

NORTH
SOMERSET

WINTER 2019

LIFE

Prepare
for winter
weather



Revised recycling and waste collections this Christmas



Recycling and waste collection days will change slightly 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 bins out on the correct day.

If your normal collection day is:

Monday 23 December

Tuesday 24 December

Wednesday 25 December

Thursday 26 December

Friday 27 December

Monday 30 December

Tuesday 31 December

Wednesday 1 January

Thursday 2 January

Friday 3 January

Monday 6 January

Tuesday 7 January

Wednesday 8 January

Thursday 9 January

Friday 10 January

Your revised collection day will be:

as normal

as normal

Friday 27 December

Saturday 28 December

Monday 30 December

Tuesday 31 December

Thursday 2 January

Friday 3 January

Saturday 4 January

Monday 6 January

Tuesday 7 January

Wednesday 8 January

Thursday 9 January

Friday 10 January

Saturday 11 January

All collections will return to normal on Monday 13 January.

Recycling centres

North Somerset's three recycling centres in Backwell, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare are now on their winter opening hours.

All centres will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Find locations, opening hours and what to take there at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

Garden waste

Garden waste will not be collected between Monday 23 December and Friday 17 January so that extra vehicles can be used to collect excess festive recycling.

If you're signed up to the garden waste service then your real Christmas tree – up to two meters high and minus the decorations and pot – will be collected from the kerbside on your usual collection

day between Monday 20 and Friday 31 January. Christmas trees can also be taken to one of the area's three recycling centres and put into the garden waste skip.

Collecting extra recycling

Christmas is the busiest time for collection crews. Due to extra waste created, you might see a different recycling vehicle. Although the way it's collected may change, it will be recycled as normal.

Turn to page 13 to find out what to do with your recycling if severe weather hits the area.



Dear reader...

In October members of the council's executive met with town and parish councillors from across North Somerset as part of our commitment to listen to residents and to respond. At that meeting we introduced our vision for North Somerset going forward - more open, fairer and greener.

This is the basis of our Corporate Plan, how we want to run this authority over the next four years to serve you. We shall be consulting further with staff, residents, businesses and so on to make sure we understand your views as we produce the finished document.

The plan will guide how we deal with the very big issues we face - how we look after our vulnerable residents, how we realise opportunities for all, how we provide more jobs and homes,

especially affordable to rent and buy and the infrastructure to support that, plus regenerating our towns while at the same time addressing the climate emergency by doing these things sustainably.

The other challenges have not gone away either. Austerity hasn't ended as far as we can see and we shall be giving you our proposals on what we need to do to address the budget gap in December. We shall welcome your input.

May we wish all our residents a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

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.

Rewilding North Somerset

Wildlife will be flourishing across North Somerset as part of a rewilding project to create more habitats and help mitigate the effects of climate change.

North Somerset Council declared a Climate Emergency in February and in July councillors voted unanimously to adopt a rewilding programme across the area.

Since then, officers have been identifying council-owned verges, parks and open spaces as potential sites for rewilding.

This will include both tree planting and tall grass areas.

More information will be coming soon, along with the chance to comment on a consultation.



www.n-somerset.gov.uk/parks
www.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult

Turn to page 26 for more information about the climate emergency and actions being taken.



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Properties from £185,000
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SUPERMARKET

Day Trips

STRAWBERRY LINE

Cider Orchards

Allotments

Community DIY SHED

Out & About

The Mendips

* IF REQUIRED

St Monica Trust

Enjoy a full and active retirement at **Sandford Station Retirement Village** in North Somerset
www.stmonicastrust.org.uk/villages/sandford-station

To find out more or book a place on an open day call **0117 919 4262**.
 Or visit our show home open every Thursday 10am-12noon.

Registered Charity 202151

Volunteers needed for new charity shop and telephone helpline

Volunteers are needed to help run a new charity shop in Weston-super-Mare which has recently been opened by the Samaritans.

The shop, in the High Street, opposite the entrance to Grove Park, opened in the summer and sells clothes, bric-a-brac, haberdashery and vintage items.

Money raised from the shop helps fund the charity's 24-hour telephone helpline for people struggling to cope. As well as creating the shop, the Weston-super-Mare branch of Samaritans also carried out extensive renovation work to the building.

It moved its operations centre to the ground floor and created disabled access, so opening up volunteering opportunities to those with mobility issues.

Branch director Andy said: "We are delighted that we now have full wheelchair access to our building. "It means we can now welcome those with disabilities to join our team of volunteers, as well as provide a ground floor space for members of the public who would like face-to-face advice from our team."

The charity is now seeking volunteers to join its shop and listening teams.

The Weston-super-Mare and North Somerset branch of Samaritans is one of over 200 throughout the UK.

Last year volunteers at the local branch responded to 15,350 telephone calls for help, as well as answering more than 1,000 emails and 600 text messages. Calls to Samaritans are free on 116 123.



To find out more about the volunteering opportunities, email samaritansrecruitmentwsm@yahoo.com, call **07852 962 909** or pop into the shop, which is open six days a week from 10 am-4pm.



Become a Shared Lives carer and change someone's life

Could you help build confidence and independence for an adult with learning differences, dementia or mental health difficulties and develop their positive relationships?



North Somerset Council's Shared Lives scheme is looking for people who could provide long-term care, short breaks and day support to vulnerable adults within the local community.

The Shared Lives service has recently expanded and is now also working to meet the needs of older adults.

As a result, more carers are needed who could provide placements and day support to help reduce isolation and loneliness for some of the most vulnerable adults in the community.

Shared Lives is looking for people who can support others to stay active in their community and live a meaningful life, by supporting existing relationships and encouraging participation in social groups, community activities and hobbies.

Studies show that just one hour a week of social interaction can improve the quality of life for those living with dementia. Carers can provide day support that is flexible and can fit around their own lifestyle and routines.

Carers receive good rates of pay and receive extensive training and support with regular visits from a Shared Lives co-ordinator.

If you're interested in becoming a Shared Lives carer, get in touch for more information and an application form on **01275 888 368** or sharedlives@n-somerset.gov.uk



Settlement scheme for EU citizens

Are you an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen living in North Somerset?

If so, you and your family can apply for the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021.

If your application is successful, you'll get either settled or pre-settled status.

You may be able to stay in the UK without applying - for example if you're an Irish citizen or have indefinite leave to remain.

