, with a focus on reuse and renewable technologies.

What can I see there?

See large-scale events, installations and accessible digital experiences on the structure.

The platform will include theatrical and spectacular weather moments, with visitors being engulfed by huge clouds or caught in a sudden burst of rainfall.

You'll also be able to walk around planted gardens and meet people at the waterfall.

A dedicated outreach team focussing on science, technology, engineering, arts and maths will be answering visitors' questions.

From the platform, visitors will have great views of the town, beach and Bristol channel.

How can I visit?

Entry will be free and local residents will be given priority access. Information will be announced this spring.

Sign up to the newsletter for more information at www.seemonster.co.uk/sign-up



Can I get involved?

A wide range of opportunities will be available for local people, such as volunteer gardeners and wayfinding hosts to help people get around.

Paid-for work will include production, carpentry, security and other operational roles.

Opportunities will be advertised at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/jobs and www.seemonster.co.uk

A community initiative has been set-up for people and organisations in Weston to have a place on the SEE MONSTER programme of events, and encourage an ongoing legacy within the town.

Search for the SEE MONSTER Think Tank group on Facebook. Bars, pub, cafes and restaurants are also encouraged to get involved, to ensure the local economy benefits.



Choose to travel actively to SEE MONSTER

There are a number of ways to get to Weston's seafront but using public transport or cycling wherever possible is being encouraged.

Weston's train station and bus drop-off points are in walking

distance of the seafront and the town is also close to several of the area's key cycling and shared-use paths.

For more information about travel options visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/seemonstertravel

Find out more about SEE MONSTER at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/seemonster22

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Celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee



Communities across North Somerset are being urged to get together to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

This year marks 70 years since The Queen came to the throne – the first time a British monarch has reached this historic milestone.

Events are taking place throughout the year to mark the occasion, including a four-day national Bank Holiday from **Thursday 2 June** to **Sunday 5 June**.

That weekend you could enjoy a Big Jubilee Lunch with friends and neighbours or wave some flags at a street party.

Unfortunately, it's now too late to apply for a new road closure as North Somerset Council needs 12 weeks' notice.

However, keep an eye out for any being advertised locally as town and parish councils will already be making their plans.

You can also find out more about what's happening locally at www.platinumjubileesomerset.org.uk

Plans are also being made for beacons to be lit on **Thursday 2 June**. Visit www.queensjubileebeacons.com for more details.



North Somerset Council's Platinum Jubilee tree, being planted in Ashcombe Park, Weston-super-Mare, in January by officers from the council's natural environment team and employees of contractors Glendale.



Royal visit to North Somerset

Thousands of people turned out to greet Her Majesty The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh when they made a whistle-stop tour of North Somerset in July 2007.

During the packed day, the Royal Party visited various organisations to see a range of innovative local initiatives – including Yeo Valley Organic in Blagdon; and the For All Healthy Living Centre, Knightstone Island, Winter Gardens, Ashcombe Children's Centre and Helicopter Museum in Weston-super-Mare.



Plant a tree for The Queen

Individuals, community groups, local organisations and businesses are encouraged to plant a tree to mark the Platinum Jubilee.

Trees are important – they help clean the air we breathe, provide a home for small animals, give shade to people, and boost general happiness.

The Queen's Green Canopy initiative, devised by HRH The Prince of Wales, wants as many people as possible to plant a tree to celebrate the long reign, create a lasting legacy for future generations, and have a positive impact on the environment.

North Somerset Council planted an oak tree in Ashcombe Park, Weston-super-Mare, in January as part of this national initiative.

The oak came from Chew Valley Nurseries and a commemorative plaque was unveiled to mark the occasion.

The tree was planted just yards away from an oak commemorating

the Coronation of King Edward VII, which was planted in 1902, the year Ashcombe Park opened.

Last year the council successfully applied to the government's Local Authority Treescapes Fund for funding to plant 3,000 smaller trees and 150 larger ones in local communities across the area.

It has sought the help of town and parish councils with planting and looking after the trees and has offered each council at least one standard tree which could be used for The Queen's Green Canopy scheme.

This also ties in with North Somerset Council's tree planting and rewilding initiative, which aims to create new habitats and encourage wildlife to flourish, as well as help to address climate change.

In total, the council will be planting about 50,000 trees across the area.

Trees must be planted in the correct season, so any more Jubilee trees must be planted this month (March) and then again from October until the end of the year.

There are no rules and regulations for planting a tree on your own land so do your own research and find a tree you love, in terms of size, shape, colour and more.

Find out more about how North Somerset Council looks after trees at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/trees and its rewilding project at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/rewilding

Find out more about The Queen's Green Canopy at www.queensgreencanopy.org

www.platinumjubileesomerset.org.uk • www.platinumjubilee.gov.uk





Plan B restrictions were lifted in January and wearing a face mask became a matter of personal judgement.

However, government and businesses, such as supermarkets, still urged caution and encouraged people to continue to wear their face coverings.

Moving forward, we must still take steps to protect ourselves and those around us.

Matt Lenny, North Somerset Council's director of public health, said: "As we learn to live with Covid, we need to remember that the virus is not going away.

"If you haven't already, please come forward for your first, second or booster jab.

"Getting vaccinated is important to protect yourself as well as helping to protect vulnerable people around you."



Those at higher risk of getting seriously ill from Covid include older people and those with medical conditions.

It's not too late to get any of the Covid vaccinations. Even one dose is better than none so please book an appointment or get to a walk-in clinic as soon as you can.

Book an appointment by visiting www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or call 119. Visit www.grabajab.net for details of local clinics, including walk-ins.

Even if you're vaccinated, you can still catch the virus or pass it on so use lateral flow tests on the

days you're more likely to catch or spread it, such as mixing with people in crowded indoor places.

If you are unwell, try to stay at home if possible to avoid spreading any infections. If you have symptoms of Covid, get a PCR test and self-isolate.

As time goes on and we learn to live with Covid, changes will be made to the guidance around testing and self-isolation.

See the latest updates and make sure you're following the current government advice by visiting www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Learning to live with Covid

Most Covid restrictions were removed earlier this year but the virus isn't going away so now we must learn to live with it.

Monitoring oxygen levels at home

Blood oxygen monitors are available for more vulnerable people with Covid in North Somerset who may be at greater risk of serious illness.

Eligible people are being provided with simple-to-use pulse oximeter devices to monitor their blood oxygen levels at home.

Blood oxygen levels are an important factor in assessing whether someone with Covid is deteriorating and needs a hospital admission.

The Healthier Together @ Home service helps keep people well at home and allows extra medical help to be put in place quickly, if needed.

It's available to those most at-risk of severe illness from the virus, such

as pregnant women, people with a learning disability, those aged 65 and over, and those aged over 16 with health conditions such as cancer, COPD, asthma and diabetes.

Find out if you, or someone you know, is eligible by taking a short, confidential survey at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/c19support



Reducing pressure on

NHS

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 recommend which health service you need and how to access it.



Budgeting for a better quality of life

A new budget has been set for the financial year ahead which focuses on protection and investment.

North Somerset Council will continue to protect key council services, such as social care, recycling and waste, and maintaining roads and pavements.

It will also invest an extra £40m in long-term local projects to improve services for children and young people, green initiatives and local communities.

This money is on top of the £300m already committed for long-term investment in local projects.

To do this, a council tax rise of 2.99 per cent was expected at the time of *Life* going to print.

The council's budget has been affected by pressures in social care and the council tax rise won't even cover the gap to provide these services.

The rise also includes 1 per cent specifically to cover adult social care services.

Amy Webb, chief finance officer at North Somerset Council, said: "Recognising the cost-of-living pressures on residents, this is not something we do lightly.

"However, the council is not immune to cost pressures either and we have worked to mitigate impacts on services and household budgets.

"The past two years have been incredibly hard for everyone and as we emerge from the pandemic, we want North Somerset to thrive.

Investment

Children and young people

Investment to make childhood fairer for everyone, especially those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, or have special educational or additional needs, including:

- almost £500,000 to support families with disabled children
- an additional £1.1m to support children's social care and children with special educational needs and disabilities
- £3m repairs to school buildings
- £300,000 to upgrade play areas.