The deadline for applying will be **31 December 2020.**



Find out more about the scheme and how to apply at www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families
You can also call the Home Office helpline on 0300 123 7379 (Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm; Sat-Sun, 9.30am-4.30pm)



Applications now open for new school places

Now is the time to apply for school places if your child is due to start school next September.

If your child was born between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2016 you can now apply for a reception place for September 2020 at an infant, first or primary school.

The closing date is **11.59pm on Wednesday 15 January.**

Parents of children who are now in their last year of infant school and are due to transfer to a junior school will also need to apply by this date.



It's very important to apply by the closing date to stand a chance of being offered your preferred school.

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

Applications can be made online or on a paper form. For more information and to apply online visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/admissions

Consultation

Each year schools are required to consult on their school admissions arrangements if there are significant changes to their admissions policies or oversubscription criteria.

For schools proposing a change, the consultation for policies relating to admissions from September

Check you've got the right bank sort code for council

If you pay council tax, business rates or any other bill to North Somerset Council by standing order, online or over-the-counter then you need to check the details are correct.

The council's bank sort code was changed two years ago but up until now payments have been redirected automatically.

However, this is now stopping so you need to check and update your payment details otherwise your payment will be rejected.



If you pay by direct debit then this will have been updated automatically so you do not have to do anything.

The original bank sort code was 20 94 74.

This must be replaced with the new bank sort code – 20 95 08.

Contact your bank to check.

2021 will be available on the relevant school websites and North Somerset Council's website (for council maintained schools), for a six week period between November and January.

For Catholic schools, the consultation runs until December.

Weston chosen to host UK Pride events

A massive party will come to Weston in 2021 after the town was chosen to host the UK Pride festival.

The UK Pride Organisers Network (UKPON) chose Weston-super-Mare to host the annual event in 2021 at its annual conference in October.






The event will celebrate freedom, equality, diversity and inclusion.

The first UK Pride event was in Hull in 2017.

Weston's local Pride events will return to the Beach Lawns next summer on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 July.



The big UK Pride celebrations will then take place in Weston on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 July 2021.

-  @WSMPride
-  @UKPrideNetwork
-  westonsupermarepride

Landlords invited to free lettings event

Landlords in North Somerset are invited to a free breakfast event to find out what incentives North Somerset Council offers.



The council's lettings team is hosting the event on Wednesday 20 November at the Winter Gardens, in Weston-super-Mare.

The event will promote the council's free lettings service for landlords and provide information on financial incentives currently being offered in exchange for good quality, affordable accommodation.

The team is always looking for homes across North Somerset for families in need of housing.

It provides a comprehensive service to make the letting process as smooth as possible, with on-going support throughout.

Also attending are representatives from the local landlord accreditation scheme (NLCE), Private Rented Housing Team, Department of Work and Pensions and tenancy support.

Enhanced packages are being offered to landlords taking referrals from Weston's Night Assessment Centre. A representative will be available to discuss the support provided to sustain tenancies and ensure long term stability for clients.

The Lettings Team is offering to pay for membership of local accreditation scheme NLCE for all landlords attending the event who are not yet accredited.

The drop-in event runs from **8.30am** to noon. For more information contact the lettings team on **01934 426 484** or **lettingsteam@n-somerset.gov.uk**



Back by Popular Demand

From Channel 5's Milkshake
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LINDA LUSARDI

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WESTON-SUPER-MARE

Box Office **01934 645544** www.theplayhouse.co.uk

Parkwood Theatres

Get the **latest news** **straight into your inbox**

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

The e-newsletter is a monthly round-up of what's happening in the area, including school holiday events, consultations, offers, recycling updates, travel initiatives and more.



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



Have your say on council services



Have your say on North Somerset Council's decision-making processes to help the local authority improve its services.

Public trust in politicians and government institutions is at an all-time low nationally but there are many ways to get involved to feel more motivated, represented and engaged.

You could take part in surveys, consultations, public meetings or other focus groups to add your own voice, perspective and experience to the discussion.

Speaking at council meetings

Any resident, business ratepayer or someone entitled to vote in North Somerset can request a slot to speak at council meetings.

This might be Full Council, the Executive, the planning and regulatory committee or policy and scrutiny panels.

The length of time you can speak varies from three to five minutes depending on the meeting.

Contact democratic services to request your slot by noon the day before the meeting.

Find out more at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/speaking-at-council-meetings or contact democratic services on committee.administration@n-somerset.gov.uk or **01934 634 900**

See which meetings are coming up at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/meetings



Comment on council consultations

You can have your say on North Somerset Council's policies by taking part in consultations.

All consultations are listed at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/consult

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

If you can't get online at home, posters are put up at the beginning of every month in all North Somerset libraries and council connect points, such as the Castlewood office in Clevedon, to publicise open consultations and how to take part.



Public and legal notices covering a range of council matters can be viewed online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/notices



Get email alerts for planning applications

Email alerts can tell you when new planning applications are registered in your chosen area.

To set it up, visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/lookatplanningapplications and follow the instructions.



Plan ahead for severe winter weather




Long-term weather forecasts are hard to predict but it's worth being prepared for if severe weather returns to North Somerset this winter.

In this edition of *Life* you'll find information about keeping warm and well, getting your flu jab, salting routes, what to do with your recycling in snowy weather, and more.

Keep this issue handy throughout the coming months because you never know when you might need it.

If there is severe weather, North Somerset Council will give a round-up of information and advice about different services at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/disruption

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

 @NorthSomersetC

 NorthSomersetCouncil



Who to contact for help and advice

- Stay up-to-date with the Met Office weather warnings at www.metoffice.gov.uk or download the smartphone app.
- Get flood warnings by signing up to the Environment Agency's flood information service at www.fws.environment-agency.gov.uk
- Register to hear flood warnings through your telephone by calling Floodline on **0345 988 1188**
- If you smell gas or think carbon monoxide is leaking then call the gas emergency service on **0800 111 999**
- Report or get information about power cuts by calling 105, no matter who you buy your electricity from
- Water leaks can be reported locally to Bristol Water on **0345 702 3797**

Festive opening times for council services

If you're stocking up on library books or want to burn off those festive pounds at the gym, here's a quick round-up of opening times over Christmas. For full details of all festive opening hours of council services visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/festive



Libraries

All libraries will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, Friday 27 December and New Year's Day.