Climate emergency

Progressing projects to make North Somerset a greener place to live and carbon neutral by 2030, including:

- buying land to develop nature parks
- funding more active travel initiatives, including the Pier to Pier Way from Weston to Clevedon
- making homes and buildings more energy efficient.



Communities

Continuing improvements to make North Somerset a great place to live, raise a family and grow old, including:

- continued investment in town centres
- £12m over five years to develop Weston business quarter and other council-owned land. This will deliver more than 1,000 new jobs and 600 new homes, with at least 300 being affordable.



“We are committed to supporting our children and young people to have the best start in life and to protect our care services for adults.”

Adult social care remains underfunded by central government and it will continue to be a challenge in the years ahead, with rising costs caused by inflation, cost of living rises, and the increase in the National Minimum Wage.

Read more about adult social care on page 18.



What council tax can I expect to pay?

This year's anticipated rise of 2.99 per cent means North Somerset Council's share of the council tax bill for an average Band D household would be £1,550.03 in 2022/23 – about £29.80 a week.

In early February the Chancellor announced a range of support to help protect households from rising energy costs. One of these measures is a £150 council tax rebate for households in England in bands A to D. It is anticipated that this rebate will be made directly by local authorities from April. Further details will be provided over the coming weeks.

In addition to North Somerset Council's share, the final council tax bill includes charges for Avon and Somerset Police Authority, Avon Fire and Rescue, and town and parish councils.

North Somerset Council has no control over the level of these charges.

View and download your latest council tax bill online at a time to suit you when you sign up for e-billing.

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

Financial support for households

Rising costs may be a worry for many households but help is available if you need it.

If your circumstances have changed and you now have little or no income, council tax support can help. This is means-tested so find out if you're eligible and how to apply at
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport

You can also find out more about housing benefit and universal credit at
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/benefits

The Welfare Provision Scheme can give short-term financial help in a crisis. The amount will depend on individual circumstances. Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/welfare-provision-scheme

Financial help may also be available if you're struggling to pay your energy or water bills. Visit the Centre for Sustainable Energy website for advice at
www.cse.org.uk/advice

Citizens Advice North Somerset can give independent advice on employment, debt, benefits and more. Call 0808 278 7973, email advice@nscab.org.uk or visit www.nscab.org.uk



Funding issues for adult social care

Taking care of the most vulnerable adults in our community uses up vast amounts of North Somerset Council's annual budget.

More than 40 per cent of the budget is dedicated to supporting 2,500 people and responding to 16,500 requests for help each year.

In 2020/21, this amounted to spending £82m on adult social care, from the £201m budget available.

However, this does not include the unpaid efforts of people working throughout North Somerset to make sure the most vulnerable adults can live safe and well.

As we move on from Covid pressures, there are continued rising costs for adult social care.

People need more complex support for longer and the price of providing this is rising, mainly due to increases in the national living wage.

The older population is also increasing and children with more and more complex needs are reaching adulthood.

To address this, the government pledged more money for adult social care in England – but this extra funding is not enough.

North Somerset Council needs to cover the shortfall with a rise in council tax and by finding extra savings.

But what does adult social care actually mean and what will your money be used for?



Where does your money go?

By the end of the 2020/21 financial year...

- North Somerset Council was contacted 16,673 times about care issues – an increase of 11 per cent in the last two years
- about 8,400 community meals were delivered
- 4,147 safeguarding concerns were raised and investigated
- 3,188 care assessments and 4,252 reviews were carried out
- there were 2,959 applicants on the social housing register at the end of November, with 74 waiting on a supported housing placement
- Telecare equipment supported 1,891 people
- 1,377 people received community services
- 962 people were in permanent care placements
- 490 approved mental health professional assessments were carried out
- 328 households were prevented from becoming homeless
- 250 were under court of protection orders and supported with their finances
- 210 private rented properties were found for people who'd contacted the homeless prevention service
- accommodation was found for 194 homeless households
- 93 people were in Shared Lives placements.



Communities to benefit from £2.8m funding

People, businesses and communities in need throughout North Somerset will benefit from a range of support thanks to £2.8m of funding.



North Somerset Council has received £2,836,811 from the UK Community Renewal Fund as part of a combined bid with local organisations.

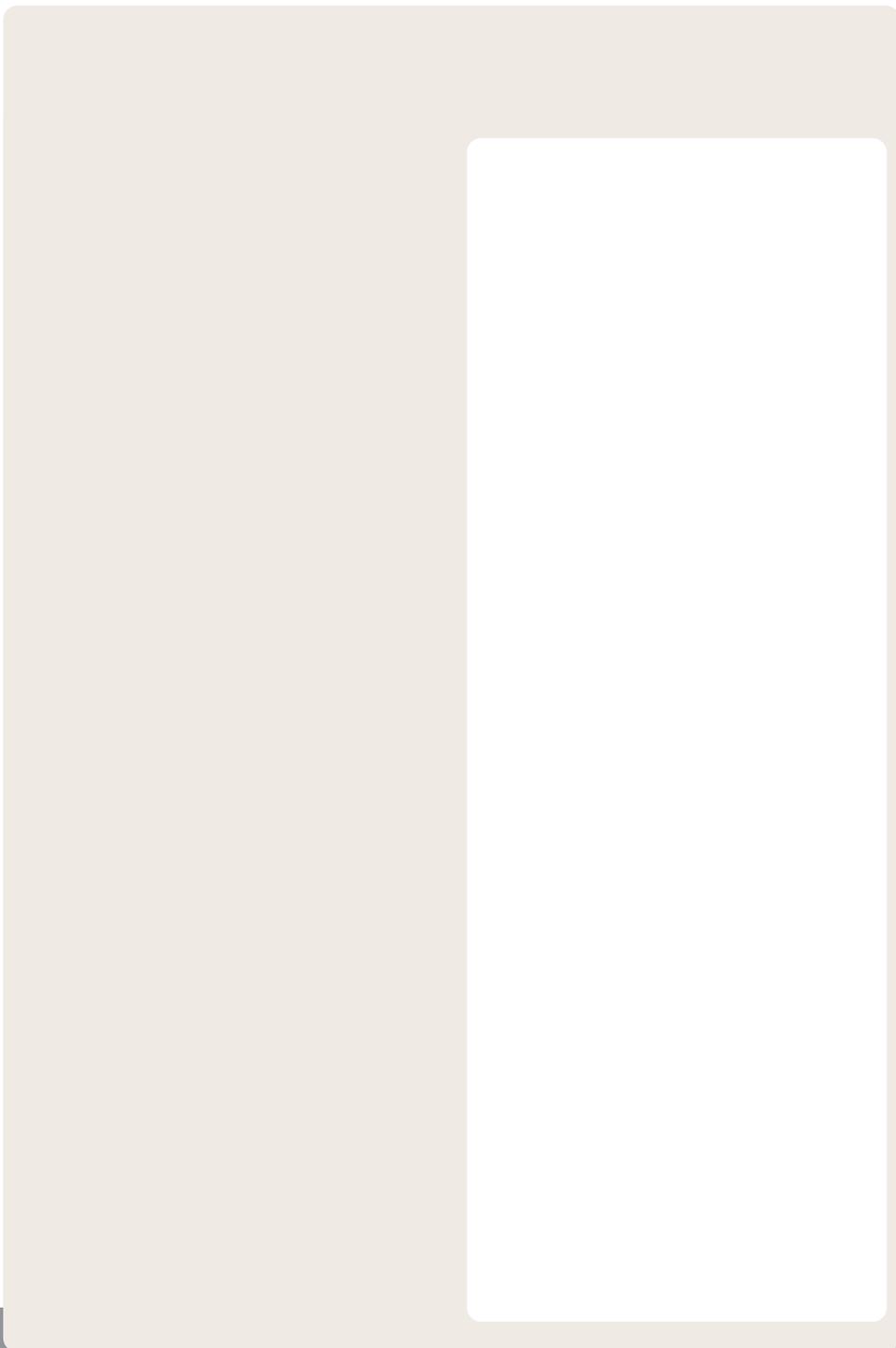
The money will be used to invest in skills, communities and businesses, and support local people into employment.

The council was responsible for inviting bids from local organisations and then selecting which ones were sent to the government for consideration.

The four successful projects are:

- Enabling Thriving Places in North Somerset
- North Somerset Works Together
- North Somerset Community Hubs
- Accelerate – Supporting Business in North Somerset.

Here's an update on the first two...



North Somerset Works Together Funding received £585,851

What for?

To enhance employment and skills support, addressing people's barriers to employment and matching vacancies with jobseekers in the area's most deprived communities. North Somerset Council is working with Weston College, Voluntary Action North Somerset and Curo on this.

What's happening now?

Residents are supported to take their first steps into employment or return to work.

This includes tailor-made action plans which consider a person's goals and addresses any obstacles, such as digital barriers or wellbeing issues.

Eligible people can access the service through one of five employment and skills hubs located within libraries. Careers fairs are also planned for March and April.

Find out more at www.innorthsomerset.co.uk/opportunitynorthsomerset or call 07990 805 512.

Learn to code at libraries

Learn digital skills in North Somerset's libraries as part of the North Somerset Works Together project.

Free Learn to Code sessions introduce people to the basics of digital technology, including coding, electronics, robots and games.

A six-week after school coding course, delivered by Coding Bug, is running for eight to 12-year-

olds. Workshops will also be held during school holidays.

Free introductory sessions will also take place for pre-school children, their parents and carers, while further workshops are planned for adults.

Find out more at your local library or visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/libraryevents

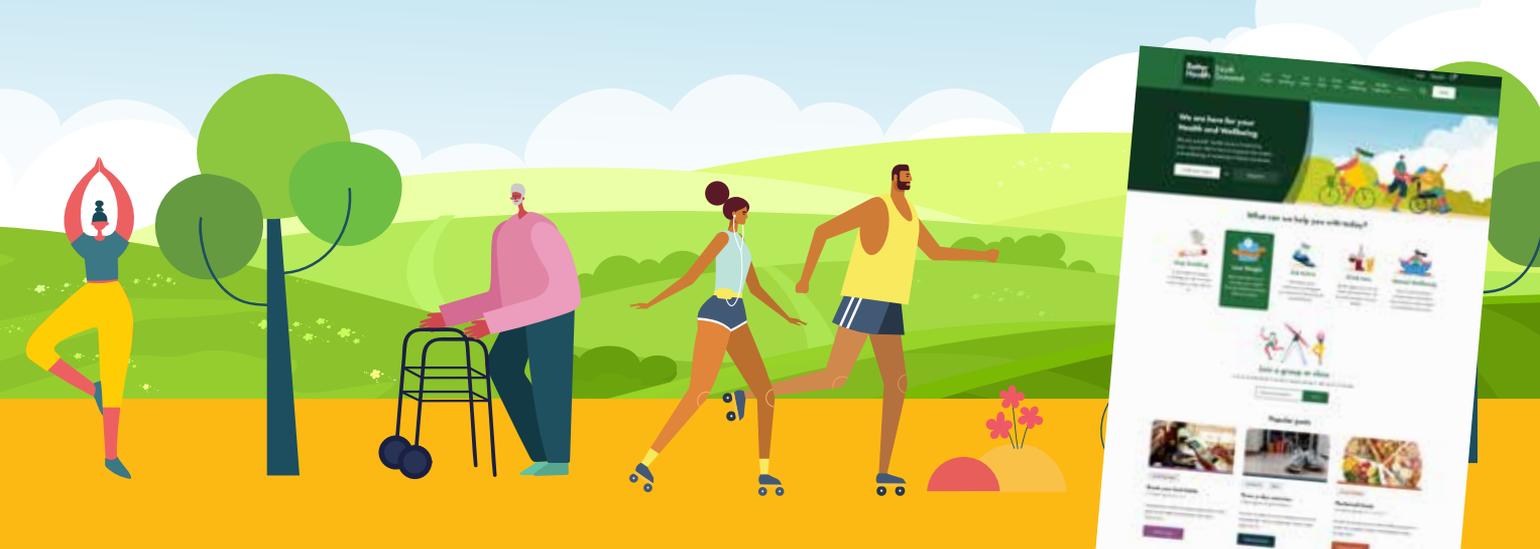
The two other projects to receive funding are:

North Somerset Community Hubs £699,997 to create a network of community hubs in rural areas and smaller towns and villages. Find out more on **page 34**.

Accelerate – Supporting Business in North Somerset £878,401 to deliver targeted and flexible support for businesses and people. Read more in a future issue of *Life*.



The national £220m UK Community Renewal Fund will provide funding to help places across the UK prepare for the introduction of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund next year, which is replacing EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). www.n-somerset.gov.uk/crf



Find health and wellbeing support on new website

Would you like more support to lose weight, get active, stop smoking or find groups and classes in North Somerset?

A new local healthy lifestyles website has launched to give you all the information you need to get your wellbeing back on track.

The Better Health North Somerset website launched last month and is packed with useful information and articles, covering themes such as breaking habits, tips and advice on different lifestyle topics.

It also features real life case studies of local people who have made changes with North Somerset Council's help.

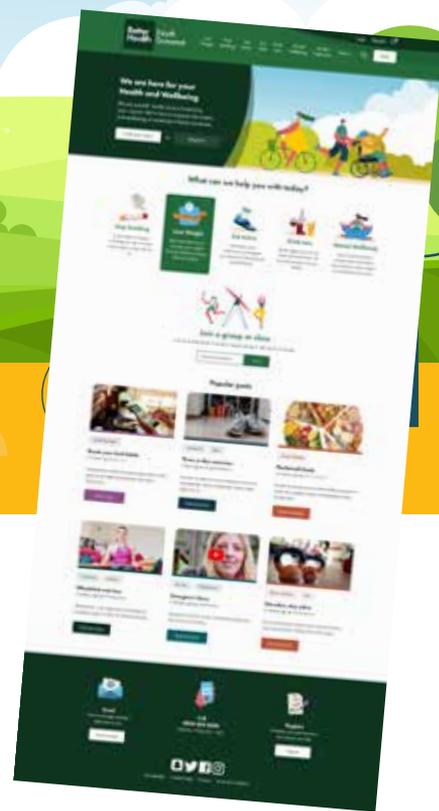
You can also access support from stop smoking and healthy lifestyles advisers.

SmokeFree North Somerset manager Chris Miles said: "Through this website, you'll have access to behavioural support, evidence-based treatment and stop smoking aids.

"You are four times more likely to stop smoking using our services compared with doing it on your own."

Professionals working in local organisations can also refer their clients.

Local organisations are also encouraged to use the site to find information, such as the healthy workplaces award scheme and healthy schools initiative.



Healthy lifestyle advice for more people

More residents in North Somerset will now be eligible to access support to make healthy lifestyle changes.

The council's team of healthy lifestyles advisors is expanding this year due to a new partnership with Pier Health Group.

Patients registered with any one of the eight practices in Weston-super-Mare, Worle, Winscombe and Banwell are now eligible.

Find out more by filling in the self-assessment form on the new website to display the support options available to you.

The vision, ambitions, principles and actions for health and wellbeing across North Somerset have now been set out.

North Somerset Council has published its health and wellbeing strategy and action plan which aims to identify areas for improvement and work to reduce health inequalities.

It addresses themes across all areas of life, from children and young people to adults and older people.

The strategy runs until 2024. Read it online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing2021-24



Visit the new Better Health North Somerset website at www.betterhealthns.co.uk

Big events return this spring



After two years of pandemic disruption, some big events are returning to North Somerset this spring.

Here's a selection of what's coming up...



Eat Festival

Clevedon – Saturday 21 May

The award-winning food and drink festival will be bringing a fiesta of food in support of small businesses to Clevedon this spring.

www.eatfestivals.org

North Somerset Show

Monday 2 May

The very best of livestock and horses showcased with rural events, crafts and food, at North Somerset Showground near Wraxall.

www.nsas.org.uk



Clevedon Literary Festival

Saturday 11 – Sunday 12 June

From music to poetry, workshops and masterclasses, the 2022 Clevedon Literary Festival is an event not to be missed.