In addition, Congresbury Community Library will be closed on Saturday 28 December.

However, if you've attended a briefing session and registered for Extended Access, you can visit Worle, Portishead, Yatton or Winscombe libraries from 8am-8pm on Friday 27 December and New Year's Day.



Check your local library for any other opening hour changes at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/libraries

Leisure centres

Leisure centres will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Opening hours vary on other days at different centres. Find contact details for your local centre at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/leisurecentres

North Somerset Council

You can report or do things online at any time at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/connect or www.n-somerset.gov.uk/myaccount

Normal opening hours apply up to and including Monday 23 December:

- Main council switchboard – 01934 888 888 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri)
- Streets and open spaces enquiries – 01934 888 802 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri)
- Council tax and benefits service – 01934 888 144 (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri)
- Social services – 01275 888 801 (8am-6pm, Mon-Fri)
- Town Hall and Castlewood reception desks – 8.30am-5pm

Christmas Eve:

- All above services close at 4pm, except the social services number remains open until 6pm

Christmas Day and Boxing Day:

- All closed

Friday 27 December:

- All above services close at 4pm, except the social services number remains open 8am-6pm

Saturday 28 December:

- All above services closed all day, except the social services number, open 8am-6pm

Sunday 29 December:

- All closed

Monday 30 December:

- Normal opening hours

New Year's Eve:

- All above services close at 4pm, except the social services number remains open until 6pm

New Year's Day:

- All closed

From Thursday 2 January:

- As normal





Help your community stay safe in the snow

Volunteers across North Somerset are needed to help keep their communities safe in the event of snow this winter.

Snow wardens work across the area to keep essential paths clear so that residents in their communities can still access schools, shops, pharmacies, surgeries or other facilities in severe weather.

The scheme launched in 2013 and more than 100 volunteers have signed up so far.

Volunteer Alan single-handedly cleared snow in Nailsea town centre last year.

He said: "It is very rewarding to help clear pathways for people who are busily going about their

daily business.

"The general public are also very appreciative of the clearance work I do and often stop to chat or just give a cheery 'good morning'."

Roles include checking grit bin levels, formulating a plan of action, monitoring the weather forecast and clearing snow.

Volunteers are fully insured by North Somerset Council.



How do I become a snow warden?

Training to become a snow warden in North Somerset can now be completed in the comfort of your own home in your own time.

Learn about what's involved and what your responsibilities will be by completing the online training on the Community Resilience North Somerset website.

Once you've completed the web-based training, you'll be able to register as a snow warden and be issued with hi-vis, a snow shovel, gloves and an ID badge.

Find out more at www.communityresilience-ns.org.uk or call **01934 426 322**

Help grit your hilly street

Hilly areas across North Somerset have their own grit bins so you can salt roads and public areas yourself.

Grit bins are located near steep hills or areas that are at risk of repeated freezing, such as under trees or in shade.



The salt is for public use and it is illegal to use it on your own land. If you do, you could be prosecuted for stealing.

Use a shovel or spade to get the salt out because it is very corrosive and could damage your hands if you pick it up.

Parish and town councils pay to have the bins installed where they are needed and North Somerset Council fills them.

If you spot one that needs refilling then visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/connect or call **01934 888 802**

Recycling and waste collections in severe weather

Icy roads, hazardous driving conditions and the extra volume of recycling and waste generated over the festive period can cause collections to become disrupted.



Here's the advice to follow if severe weather hits North Somerset this winter...



Waste

Put your wheelie bin or grey council-issued bags out on your normal collection day. If it's not collected, then leave it out and crews will be back as soon as possible.



Food caddy and recycling boxes

Continue to put these out on your normal collection day. If they are not collected by 7pm, take them back in and put them out again the following week on your normal day.



Garden waste

Put your garden waste bins out on your usual collection day. If they are not taken, take them back in and put them out again the following month on your scheduled day. There will be no garden waste collections between Monday 23 December and Friday 17 January.



How you can help

- ✓ Put your bins and containers out by 7am on your usual day. Check www.n-somerset.gov.uk/calendars
- ✓ If collections are missed from a whole street, you don't need to report it as it will already be logged
- ✓ Sorting materials in your recycling box helps crews collect quickly and more efficiently. If your boxes are full please separate each material into loosely-tied carrier bags and place next to your containers (except for glass).
- ✓ Any glass bottles and jars must be put in the recycling box to help reduce the likelihood of crews being injured by unseen glass.
- ✓ Remove packaging from inside large cardboard boxes and flatten the boxes down to the length of your recycling box for collection.
- ✓ Extra general waste that doesn't fit in your black bin will not be collected and should be taken to a recycling centre or stored until your next collection.
- ✓ Check the council's website, Facebook and Twitter accounts for updates
- ✓ Help neighbours who may have difficulties.

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/recycling



A hot meal with a friendly visit



Some of the community meals team based in Weston

Hot meals are delivered daily to vulnerable people across North Somerset and the team is now getting prepared for the critical winter season.

Community meals are delivered to people who are too frail or ill to cook for themselves. They can also be delivered for short periods, to help recover from an illness or if returning home from hospital. Drivers also provide a valuable welfare check at the same time. They might help with cutting up food, checking the person is comfortable, or calling for help if there is a problem.

To cope over winter, a new route has been added into the rounds to support the Clevedon, Nailsea and Mendip areas.

Delivery drivers have also had their annual flu jabs.

One recipient of community meals said: "I look forward

to my driver Kate coming with my hot meal and pudding.

"I know that she will pick my mail up on the way through and, as my eyesight is not good these days, she tells me what I am going to be eating.

"We have a little natter while she is busy plating my meal. It's one of the highlights of my day."

Another regular customer said: "I have had meals for years, they employ such lovely people.



Testing the food temperature

"Recently I needed my carers to come earlier because I was in a predicament and they sorted it for me."

Small eco-friendly electric cars are used to deliver the food.

Weekend deliveries are subject to criteria and for the most vulnerable.

Do you drive a 4x4?

Community-minded drivers of 4x4s are needed to help deliver meals on wheels when severe weather strikes.

The service relies on volunteers with 4x4s during snowfall or adverse icy conditions to help reach the most vulnerable people and ensure they get their food for the day.

If you have a 4x4 and could help out during severe weather or at weekends, then get in touch with the team.



Community meals cost £5.50 for a hot meal and pudding. An additional cold teatime meal costs £3.40. There is no charge if a meal is cancelled in advance before 9.30am.

If a meal is ordered before 9.30am, it can be delivered that day.

Call **01275 882 155** or email **commmeals@n-somerset.gov.uk**

Keep flu at bay and stay healthy this winter

Nobody likes getting ill but it can be a bigger worry if you're older or live with long-term health conditions.

If you do feel unwell this winter there are teams of experts on-hand across North Somerset to help you get better.

Follow these simple steps to get the right care at the right time – and help reduce pressure on busy NHS services.



- Adults who aren't eligible for a free flu jab can get one for about £10 at their local pharmacy.

Be prepared

- Stock up on medicines before the Christmas holidays start as many GPs and pharmacies close over the festive period. Request and pick up repeat prescriptions in good time

Stop the spread

- Good hand washing can help stop the spread of flu and other illnesses including norovirus. Alcohol hand gels don't kill norovirus so be sure to use soap and hot water
- Norovirus is very unpleasant and highly contagious. It can be very serious if it spreads in hospitals or care homes
- If you're ill, treat it at home and do not visit healthcare facilities until you've been symptom-free for two days
- Follow #NoNoro4Xmas on social media for tips to keep healthy.



Fight the flu

- Flu can be very serious, especially for older people or those who may be more prone to serious illness
- You can still pass on the virus even if you don't have symptoms so the only way to protect yourself and loved ones is to have the flu jab
- Some people are eligible for a free flu vaccination from the NHS, including anyone with long-term health conditions, people aged 65 and over, children and pregnant women, carers and health and social care workers. All primary school children will get their free vaccination at school

**HELP US
HELP YOU**

STAY WELL THIS WINTER

Call 111 for non-emergencies

- Call the free NHS helpline 111 if you need medical help quickly but it's not an emergency
- Fully-trained advisers are on-hand 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week to advise you on which health service you need and how to access it, such as the minor injuries unit in Clevedon or out-of-hours GP services.



Make the pharmacy the first port of call



- Visit your local pharmacist at the first sign of a winter illness to help prevent it getting worse
- Pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals who can offer clinical advice and over-the counter medicines to manage a range of minor concerns, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy troubles and more.



Stay active and warm this winter

Cycling, walking or jogging can still be enjoyed during the winter months if you are prepared for whatever the weather may bring.

Keeping active can be tricky as the nights draw in but if you layer up and prepare well you can continue to enjoy the great outdoors.

Here's how....

Wrap up warm

Wearing warm, breathable layers means you can adjust your clothing and stay comfortable as you warm up.

Check the weather before heading out, wear a good windproof, waterproof jacket and suitable footwear.

Waterproof boot covers could also come in handy if cycling.



Make yourself visible

Wearing dark colours makes it very hard for drivers to see pedestrians and cyclists in the dark.

The low winter sun can also reduce driver visibility during the day.

Wear light-coloured or fluorescent clothing to increase your visibility during the day and wear something reflective after dark.

It is a legal requirement to have a white front light, red rear light, a red rear reflector and amber pedal reflectors when cycling. White front reflectors will also help you to be seen.

Check your bike

Consider swapping your tyres for wider ones with better grip and make sure your brakes are maintained.

Mud guards are essential to stop spray from the road. A waterproof saddle cover is also a good idea.

Clean your bike and oil the chain regularly to keep it running smoothly.

Be more cautious with your speed as wet weather increases your braking distances.

NStravelandroads
 NStravel_roads

Travel roadshow on its way

Get advice about walking and cycling through the winter at a Travelwest Roadshow visiting North Somerset this month.

The team will be giving advice and handing out free accessories to help keep you active during winter.

Dr Bike mechanics will also be there to do safety checks, quick fixes and maintenance recommendations.

Visit these train stations in November, from 4-7pm each day:

- Monday 11 – Nailsea
- Tuesday 12 – Yatton
- Wednesday 13 – Worle

A morning roadshow without Dr Bike will take place in Weston-super-Mare, from 8-10am on Thursday 14.



Could you host a travel roadshow?

Businesses in North Somerset could host their own travel roadshow to encourage their staff to cycle, walk and stay active throughout winter.

Events could include a prize draw, goodie bags, active travel breakfasts and more.

Contact Ruby Tobin on ruby.tobin@n-somerset.gov.uk or 07919 546 401



Get updates about road disruption

Snow and ice can cause major disruption to the road network but real-time updates could help you plan your journey before you step outside.

Anyone who relies on public transport to get to work or school could find themselves stuck if the roads are covered in snow.

North Somerset Council's integrated transport unit works behind-the-scenes to collate the latest information.

Alice Griffin, from the team,

said: "When snow is forecast, we'll prepare to communicate any disruption to local people.

"We monitor bus operators' social media feeds or call operators, if necessary, and share any updates through our own social media feeds.




"We can also display messages on our electronic real-time information screens at bus stops.

"If snow arrives overnight, we'll aim to get the first update out at about 7am."



Latest updates

Follow the council's dedicated travel and roads accounts on social media to get the latest information.

-  @NStravel_roads
-  nstravelandroads
-  NSpublictransport



For a round-up of all council services during adverse weather visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/disruption

Public transport

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

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

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.

Getting to and from school

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



The decision will be made at the earliest opportunity to give enough notice to parents and carers.

Check your school or college's website for open or closed 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.



True grit



Gritters usually go out in the early morning or after rush hour as they need to keep moving to spread the salt properly. The weight of the traffic then helps break up the salt and make it more effective.



40 per cent of the council's road network is treated.



Salt is used instead of grit because it has de-icing properties – grit is only effective as an abrasive to break down ice and snow.



Six gritter lorries are on round-the-clock standby throughout winter to salt main routes.



Officers receive weather forecasts from Metdesk and use this data to decide if and when to treat roads. The decision is based on road temperature not air temperature, as these can be quite different. Crews can be called out with two hours' notice.



Highways staff are on duty 24-hours-a-day to monitor weather conditions.



The council's salt barn holds 2,000 tonnes of salt.



The council's Facebook and Twitter accounts will be updated with news of when the gritters are out and about.



Each gritter now uses sophisticated software to control how much salt is dispersed, where, and how widely. This means the driver can concentrate on just driving, so makes it safer.