Weston Air Festival

Sat 25 June – Sunday 26 June

A weekend of entertainment in the sky with the iconic Red Arrows, air displays, food stalls and family activities, on Weston-super-Mare's seafront and beach lawns.

www.westonairfestival.com



For up-to-date listings visit:
www.visit-westonsupermare.com
www.nailseatown.com/whats-on
www.discoverclevedon.co.uk
www.visitportishead.net



Around beautiful Abbots Pool

A tranquil pool and leafy woodland provide the perfect place to explore on a sunny summer's day.

This is a walk of two halves – a route around Abbots Pool and woodland, followed by an exploration of the lanes

Walk information

Distance:
about 3.75 miles

Difficulty:
mainly flat. A few steps in places and kissing gates. It can get very muddy in certain sections so wellies recommended after recent rain

Duration:
About two hours for the full route

How to get there

By car: from the A369, turn into Manor Road. The car park is signposted on the right. Manor Road is a narrow country lane so drive with caution.

For bus timetables visit www.travelinesw.com

Tranquil Abbots Pool nature reserve, in Abbots Leigh, has a long history. The track running through it is thought to have been used since Roman times and the pool was used by monks in the Middle Ages to provide fresh fish.

Now the area is owned by North Somerset Council and is a Green Flag site, meaning it meets the international high standard for open spaces.

From the car park, follow the main path into the woods to the pool. There are some benches to sit and enjoy the peace. No swimming is allowed.

Continue on, with the pool on your right, and follow the bridleway as it curves around to the left.

Continue with the fence on your right-hand side. Just past the old stone building, turn left onto the footpath, marked with a yellow waymarker.

At the top of this path is a gate into a field. It's private property apart from the public footpath, so keep to the right-hand edge.

Exit the field through the gate and continue on the path straight ahead. Exit the wood through the gate and then go through the next field.

Help keep Abbots Pool beautiful for all

Anti-social behaviour is being deterred at Abbots Pool through Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO).

No swimming, wading or jumping is allowed in the water, as well

as no boats, dinghies, canoes, sailboards, inflatables.

General PSPO rules also apply. Visit

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/pspo



Turn left onto the bridleway and follow this all the way back to Manor Road. It can get very muddy here.

At the yellow cottage, turn left into Manor Road. You'll go past the entrance to the car park so you can finish the walk here if you want to.

If you want to continue exploring the village of Abbots Leigh, carry on up Manor Road.

Turn left into Manor Lane. It's a quiet country lane but watch out for cars, especially on bends.

At the junction take an immediate right into Harris Lane, which leads to the A369. You'll catch glimpses of Avonmouth from here.

Turn right onto the A369, cross the road at the traffic lights, then go up Church Road past the village hall. There are historic properties along this road, such as Chantry House.

Holy Trinity Church is at the top of this road. This Grade II* listed church was originally built in the 15th century but partially rebuilt in 1848 after being struck by lightning and a fire.

From the church, take the footpath next to Avonhurst House, through the park and down across the field.

Turn right into Home Farm Road, right onto the A369, then cross the road at the traffic lights again and head left down Manor Road.

On your right-hand side is The Priory, a Tudor Gothic-styled country house with an impressive conservatory, built in 1831.

It was later owned by the Fry family, famous for chocolate making.

Just up ahead on the left-hand side is the impressive 19th century Manor House, now a nursing home.

Take the track on the right just past Manor Lane.

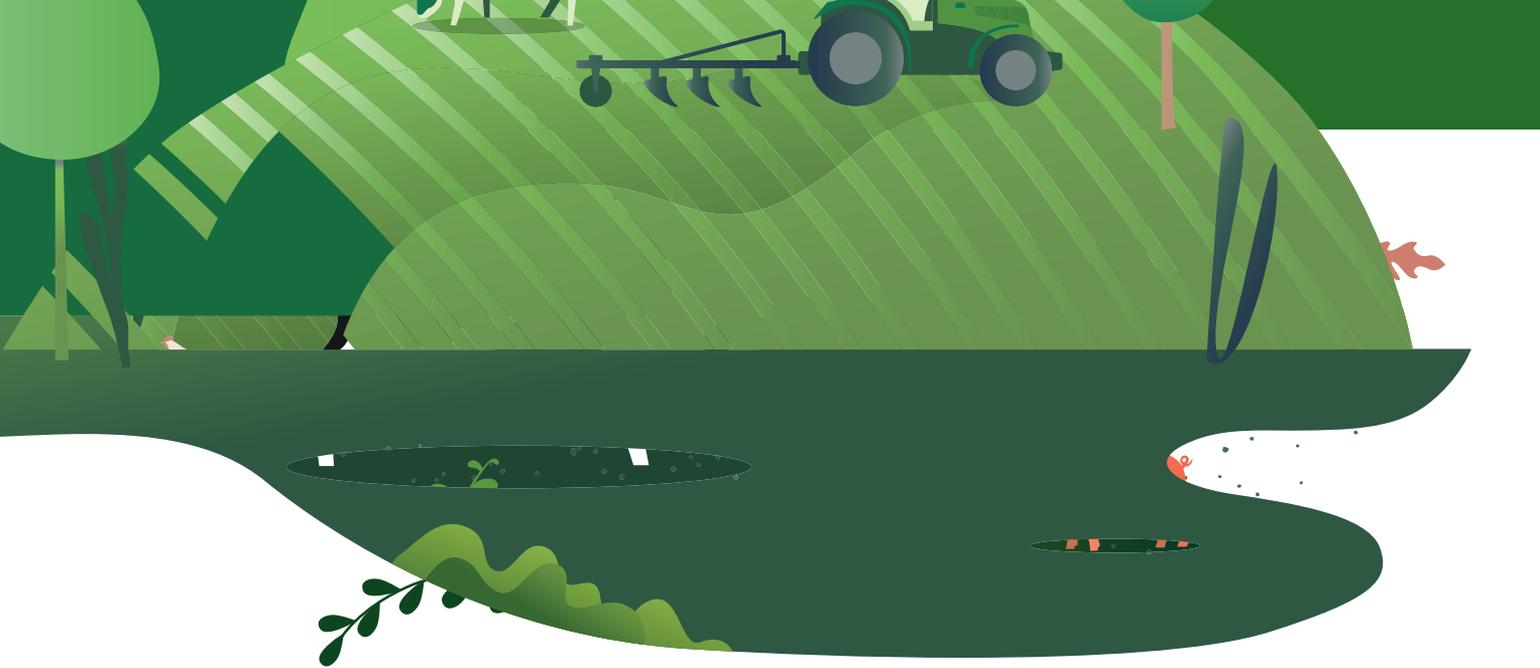
Follow it to the end and then re-enter Abbots Pool nature reserve down the steps.

You'll come to another section of the pool, with water features, a small bridge and a picnic table.

Follow the path to the left, around the pool, to return to the car park.



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How food affects your carbon footprint

What we eat and where it comes from has a huge impact on our individual carbon footprint.

It is estimated that a quarter of the world's greenhouse gas emissions are associated with food production so thinking about what you eat and where it comes from is one of the biggest ways you can reduce your environmental impact.

A 2019 UN report on land use and climate change said the West's high consumption of meat and dairy produce is contributing to global warming. They said that more people could be fed using less land if individuals cut down on eating meat.

The two biggest climate impacts of animal products are land use and methane emissions.

Livestock uses huge amounts of land, both for grazing and growing their feed. This has caused worrying increases in deforestation in areas like the Amazon rainforest.



Methane is a powerful greenhouse gas and animals like cows and sheep burp enormous amounts when digesting grass.

Considering our food choices more carefully and making simple changes can have a positive effect on our carbon footprint.



Animal-based foods have a much higher carbon footprint than plant-based ones.

In the UK, on average, producing 1kg of each of the following foods produces greenhouse gas emissions of:

● Beef	25kg
● Lamb	21kg
● Pork	10kg
● Chicken	4kg
● Quorn	4kg
● Lentils	2.1kg
● Tofu	1.5kg

It varies depending on the type of animal and the way it is farmed but the evidence is clear that meat and dairy contribute a large proportion of food production emissions.