A dedicated team of council officers work around the clock to keep North Somerset's major routes passable in most conditions.

The team is made up of highway engineers who work on schemes all year to help improve the condition of the area's roads.

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

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 your route and help plan your journey.

Six gritters operate in North Somerset and can work round-the-clock when temperatures drop.

The fleet was named following a public vote last year and includes Burrington, Bleadon-cold, Nailski, Portispread, Weston-scooper-Mare and Sleetholm.

Each gritter tends to operate in its named area where possible - so look out for your local one.

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

Follow social media feeds for updates:

@NStravel_roads

nstravelandroads





Keeping you moving whatever the weather

Winter weather can vary from beautiful cool, crisp, dry days to torrential rain, high winds and freezing temperatures.

North Somerset Council's highways team wants to keep you moving and safe, no matter what the weather throws at you.

Preparations are made well in advance and the team starts getting ready for winter while the sun is still shining in August.

A spray injection patcher is used for six weeks to seal roads and fix potholes before temperatures start to drop, which increases the risk of surface cracking and frost damage.

Salt levels are also topped up during the summer when prices are cheaper.

Gritters are taken out in September for test runs and to make sure everything is in working order.

The council's gully officer checks possible flooding hot-spots and makes sure the drains in those areas are clear.

Any forecasts for extreme downpours will also kick off a series of extra inspections to reduce the likelihood of flooding.

Rain is not the only potential cause of flooding in North Somerset though - the coastline also brings risk from the tides.

Teams monitor the forecasts and deploy the defences if seawater levels and winds put towns at a high risk of flooding.



The winds can also bring other issues too.

Area officers carry equipment to clear any debris that is blown onto roads and pavements.

They are linked up to the emergency services to respond to any other issues that are caused by poor weather.



The council's emergency team is on call 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week to look after all of North Somerset.

The team includes winter specialists who have specific training to deal with snow and ice.

They monitor weather forecasts and direct services to help reduce the impact when wind, rain, snow and ice does hit.

Duties include deploying temporary flood defences, sending out gritters or snow ploughs, checking and clearing drains, responding to emergencies and closing roads, footpaths and cycleways.

Extra people are also drafted in to help during times of extreme weather, such as prolonged snow or hurricane conditions.



The impact of weather cannot always be totally avoided, though.

Officers use a 'fix it, protect it, or close it' approach. If they can they will solve the problem there and then, from filling a pothole to chlearing blockages.

If they cannot solve the issue but it is safe for travellers to move through the area - such as if there is flooding - then they will put out signs or temporary traffic lights to direct traffic past the problem.

If it is not safe, such as if powerlines have come down or a tree has fallen, then the route will be closed.

All this behind-the-scenes work is done to help the roads stay clear and so you can stick to your travel plans.



Funding boost to tackle homelessness



Homelessness is being tackled in North Somerset thanks to £50,000 of funding for local organisations.

The group of organisations are working together to co-ordinate action to reduce rough sleeping in the area under the new name of Street 2 Settled. The agencies include North Somerset Council, Weston Town Council, the YMCA, Somewhere to Go, local charities, health professionals and the police.



Emma Simmonds, from North Somerset Council's homeless prevention team, said: "All members of the partnership believe that everyone should have a safe and suitable home to sleep in and no-one should have to sleep rough."

North Somerset Council has been successful in bidding for money from the Government's Rapid Rehousing Pathway and Rough Sleeper Initiative Funds. Thanks to this £50,000 funding, the daytime hub for homeless people at Somewhere to Go, in the Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare, has extended its hours to open five days a week.

This gives rough sleepers more opportunities to engage with services and access help.

Chris Charnley is a regular volunteer. He said: "I find it a great opportunity to meet and help others who were really disadvantaged and to be part of their journey."

The night-time provision is also going from strength to strength.

The night assessment centre, also based at Somewhere to Go, is a referral-only centre for a maximum of 12 people a night. Visitors can access various services to help with accommodation and support they need.

The funding has also been used to expand the outreach team at the YMCA to help with assessment, prevention, coordination and tenancy support.

www.somewheretogo.org.uk  [WestonNightAssessmentCentre](#)



What to do if you spot a rough sleeper

Contact the national rough sleeping helpline StreetLink if you're concerned about a rough sleeper.

Give the specific location of the person, the time and any other information to help identify them.

Details are passed onto the local council or outreach services so they can find the person and offer support.

StreetLink: **0300 500 0914**
www.streetlink.org.uk



Appeal for landlords

Are you a landlord who would consider letting a property to one of the many households the council helps each year?

Contact the lettings team on **01934 426 483** or lettingsteam@n-somerset.gov.uk to discuss incentives and support.



Christmas countdown is on

The Christmas countdown has begun so now is the time to succumb to the festive feeling.

Here are some highlights of events happening over the next couple of months...



Tap into the Grid

Now until Sunday 5 January

Icescape @ The Tropicana

Get your skates on for another season of skating at this huge indoor rink.

Enjoy skating under the fairy lights, Santa's grotto, rides, festive food and drink.



www.icescape-tropicana.co.uk

Friday 8 November

Weston Illuminated Carnival

See the light, music and colour of Weston-super-Mare's spectacular illuminated carnival in its 50th anniversary year.

Floats, marching bands, fancy dress walkers and entertainers will wow the crowds.

The procession leaves Locking Road car park at 7.15pm.

www.northsomersetcarnival.co.uk

Tuesday 12 November

Dance Dynamic

Dynamic dancing will be coming to Weston-super-Mare this month.

Tap into the Grid, by the Tentacle Tribe Dance Company, takes place at the Blakehay Theatre, in Wadham Street.

For full details and booking visit www.theatreorchard.org.uk/weston

Saturday 14 December (Portishead) and Sunday 15 December (Weston-super-Mare)

eat:Christmas

Get your taste buds tingling and pick up a unique gift from a local producer at these festive - themed food and drink festivals.

www.eatfestivals.org



Christmas switch-on events

Towns and villages will soon be switching on their Christmas lights.

Enjoy music, stalls and entertainment at these events:

- Saturday 23 November – **Weston-super-Mare**
- Monday 25 November – **Portishead**
- Saturday 30 November – **Clevedon**
- Friday 29 November – **Nailsea**

Weekly clubs and classes

Hundreds of clubs, art groups, dance classes, music groups and more run every week in North Somerset.

Visit www.northsomersetlife.co.uk/local-events for the full list.

Photo credit: Gary Clark



Discovering the delights of Clevedon

Picturesque towns and villages are found throughout North Somerset - from small hamlets nestling in the natural environment to vibrant coastal communities. This month, *Life* takes a look at Clevedon....

Historic charm with a modern twist

Discover the historic charm of Clevedon and sample its modern-day allure of food, art, culture, entertainment and shopping.

The Victorian seaside town, with its Grade II listed pier and ornamental gardens, is enjoying a new lease of life as a place for great shopping, ethical buys, theatre and cultural treats.

Visit www.discoverclevedon.co.uk to find out what's on and ideas about what to do.

The website is funded by Clevedon Business Improvement District, a partnership of 250 local businesses formed to promote and enhance Clevedon in the face of the growing threat of the internet to traditional town centres.

Along with the website, there are plans to improve signage around the town to help people get around, and more murals, flowers and posters installed in empty shops to make the shopping streets more attractive.

New independent shops include Lolly and Moo, selling vegan fragrance and bath products, and Store For The Curious, selling eclectic gifts, furniture and homewares.

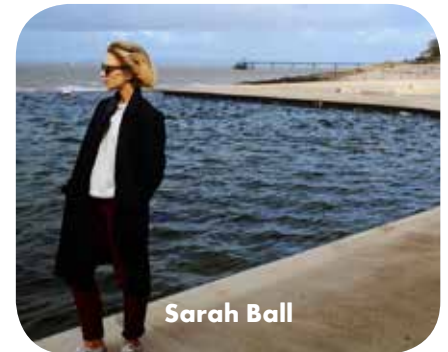
For food and drink, the Market Hall Café is a traditional café in the Grade II listed market hall, while Glede Brewing Company has opened a tap room with tours of the micro-brewery every Saturday.

Ethical and minimal waste shop A Better Weigh, in Old Street, is also proving popular with its eco-friendly credentials.



Photo credit: Gary Clark

Sarah Ball moved to Clevedon two years ago and now works as the social media and content manager for the Discover Clevedon website.



Sarah Ball

She said: "Clevedon is the kind of place where there really is something for everyone.

"Independent shopping from the seafront to the town centre has seen a flourish of new faces and bright business ideas over the past few years.

"The Theatre Shop is another great example of a creative collective which adds to the cultural buzz.

"Having been here for a few years now, I can really see Clevedon becoming a destination for weekend day trips.

"Unlike your usual seaside town, Clevedon has something unique and quite special to experience."

Aardman joins cinema tile fundraiser

Bristol-based animators Aardman have got behind a fundraising scheme to help save Clevedon's historic cinema.

The Curzon, in Old Church Road, has launched its Art on the Tiles fundraising auction to raise money for its roof restoration appeal.

Fifty tiles, made in a local brickwork in the 1920s, will be sold online in a week-long auction ending on Sunday 8 December.

Nick Park will paint Wallace and Gromit onto one of the old roof tiles, while Peter Lord will create a Morph tile.

They will be joined by Peter's co-founder David Sproxton and more Aardman directors and designers.

Other highly-regarded artists, illustrators and celebrities will also paint, sculpt, draw or doodle on the antique tiles which have been tiles lifted off the cinema's huge roof.

The money raised will go towards the roof restoration appeal, which will see 12,833 new tiles fitted.



Aardman creative director Merlin Crossingham

The restoration is expected to cost £600,000. In September, the cinema secured almost £240,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a community campaign to raise £100,000 has already reached £60,000.

Find out more at www.curzon.org.uk



Top website links

www.discoverclevedon.co.uk/thing-to-do

www.discoverclevedon.co.uk/blog/a-cultural-tour-of-clevedon

www.discoverclevedon.co.uk/blog/a-family-day-trip-to-clevedon

www.facesofclevedon.com

www.theatreshop.org.uk

www.clevedonpier.co.uk

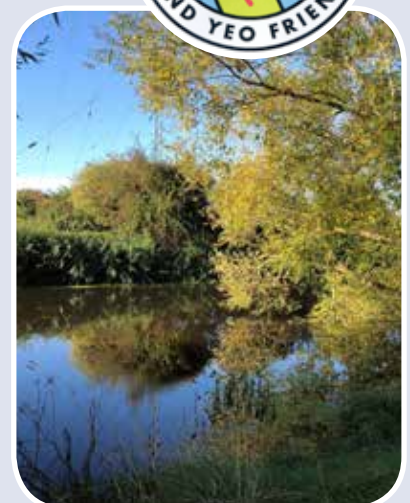
Enjoy a picturesque riverside stroll

Take a tranquil riverside walk along the newly opened Two Rivers Walk in Clevedon.

The walk comes courtesy of Land Yeo Friends, a volunteer group which helps look after the Land Yeo River.

It is a 3.25-mile route from Kenn Road bridge towards Clevedon Pill, and onto Queens Square.

Find it online at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/walks





Action on climate crisis

Millions of people across the globe took to the streets in September to raise awareness about the devastating impacts of climate change.

The Global Climate Strikes saw people protest during two days of action to push for solutions to the climate emergency.

Locally, North Somerset Council declared a climate emergency in February and since then officers have been developing an action plan to ensure steps are being taken.

During the first Climate Strike Day, the council hosted seminars for staff and town and parish councils, including understanding our carbon emissions, building low carbon buildings and more.

Here is round-up of North Somerset Council's latest actions and commitments...

Planning for growth

- More than £10m has been secured from Homes England to build precision manufactured homes in Nailsea and Weston-super-Mare. These will be inherently energy efficient and use a manufacturing and assembly process that has low carbon emissions and saves on building waste.

- A new policy will be introduced to require developers to make new buildings more environmentally sustainable, and the council will lobby government to reverse decisions that have hampered it applying sustainability planning policy to new developments.

Improving energy efficiency

- About 18,500 street lights across North Somerset are being upgraded to energy-efficient LEDs, to reduce carbon emissions and deliver financial savings.
- Activities to educate and promote energy efficiency are being delivered to help residents alleviate fuel poverty, such as winter fuel payments and the warm homes discount scheme.

Transport

- Funding has been secured for several cross-regional public transport programmes, including Metrobus and MetroWest. MetroWest, which includes reopening Portishead rail branch line, will help take thousands of cars off the road every year.