Choosing a more sustainable diet

Changing our diet to eat more plant-based sources of protein is one of the easiest and most impactful ways we can reduce our carbon footprint.

A low carbon diet focuses on plant-based foods, and, if you do eat meat and dairy, choosing products sourced from local farms with better welfare conditions.

Plenty of plant-based foods contain high levels of protein, the building blocks we all need to grow and maintain muscle.

If your starting point is a traditional, high meat diet then it might feel challenging to reduce your meat intake.



A flexible approach might be easier to start with, focussing on plant-based foods but not entirely excluding meat and dairy.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- designate a meat-free day each week and stick to plant-based foods for all meals and snacks for that day
- when you do eat meat, buy the best quality you can afford and use less of it

- switch high carbon meat for lower carbon alternatives. For example, if you usually use beef mince, try pork or turkey mince instead.

Eating plant-based meals can be cheaper and healthier too, with higher fibre and lower saturated fat.

Buy local, in season

One kilogram of beef that has been produced abroad on deforested land will have created, on average, 60kg of greenhouse gases.

UK-reared beef will produce an average of 25kg per kilogram and if produced using regenerative farming practices, such as improving soils and rotating crops and livestock, can be even lower.

Food miles also take into account how the product has travelled. Out of season vegetables in the UK are often air freighted. Air freighted asparagus from Peru produces 16 times more carbon emissions than in-season UK asparagus.

Many British farmers are already working towards becoming net zero and raising welfare standards, so buy British where you can.



Join the Climate Action North Somerset Facebook page for more ideas and tips:

 [climateactionNS](https://www.facebook.com/climateactionNS)

Check your carbon footprint at Giki Zero, by typing **zero.giki.earth** into your search bar.

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



Rewilding efforts are increasing biodiversity

Wildlife is flourishing across North Somerset thanks to more habitats being created by rewilding.

Many insect species and birds had suffered from a lack of flowers and wild grasses so in 2019 North Somerset Council launched a rewilding programme.

Officers identified council-owned verges, parks and open spaces which were suitable for rewilding, meaning grass would be left to grow taller and more trees would be planted.

Traditional, short grass in parks and open spaces isn't valuable in ecological terms and regular mowing isn't necessary.

Longer vegetation provides habitats for

many species of insects, which in turn feed birds and bats, and many plant species which were previously held back by regular mowing are then allowed to thrive.

As well as launching the rewilding programme, the usual grass cutting schedule was scaled back in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

This meant grass was allowed to grow taller in more sites earlier than planned.

Native trees have also been planted in some areas, thanks to groups of volunteers.



Results from rewilding

Last summer North Somerset Council teamed up with Avon Wildlife Trust to monitor biodiversity at the rewilding sites and engage with local people.

Free training sessions were held in species identification and survey techniques, and volunteers carried out surveys on sites in Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare.

Volunteers observed a stark difference in the number of species found among the wilder sites compared with the short, regularly mown grass.

Insect numbers have also multiplied and plants which weren't seen before have been recorded, such as orchids.



One site alone saw 28 different plant species within the unmown section, compared with just six in the mown areas.

Avon Wildlife Trust project manager Jamie Kingscott said: "This project is an excellent opportunity to show that small changes can make a big difference.

"We are already seeing a marked increase in both insect and plant life across these sites.

"These survey and identification sessions enable people to be really involved with their local areas and see how the wildlife increases and biodiversity improves."

Samantha Phillips, natural environment officer at North Somerset Council, said: "We recognise the importance of parks and open spaces within the community but altering the management of small pockets of these sites goes a long way to helping address both the climate and nature emergency."

The survey season starts again this spring, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

There will be a full calendar of training events and survey sessions so lots of opportunities to get involved.

It is hoped that groups of local volunteers will be able to build on their skills and continue monitoring in years to come, to capture changes in the longer term.

It is also hoped that some people will become 'rewilding champions' to take a lead role and co-ordinate local surveys in the future.



What is the rewilding programme?

Grass is being allowed to grow longer across North Somerset and 50,000 new trees are being planted.

This initiative will result in 25 hectares of new woodland and about 40 hectares of tall grass areas being established

This is helping to create more biodiversity and mitigate the effects of climate change.



North Somerset Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and aims to become a carbon neutral council and carbon neutral area by 2030.

Read more about North Somerset Council's rewilding project at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/rewilding

Read the Green Infrastructure Strategy at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/greeninfrastructurestrategy



To find out more about the project or get involved visit www.avonwildlifetrust.org.uk or email nsrewilding@avonwildlifetrust.org.uk



Moving up the recycling

Recycling rates in North Somerset are among the best in the country thanks to all your efforts.

Latest figures from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) show that 60.4 per cent of household waste generated in North Somerset was recycled in 2020-21, well above the UK average of 44 per cent.

This ranks us the second-best performing unitary authority in England and seventh best council overall, up from ninth position in 2019/20.

Looking ahead, North Somerset Council is now setting out its plans for the coming years and what else we could all be doing.



Priorities include increasing rates of reuse, improving recycling services for flats, supporting composting, expanding the commercial waste service, and tackling littering and fly tipping to improve the look of streets and open spaces.

The council also wants to reach a recycling rate of 64 per cent by 2025 and 70 per cent by 2030, which will also help towards the aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Read more about these aims in the new recycling and waste strategy at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/wastestrategy

COMPOSTING LET'S GET DOWN TO EARTH

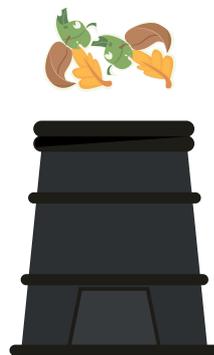
Cultivate your own compost

Spring is here and it's the perfect time to get out in the garden – but did you know home composting is the most environmentally friendly and cheapest way of dealing with garden waste?

Compost is a nutrient-rich food for the garden which helps improve soil structure, maintains moisture levels and keeps a balanced pH range.

To encourage more home composting, North Somerset Council is extending its offer of buying a bin at a discounted rate.

You can buy a 220-litre compost bin made from recycled plastic directly from the council for £10, which includes access to a free e-learning course.



A range of specialist bins and accessories is also available. Visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/composting

Pass on your composting skills

Could you be a volunteer master composter teaching friends, neighbours and local people how to compost?

This can involve attending events, giving talks, writing newsletters, networking and using social media.

Becoming a master composter gives you the opportunity to meet new people, learn new skills and be part of a network of likeminded people.

Compost in your community

Communities are being encouraged to get together and create shared composting facilities for local people to use.

The council is keen to support local groups setting up community composting sites and may be able to help with issues such as securing the site and promotion.

Sites will also benefit from recycling credits, where a price is paid per tonne of garden waste that you compost.

If you're interested, email gardenwaste@n-somerset.gov.uk or call 01934 888 802.

league top ten



Litter pickers needed to help keep area clean and green

Spring is a great time to get outside but litter can make areas look unsightly.

If you're passionate about where you live and want to keep it looking clean and green, you could join the council's Adopt-a-Street scheme and litter pick.

Volunteers across North Somerset are already doing valuable work to help keep the environment litter free.

If you join them, you'll receive litter picking equipment and safety information.



Find out more at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/adoptastreet

Garden waste service for the year ahead

Some garden waste services were suspended last year and the frequency of collections reduced.

North Somerset Council is sorry for the inconvenience caused. It did its best to keep the service running during extremely challenging circumstances, due to continued Covid pressures and the shortage of HGV drivers.

The council realises that it was unable to provide the service that garden waste customers had paid for so it is now contacting those customers with details of its plan to put this right.

Customers who provided an email address when registering should receive an email. Those who signed up by phone without



providing an email address will receive a letter in the post.

Registration for the 2022/23 service will open soon. If you're a current subscriber you'll receive a reminder to renew.

If you'd like to subscribe but don't currently, look out for information on the council's website as well as the recycling and waste team's social media accounts.

For more information visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/gardenwaste



 ns_recycling  NSrecyclingandwaste

Adventure on the high sea North Somerset's care leavers

Horizons were widened for young care leavers from North Somerset when they undertook a sailing adventure on the high seas.