- Cycle infrastructure continues to expand to make commuting and leisure rides more attractive, such as Brean Down Way connecting Weston-super-Mare to Brean Down.
- A Rapid Charging Hub for 10 electric vehicles will be built in Portishead, and almost 50 per cent of the council's fleet vehicles will soon be electric.
- Businesses, community organisations and schools continue to encourage sustainable transport, through schemes such as business grants and bike loans.

Green infrastructure

- Green spaces in North Somerset continue to be safeguarded, improved and enhanced. New contracts for ground and tree maintenance will take advantage of re-wilding opportunities where possible, restoring wild nature.
- The council passed a motion to support rewilding and is devising a strategy for some of its own land and forestry.

- 400 new trees (called Standards) will be planted across North Somerset thanks to new funding from DEFRA.
- Thousands of new trees (called Whips) will be planted over the next few years to increase biodiversity and lock up carbon.



Recycling and waste

- A recycling rate of 57.1 per cent was achieved in North Somerset in 2018/19, ranking it 26th out of 345 local authorities. The total amount of household residual waste also declined between 2017/18 and 2018/19, despite an increase in houses. An average household now produces about 430kg residual waste a year, a 17kg reduction on the year before.
- An ambitious target of zero tonnes of landfill waste has been agreed. This will be achieved by increasing energy produced from waste, plus greater recycling. Support also continues for community projects such as the Repair Café.



What can I do to help?

The world cannot meet its climate change target without individuals changing too.

- ✓ **Re-think your shopping habits**
Think before you shop. Eat more locally-sourced food, in season. Buy less meat, milk, cheese and butter. Avoid single-use plastics and buy things with less packaging. For big items, consider buying second-hand or borrowing.

- ✓ **Reuse and repair**
Think before throwing away. Is it still useful? Could it be repaired or reused? Sell unwanted items or donate to charity or reuse organisations.

- ✓ **Recycle**
Recycle as much as possible in your recycling boxes, garden waste bin and food waste bin.



- ✓ **Renewable energy**
Buy energy from 100 per cent renewable sources to reduce the need for fossil fuels.

Calculate your current carbon footprint on the World Wildlife Fund's website. Visit www.wwf.org.uk/footprint

Why is it a climate emergency?

Last year the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the world had 12 years to reduce its carbon output by 45 per cent to avoid a climate catastrophe.

Most countries around the world had adopted the Paris Agreement in 2015 to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

However, the IPCC report said we were heading towards a 3°C rise instead, leading to catastrophic consequences.

A further report published in September highlighted the impact on the seas – that they are getting warmer and more acidic as a result of climate change.

This warming could potentially melt permafrost, which would release even more carbon into the atmosphere.



North Somerset's low carbon action plan will be discussed by councillors in November. Read it at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/climatechange



Catering for children with complex needs

Proposals have been put forward to extend a special school in North Somerset to cater for the increasing number of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

If successful, North Somerset Council's plans will see Baytree Special School, in Weston-super-Mare, expand from 72 to 120 places.

This expansion can only happen if the school moves onto a second site. This is currently proposed to be in Clevedon.

Life found out what this means for local families....



Edith

Five-year-old Edith is a Year 1 pupil at Baytree School.

She can't speak and instead communicates through facial expressions, noises and body language. Complex health needs mean she uses a wheelchair and needs adult support for all day-to-day tasks.

Edith and her family live in Pill so she travels the 15 miles to Baytree on a minibus with four other young people with complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

To get to school on time, Edith must be up by 6.15am so her parents can carry out all her personal care and she has her breakfast through a feeding tube.

The long journey means she can often arrive at school tired and frustrated. She also can't communicate if she feels unwell or needs the toilet en route. A new school site in Clevedon would mean a shorter journey, less stress, and she would arrive at school happy, more comfortable and ready to learn.

Edith's mum said: "It's hard to put into words what this new school location would mean for us as a family.

"Journey times have been incredibly tough for her so this new site means we could take that extra bit of time, knowing that school is not too far away.

"It will create an environment where Edith can be the very best she can be, with all the best people supporting her.

"I can only dream of what the children would be able to accomplish when given a purpose-built site for those with the most complex of needs."



Increase in demand

North Somerset Council carries out Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) to identify what extra support is needed for a child with additional needs.

There has been an 80 per cent increase in new EHCP assessments in the last four years - from 140 a year in 2015 to 252 in 2018.

Despite this rise, in 2018 North Somerset Council completed



93 per cent of new EHCPs within the statutory 20-week time frame.

The total number of children with an EHCP in place rose from 534 in January 2015 to 900 in January 2019 – a 69 per cent increase.

North Somerset Council expects this number to keep increasing.

Also, more North Somerset children have to go to special schools outside the local authority area because they can't be catered for locally.

Success at special schools

Two other special schools in North Somerset are helping their pupils to flourish.

Tracy Page's daughter Ava now attends Westhaven Special School, in Weston-super-Mare, after falling behind in a mainstream primary.

Tracy said: "The signs were there from day one that her academic abilities were behind compared with her peers.

"We had meetings every term with the SEN co-ordinator but school reports year after year stated she was behind in all areas.

This can be quite upsetting as a parent, let alone a child."

Eventually a special school was suggested and, after getting an EHCP approved, Ava was offered a place at Westhaven.

Tracy added: "Our daughter's confidence has grown, she is happy going to school, and can see she is capable of achieving great things."

One parent with a child at Ravenswood Special School, in Nailsea, also said: "As a whole, the school offers complete support. Everything a child needs to grow, learn and develop confidently."



A planning application about the expansion of Baytree School is due to be submitted shortly. Once submitted, people will be able to comment on it and share their views about using land at Brookfield Walk. Find out more at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/baytreeschoolexpansion



Celebrating special life achievements within fostering far

Fostering can create long-term family ties and it can be hugely rewarding to see young people grow up and flourish in their lives.

It takes considerable time, love, care and commitment to foster but is so worthwhile because it can change so many lives for the better.

Life spoke to two North Somerset foster families who have recently celebrated some big life achievements with their current and former foster children...



Wedding bells ringing

Celebrations took place this summer when long-term foster carers Bonnie and Dave Chadwick saw one of their former foster children walk down the aisle.

Bonnie and Dave have fostered for more than 20 years and began caring for Billy when he was seven years old.