A group of 10 young people, both care leavers and older children still in care, boarded a racing yacht to sail around the Isle of Wight for five days during the October school holidays last year.

The trip, run by sail training charity the Tall Ships Youth Trust, aimed to boost self-esteem, provide unique challenges for the group to rise to, and give them the opportunity to have fun with others.

On board, the young people acted as trainee crew, learnt how to tie the ropes, steered the yacht, helped prepare evening meals and more.

The trip was funded by North Somerset Council as part of its aim to provide more opportunities for children in care as they grow into adults and help maximise their independence.

Paul Johnson, head of corporate parenting at North Somerset Council, said: "The trip provided an unforgettable experience and adventure for our young people.

"It took them out of their comfort zone and challenged them to try new things, learn new skills and make great friendships that they didn't have before.

"They became part of the crew that sailed the ship, navigating the often-choppy south coast waters for a whole safe and fun-filled week."

Many of the young people didn't know each other before the trip but one said: "I met another boy who speaks my language and I found out we go to the same college. It was good to make a new friend on the trip and now at college."

Another said:

"I loved the trip. I defiantly want to go back."

Raheal Amare, a care leavers personal adviser at the council, said: "It was a great experience seeing different young people come together and work as a team.



s for vers

"We all took turns cleaning and cooking, which was a surprise to the young people but they all did their part without complaining.

"One young person was determined to continue with a positive attitude after falling terribly seasick.

"He was very enthusiastic and a quick learner, and spent every evening doing some college course work. The crew were very impressed and so they've given him a discount to attend next year.

"It was lovely to see the young people taken out of their comfort zone and explore the sea."

Find out more about the Tall Ships Youth Trust at www.tallships.org



North Somerset care leavers on their Tall Ships adventure



Could you foster?



More foster carers are needed in North Somerset to help look after the area's most vulnerable children and young people.

There are currently 193 children and young people under the care of North Somerset Council for a variety of reasons – but never through their own fault.

Foster carers play a vital role in supporting them through a difficult time, giving them a safe, stable and caring family environment in which to flourish.

The commitment and hard work of foster carers can make all the difference to someone's life.

While foster carers are needed for all age groups, there is currently an urgent need for those who can look after teenagers or siblings.

To support local foster carers, North Somerset Council follows the Mockingbird programme.

This approach is a special way of providing foster care so that it's structured like an extended family.

The fostering team is happy to discuss the role with anyone who is interested, even if your circumstances aren't quite right at the moment.

People from all backgrounds are welcomed, from different ages, genders, ethnicities, relationship status or sexual orientation.

You just need a spare bedroom, some experience of caring for or working with children, and a willingness to develop parenting skills.

If you are still working, some other opportunities might be more suitable, such as the Supported Lodgings scheme for young people aged 16 and over.

For an informal chat to find out more, call 01275 888 999 or email

fostering@n-somerset.gov.uk

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/fostering

time to care... **F**ostering North Somerset

Importance of comm

Rural communities across North Somerset are continuing to support each other as the area recovers from the coronavirus pandemic.

North Somerset has beautiful countryside and great towns and villages but anyone living in a more rural area might feel more isolated.

The pandemic highlighted the need for a community network across the area and work is on going to ensure this can grow and prosper.

One way residents are being supported is by breaking down the digital divide.

In 13 areas across North Somerset, monthly Tea and Tech sessions are taking place with volunteers giving their time to help others get online and learn to use devices such as smartphones, tablets and laptops.

This project was initially a joint venture through the West of England Rural Network (WERN) and parish councils, through the Avon Local Councils Association.

However, it has now expanded and funding is coming through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

Tina Huckle-Mills, from WERN, said: "The pandemic demonstrated how important technology is.

"It highlighted the digital divide for many people as they became socially isolated, unable to connect with family and friends over the internet, do online shopping, order prescriptions or even have virtual GP appointments.

"Simple approaches such as Tea and Tech, with gentle gatherings in community venues, give people a chance to learn in a friendly environment.

"The willingness of communities to take up the challenge of addressing these issues has been remarkable and the benefits great.

"Not only that, it provides an opportunity to connect with others over tea and cake, adding an all-important social aspect to these sessions too."

In Banwell, this has expanded further.

Liz Shayler, clerk at Banwell Parish Council, said: "Due to the success of the Tea and Tech sessions, we are now running additional ones in Banwell called You Can Do IT.



unity in rural areas

“These are more focused sessions. Our first was digital devices, the second was emailing, and then we arranged a talk with Avon and Somerset Police about how to avoid online scams.”



Register for free digital support in your community

Would you like to help reduce the digital divide in your local community?

Free support is available to set up local Tea and Tech sessions.

Find out more by emailing Dick Whittington, of WERN, on dick@wern.org.uk

The deadline for funding being awarded is Thursday 30 June so please apply early.

Creating a network of community hubs

A network of community hubs will be piloted across North Somerset to support local people and reduce social isolation.

North Somerset Community Hubs pilot is one of the four projects to receive funding through the £2.8m UK Community Renewal Fund.

This project has received £699,997 and will build on the opportunities for community-led growth generated by the Covid pandemic.

Community hubs will become focal points for delivering services, which in turn support recovery

and growth in villages and towns across the area.

North Somerset Council is working with a variety of partners to develop this project, including Voluntary Action North Somerset, Clevedon and Portishead town councils, Flax Bourton Community Hub, Long Ashton Coronavirus Support Network, North Somerset Black Minority Ethnic Forum, The Stable in Weston-super-Mare, Culture Weston, Theatre Orchard and the West of England Rural Network.

Find out more about the Community Renewal Fund on page 20.

Sessions to help reduce the digital divide in Banwell

Young volunteer Tom Shayler helps Banwell resident John with IT.



Communities still coming together

Practical support is still being given to residents across the area through the North Somerset Together initiative.

North Somerset Together is a coalition between North Somerset Council, charities, mutual aid groups, town and parish councils, local faith groups, businesses and volunteers.

It connects socially isolated residents with organisations

that can offer support, and links would-be volunteers with those groups needing a helping hand.

Find information and support at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/together or call 01934 427 437.

Volunteering opportunities are also listed through Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS). Visit www.vansweb.org.uk or call 01934 416 486.

Work on The Sovereign begins



Work has started to transform Weston's Sovereign Centre into a multi-use space for all the community to meet, work and shop.

The revamp of the centre is now under way and should be completed in the summer.

Refurbishment, being carried out by a local contractor, includes:

- creating new workspace for businesses, makers, entrepreneurs and individuals. Flexible options will be offered to meet increased demand for different types of working
- introducing an attractive new restaurant/café space
- enhancing and refurbishing key parts of the interior and exterior of the building
- providing space to support active lifestyles and wellbeing, such as a cycle hub and rental shop.

The centre's name has evolved into the Sovereign following a public engagement exercise last year.

North Somerset Council, which owns the Sovereign, was awarded £1.7m by central government's Getting Building Fund to revamp the centre.

To find out more about how you can get involved with the new space, email info@sovereign-centre.co.uk

Free events to celebrate heritage

Free events will be taking place over the coming months to celebrate North Somerset's heritage.

Weston's High Street Heritage Action Zone has received £70,000 funding from Heritage England to carry out a programme of engagement work.

Weston has two Heritage Action Zones, an initiative funded by Historic England.

You can find out about Weston's heritage and the work taking place to protect and enhance it at a new free exhibition opening on **Saturday 21 May** at Weston Museum, in Burlington Street.

The exhibition will be held in the museum's community gallery and is expected to run until early November.

Find out more at www.westonmuseum.org/westons-high-street-community-exhibition

Later in the year, England's largest festival of history and culture takes place.

Heritage Open Days takes place every September and gives people the chance to explore hidden places for free.

Find out more about Weston's Heritage Action Zones at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/heritageactionzone



Images courtesy of Cuppa Architects

Vibrant bandstand set to brighten High Street

A distinctive multi-use space is set to be installed temporarily on Weston’s High Street.

Subject to planning approval, the temporary art installation will be a timber-built bandstand style structure including a sheltered seating area.

It will form part of 21st Century super Shrines, a pioneering heritage project which aims to inject energy into the High Street and shine a spotlight on the local community.

The structure has been designed and co-created by internationally-acclaimed public realm artist Morag Myerscough and the community, in partnership with Culture Weston, and will be situated in Big Lamp Corner, just off the High Street.

It is hoped the installation will be the first in a series of innovative ‘shrines’ that project the community’s values out to the High Street through artist-led initiatives and experiences.

If approved, installation will take place this spring.



Internationally-acclaimed artist Morag Myerscough



Small actions can make difference to bathing water

Recent bathing water quality assessments show a mixed picture

Clevedon, Sand Bay and Uphill meet stringent standards but Weston-super-Mare's bathing water has been rated poor by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Environmental teams at North Somerset Council and the Environment Agency are investigating why the water at Weston has slipped below the minimum standard.



Bathing water quality results in North Somerset

- Clevedon – good
- Sand Bay – sufficient
- Uphill – sufficient
- Weston – poor



How is water quality checked?

The Environment Agency monitors bathing water quality between May and September each year at more than 400 sites across England.

Each site is classified as excellent, good, sufficient or poor based on measurements taken over a period of up to four years.

The classification is based on a statistical measure of all samples rather than an individual sample.

A sample tells us the quality of the water at that specific time but water quality can change quickly, even over the course of one day.

Why does bathing water quality change?

Bathing water quality in coastal towns can be impacted by many things, from animal poo and litter to water running off farms and fields into rivers which lead to the sea.

Bird poo contains high levels of bacteria and has the potential to pollute the waters.

In Weston-super-Mare, the seagull population has increased over the last two years, possibly because they are attracted to food left behind in litter bins.

Seafront businesses were busier than usual over the last two summers when lockdown restrictions eased and more people visited in a short space of time.

There have also been reports of higher rates of dog mess, which can be washed into the waters.

The potential impact of this on water quality is being investigated. Fines are being issued to people not picking up after their dogs, taking dogs on the beach in summer where they're not supposed to, and failing to show they have the means to pick up after their dog.

Weston's position in an estuary, on the mouth of the River Axe, also influences the water quality.

Water draining from farms and farmland, which includes manure from livestock or poorly stored slurry, can wash into the river.

One of the biggest causes of bathing water pollution comes from untreated sewage finding its way into rivers and sea.

This can be caused by misconnections in residential or business plumbing, where waste pipes are incorrectly connected to outlets that go directly into rivers or the sea, or badly maintained septic tanks.

a big water quality

for North Somerset.



In recent years, Wessex Water has invested millions of pounds to ensure sewage received from homes and businesses is treated to a high standard.

It uses state-of-the-art UV treatment to kill bacteria before safely returning it to the environment.

Wessex Water has also renewed the main sewer around Marine Parade to reduce risks of deterioration and leakage.

Help protect rivers and seas

Everyone can help improve bathing water quality...

- always take your rubbish away from the beach
- always bag and bin or take home your dog's poo
- follow signs for where you can and cannot take dogs on beaches
- never pour waste liquids or throw litter down surface water drains
- never pour fats and oils down the sink
- never flush wet wipes and sanitary products down the loo.

Report any sources of pollution you see at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/comment

North Somerset Council, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water are working together to investigate causes for the lower-than-expected water quality results.

This is being done through a range of measures.

Checks are being carried out for misconnections of foul sewage from private properties into the surface water system, which discharges straight into the sea.

Other potential sources are being investigated, such as businesses along the river and seafronts. Support is being given to any business found to have a problem.

A steering group involving local businesses and other

town representatives, as well as environmental and water specialists, has been set up.

All seafront businesses have been asked to check their waste-water and rubbish disposal systems.

Bird roosting sites are being checked to see if they have changed or are having a larger than usual impact on the beach.

Drainage systems for surface water are being looked at to make sure everything is working as it should.

North Somerset Council is also looking into getting real-time signs which will use a prediction system to let swimmers and other water users know if there is the potential for lower water quality at any given time.



See water quality data at environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles



Be on your guard against scams



Scams are fraudulent schemes designed to cheat you out of your money or obtain personal information – so be on your guard and watch out for more vulnerable people.

Scams come in many shapes and sizes, from bogus lottery wins to miracle cures and chain letters.

They might be online, by post or in-person, and can target people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes.

Be alert to this type of crime to help protect yourself and those close to you.



New taxi driver saves passenger from scam

A quick-thinking North Somerset taxi driver helped prevent an elderly passenger from losing £2,500 to a fraudster.

Lewis Cornish was a new taxi driver and had only been trained in safeguarding a few weeks before the event happened.

He said: "I collected the gentleman to drive him to the bank and during the journey I overheard the phone call with the scammer.

"The resident had been called by a man claiming to be from the bank's fraud department, asking for

money to be moved into another account for security.

"I decided to stop the car and call-in my concerns to the council's licensing team."

The local resident, in his 80s, lived alone and had recently undergone major surgery.

Lewis added: "North Somerset Council's trading standards team

Don't get caught by doorstep criminals

Margaret* needed some landscaping work doing in her garden after falling over some tree stumps.

She received a leaflet through her door so made contact and agreed a price with the trader.

After paying, the trader failed to complete the work and now the trader and Margaret's money can't be traced.

Margaret said: "I was so incensed that I'd been taken in by a conman that I want to warn others."

Helen Heskins, principal trading standards officer at North Somerset Council, said: "Sadly, this is not an unusual event.

"The leaflet didn't give enough details to make an informed choice, nor was Margaret given the right to cancel after the trader had come to the house.

"Traders should be willing to give you their full name, business name, address and telephone number."

Before agreeing to work, check online to verify their details and see if they've had any complaints or bad reviews.

Don't pay cash and don't pay in full up front.

Instead, get advice from friends and family and ask for any

Stories from the isolated in lockdown



Retired residents beat isolation with writing group

People who are isolated may be more vulnerable to scammers and fraudsters.

If you're alone at home, you might be more likely to strike up 'friendships' with strangers online or take part in telephone lottery draws.

Lockdowns over the last two years also had a profound effect on everyone's mental health.

To combat this, North Somerset Council's scams support worker Lin Griffin provided weekly calls to retired residents during the pandemic.

Lin said: "We are aware that isolation and loneliness can put people at increased risk from scams."

Soon, the weekly chats developed into participants writing stories and poems.

These have now been collated into an anthology and copies of Stories From the Isolated in Lockdown are available from local libraries

To join the group, call Lin on 07443 983 505.

were called and the police were informed.

"I'm just grateful I was able to spot it."

Trading standards have an officer specialising in scam prevention, and a support worker to help the victim with their recovery.

recommendations of traders they have used.

Don't be in a rush as many good traders will be busy and you may need to wait for the services you want.

It's also useful to get three quotes from different providers.

To avoid doorstep salespeople, 'no cold calling' stickers are available from local libraries.

* not her real name

It might be a scam if:

- △ it seems too good to be true
- △ you're contacted unexpectedly by someone you don't know
- △ there's no postal address
- △ you've been asked to transfer money quickly
- △ you've been asked to pay in an unusual way, such as through a transfer service
- △ you've been asked to give away personal information
- △ you haven't had written confirmation of what's been agreed.

Find out more about Trading Standards in North Somerset at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/tradingstandards

Advice is available from North Somerset Citizen's Advice Bureau at www.nscab.org.uk or 0808 278 7973



Breaking new ground for se



Students and staff from Winterstoke Hundred Academy at the turf cutting ceremony

Pupils in Weston-super-Mare buried a time capsule to mark a milestone turf cutting event and the start of construction on a new school expansion.

The expansion of Winterstoke Hundred Academy, in Locking Parklands, will provide up to 900 school places in a new building constructed to some of the highest environmental standards.

Year 8 pupils, school staff and project contractors Kier were joined by pupils from local primary schools for the turf cutting event held in January.

A time capsule carrying mementos of childhood in 2022 was then buried in the freshly cut ground.

The new school building has been designed with the environment in mind, including on-site energy and recycling centres to help reduce emissions.

This will help North Somerset Council work towards its vision of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

Year 8 pupil Max said: "I'm excited and I think the idea of it being an eco-school is really cool.

"I like that it's going to have solar panels and be good for the environment."

Winterstoke Hundred Academy principal Ian Garforth said: "This is an immensely exciting time for us.

"Soon we will be in a brand new, state-of-the-art building that will meet the needs of our community now and in the future."

The expansion of the school, funded through Homes England's Housing Infrastructure Fund, is expected to be completed in 2023.

The new facilities are expected to cater for Years 7 to 11. As well as the on-site energy generation and recycling centre, there will be extra bike storage so pupils have the sustainable option of cycling to school.

Read more about the scheme at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/whae

"I'm excited and I think the idea of it being an eco-school is really cool.

"I like that it's going to have solar panels and be good for the environment."



Secondary school expansion



Hidden history of Weston bridge

Designs are being drawn-up to replace an historic 80-year-old bridge in Weston-super-Mare.

Winterstoke Road bridge has provided an important route to and from Weston-super-Mare for generations of vehicles and pedestrians

However, it is now showing signs of age and, without a safer replacement bridge in place, would likely need to be closed within the next five to 10 years.

The bridge was built during the Second World War when British aircraft production become one of the largest industries in the country, employing nearly two million people.

To help supply the RAF with planes needed to fight the Battle of Britain in 1940, Sir Winston Churchill formed the Ministry of Aircraft Production.

The Ministry worked to secure materials and create the supply lines needed to ensure enough planes were being built and deployed throughout the war.

Among the new strategic delivery routes was Winterstoke Road bridge, originally built in the 1940s to provide quicker access to the Westlands Military Aeroplane Factory where fighter planes like the Whirlwind were in production.

The bridge remained in military service until the end of the war when the Ministry of Aircraft Production was eventually dissolved.

Though the maintenance of the road was handed over to the County Council of Somerset in 1958 (and now maintained by North Somerset Council), the bridge remains owned by the Ministry of Defence.

Design and development of a new, modern bridge that will better serve our community is now under way with work expected to begin later in the year.

Read more about the plans at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/winterstokeroadbridge



Get the latest news about major projects in North Somerset at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hif





Photos courtesy of Nick Whimster Photography

Innovative food centre goes from strength to strength

An innovative centre of excellence for the food and drink industry is going from strength to strength two years after opening.

The Food Works^{SW}, in Weston-super-Mare, provides state-of-the-art facilities and specialist technical support.

Despite opening at the start of the first coronavirus lockdown, in April 2020, tenants soon started moving in.

The on-site technical team supported these businesses throughout the pandemic with advice about diversifying, scaling-up, exploring online sales and delivery.

Within the centre, product development kitchens are available for flexible, short-term hire.

Businesses of any size can use them to increase production, introduce new lines, produce short runs or pilot new products.

A smaller test kitchen is suitable for producers who currently work at home but want to start making larger batches.

There are also meeting rooms, a café and conference facilities for hosting food-related events and workshops.

The £11m centre is based within Junction 21 Enterprise Area.



Photos courtesy of Mark Atherton Photography



Taylor's of North Somerset

North Somerset resident Delyse Taylor had a dream of setting up her own business producing local and seasonal jams and preserves.

Delyse said: "I'd been making jams from family recipes for many years but lockdown and the death of my nan earlier in 2021 made me rethink my life and future goals.

"I started my business full time last September and used the development kitchen at the The Food WorksSW for three months.

"I am now working in partnership with Uncle Paul's Chilli Charity, producing and developing a full range of chilli sauces and seasonal fruit jams and preserves, so moved into their kitchen space in January."

Uncle Paul's Chilli Charity, based at Butcombe Farm, provides an environment where young people and adults who have experienced social disadvantage or barriers to employment can develop new skills, experience and qualifications.

Delyse added: "We sell through local food festivals, online, and are hoping to have some local shop stockists in the coming months.

"The Food Works^{SW} team were an amazing support for me, both using the development kitchen and then transitioning to the new one.

"Going there allowed me to realise my dreams."

www.chillicharity.org.uk



Delyse Taylor, founder of Taylor's of North Somerset



Official Royal opening for food and drink centre

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal gave The Food Works^{SW} an official opening during a visit in October.

The Princess had an escorted tour to see the facilities before unveiling a plaque.

At the unveiling she said, "I'm delighted The Food Works^{SW} is here and functioning well and people are taking advantage of it."

She met tenants and saw them demonstrate some of the specialist equipment they use to develop their products, such as gelato, salsa, kefir water, vegan cheese, deli items, brownies, chilli sauces, high protein cookies, frozen ready meals and curry dishes.

Find out more at www.foodworks-sw.co.uk

For more information about leasing one of the units, email enquiries@foodworks-sw.co.uk or call 01934 315 381.

www.foodanddrinkforum.co.uk



Cycle more this spring

Spring is the perfect time to get on your bike, whether riding to school, work or the local shops, or exploring North Somerset's beautiful countryside.

There are lots of initiatives available to encourage both children and adults to get on the saddle, even if you've never ridden before or it was a long time ago.

With the Weston to Clevedon Pier to Pier Way due to open later this year (see page 6), free bike hire and lessons are available for those keen to try it out.



Celebrating cycle progress in schools

Dozens of North Somerset schools are being recognised for their work in helping students and staff travel actively and reduce the school run carbon footprint.

The ModeShift STARS scheme accredits schools who take steps to increase active travel, whether that's fitting scooter racks, promoting walking, or offering Bikeability training.

If your child's school doesn't currently offer Bikeability sessions, get in touch with the council's active travel team to see what can be done.

Bikes available for hire

Keen to cycle more with children, friends or family members?

Strawberry Cycles in Yatton is a not-for-profit organisation which has a range of standard, electric and adapted bikes available to hire, plus trailers and even tandems.

Hire bikes and e-bikes or book a free 1-2-1 or small group cycle lesson.

Visit www.strawberrycycles.com for more information.

Free e-bike trials and more

Firms can borrow a fleet of e-bikes for free so staff can try these fantastic, zero-emission vehicles for themselves.

Other offers include:

- **free** bike or e-bike hire (a deposit is payable)
- **free** 1-2-1 bike or e-bike lessons
- **free** Dr Bike visits to businesses and organisations, to service staff bikes.



Find out more about any of these schemes by contacting Abbie on sustainable.travel@n-somerset.gov.uk or call 01934 426 629.

Visit www.betterbybike.info for free cycle lessons and free bike hire.

For workplace offers and e-bike fleet hire, visit www.travelwest.info/business



North Somerset Life

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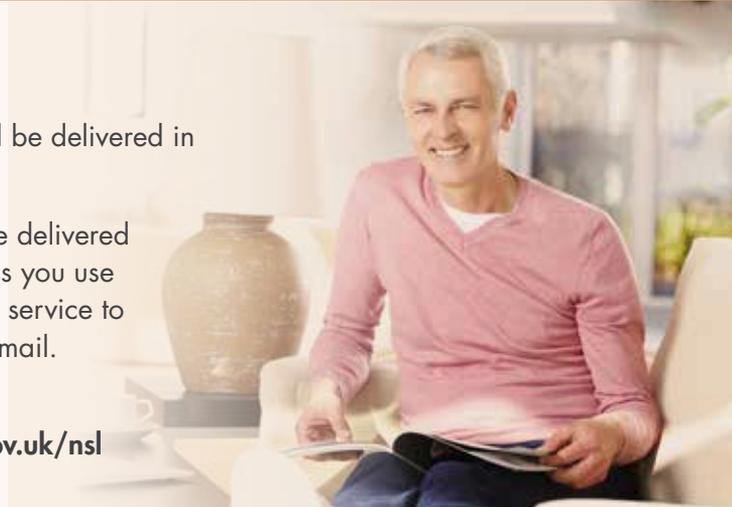
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Call us

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)



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Tide times

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



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.



Walks in the area are available to view and download at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/walks

30745 0122

Let's get the jab done



Book your vaccine today



To book your COVID-19 vaccine or find local walk-in clinics, visit www.grabajab.net or scan the QR code.