Now 26, Billy married Ellie this summer and it was an emotional occasion for them all.

Bonnie said: "We have never been so proud as when we heard Billy's speech.

"We were not expecting his lovely words and will never forget such a wonderful and happy day."

Bonnie and Dave were determined to encourage Billy to meet his full potential when he first joined their home.

He grew up with a keen interest in sport and played badminton for the county, along with playing and

refereeing football, playing cricket and working in a local leisure centre.

He also did well at school and went on to get a degree in sports development and coaching.

Billy said: "Maybe I was just lucky and lived with really good carers but it was never a job for them.

"They cared about what I did, got me involved in things, were there for me and always celebrated my achievements.

"They took an interest in everything I was doing and took the time to give me feedback. All the things a parent would do."

Bonnie added: "We came to fostering to help children and it has changed our lives.

"You can't change a child's past but you can make a difference to their future."



Billy with his former foster carers Bonnie and Dave Chadwick

Celebrating exam success

Brothers David and Adam Oputu Dawood have been in foster care since coming to the UK from Gambia nine years ago.

This summer, 16-year-old David did extremely well in his GCSE exams and said that living with his foster carer had changed his life.

Former Broadoak Academy student David was interviewed by BBC Points West on results day and said: "It's hard to change but as long as you try and work your best, there is nothing that can stop you.

"You just need to get through things and put your head down, then anything is possible."

Kathleen McGillycuddy, principal of Broadoak Academy, said: "David is an absolute symbol of what's possible when a young person takes full responsibility for what they want and where they want to be.

"David is kind and hardworking and has not let any disadvantage hold him back."

It can be a challenge to find foster carers to take siblings but the brothers have lived with foster carer Sheridan Barmaki for the past six years.

Sheridan said: "David and Adam are very lovable and, although they've had difficult times, they have lovely characters with good values.

"We are a normal family. We have our ups and downs but are secure enough to disagree and then move things forward.



Brothers David and Adam Oputu Dawood with their foster carer Sheridan Barmaki

"No matter what, there is a special bond that keeps us together."

Adam, aged 17, who hopes to become an electrician, summed up by saying: "We feel like a family."

Could you foster?

There are many types of fostering depending on your personal circumstances.

You could care for a child for just a few days, offering respite care, or provide a long or short-term home. There is also a supported lodgings scheme for older young people, which might suit carers who work.

The nature of fostering means that placements might end in different ways – some children return home, some go to extended family, some are adopted, while others go to long-term foster carers.



Carers are needed from a wide range of backgrounds to reflect all children in the council's care.

You need to have a spare bedroom, be over 21 and have some experience of caring or working with children.

You also need the time, energy, patience and understanding to meet the needs of the child.

Get in touch

If you're interested in fostering now or in the future, then North Somerset's fostering team would love to hear from you. Call **01275 888 999** for more information.

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/fostering

 @fosteringnorthsomerset  fosteringNS



Show home opening
January 2020



Typical show home



Strawberry Gardens show home opening soon!

Available for viewing
from January 2020

Prices
from £57,500
(25% purchase)
to £185,625
(75% purchase)*

A stylish Extra Care court for people over the age of 55, Strawberry Gardens has two bedroom apartments available for rent* and shared ownership*. Pets are more than welcome too!

A dedicated Housing Manager is available during the week and there is a care team on-site 24/7 to respond to emergencies and provide optional, tailored care and support packages.

There is an impressive range of fully accessible communal facilities for residents and their visitors to enjoy.

*Eligibility criteria and charges apply

To book your viewing call **0345 608 4021**, Monday - Friday,
9am - 5pm, or email **sales@housing21.org.uk**

Strawberry Gardens | 18 Moorhen Road | Yatton | Bristol BS49 4GB

Promoting equality, diversity and culture



Equality, diversity and culture is promoted through an organisation which helps people from across the world who have made their home in North Somerset.

North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Network offers information, support and signposting to people who need help with benefits, housing, health, immigration or other issues.

The centre acts as a hub of resources and information as well as a drop-in space for a cuppa and a chat.

It offers a safe space for women to meet up, offers free English classes, and a Wellbeing Café for people to meet others and learn about different services.

Patty Pereira Taylor, from Guatemala, said the BME Network helped improve her confidence.

She said: "I relocated to England after leaving my job in Canada as a chemical engineer.

"I felt culturally very isolated but North Somerset BME Network helped me regain my confidence.

"I was not familiar with the vocabulary since Spanish is my first language and I learned American English from the age of five in Guatemala.

"I attended skills for life and made friendships with people from Venezuela, Lebanon, Mauritius, India, China, Japan, Jamaica, Greece and all over the world.

"I felt welcomed and accepted. I was amazed to learn we have more than 65 languages spoken in North Somerset."

Patty now has a career in sales and has become a volunteer at the BME Network.

She added: "We are lucky in North Somerset to have an organisation like the BME Network that supports isolated residents.

"We are always looking for business and individuals to help us grow stronger and stronger."

The North Somerset BME Network is run by volunteers and more are welcome to help with admin or managerial work.



North Somerset BME Network is based at the Centre of Diversity and Culture, in Orchard Place, Weston-super-Mare.

For more information phone **01934 414 455**, text **07971 443 574** or email office@ns-bmenetwork.org

 [ns.bmenetwork](https://www.facebook.com/ns.bmenetwork)



Balancing the books

Funding for local authorities remains uncertain and so balancing the budget books is still a tricky matter.

Chancellor Sajid Javid found some more money for public services during the spending review in September.

However, the Institute for Fiscal Studies said that if health is excluded, this additional spending is only enough to reverse about a quarter of the cuts since austerity was introduced in 2010.

The spending review was only set for one year so North Somerset Council expects to receive no direct funding from central government from 2021.

At the same time there is an increasing demand for services, particularly adult and children’s social care.

Some short-term funding for adult care has been made available – through specific grants and the

council tax levy – but the number of vulnerable people needing support and the complexity of their needs continues to exceed available resources.

In response, North Somerset Council is improving its financial self-reliance by focussing on locally-generated resources, such as income generation.

The council also needs to keep delivering savings to ensure services can be funded and meet the ongoing challenges.

Despite these pressures, North Somerset Council has maintained most frontline services.



Statement of accounts

The statement of accounts is published annually to give local residents information about the council’s income and expenditure for the previous financial year.

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.

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

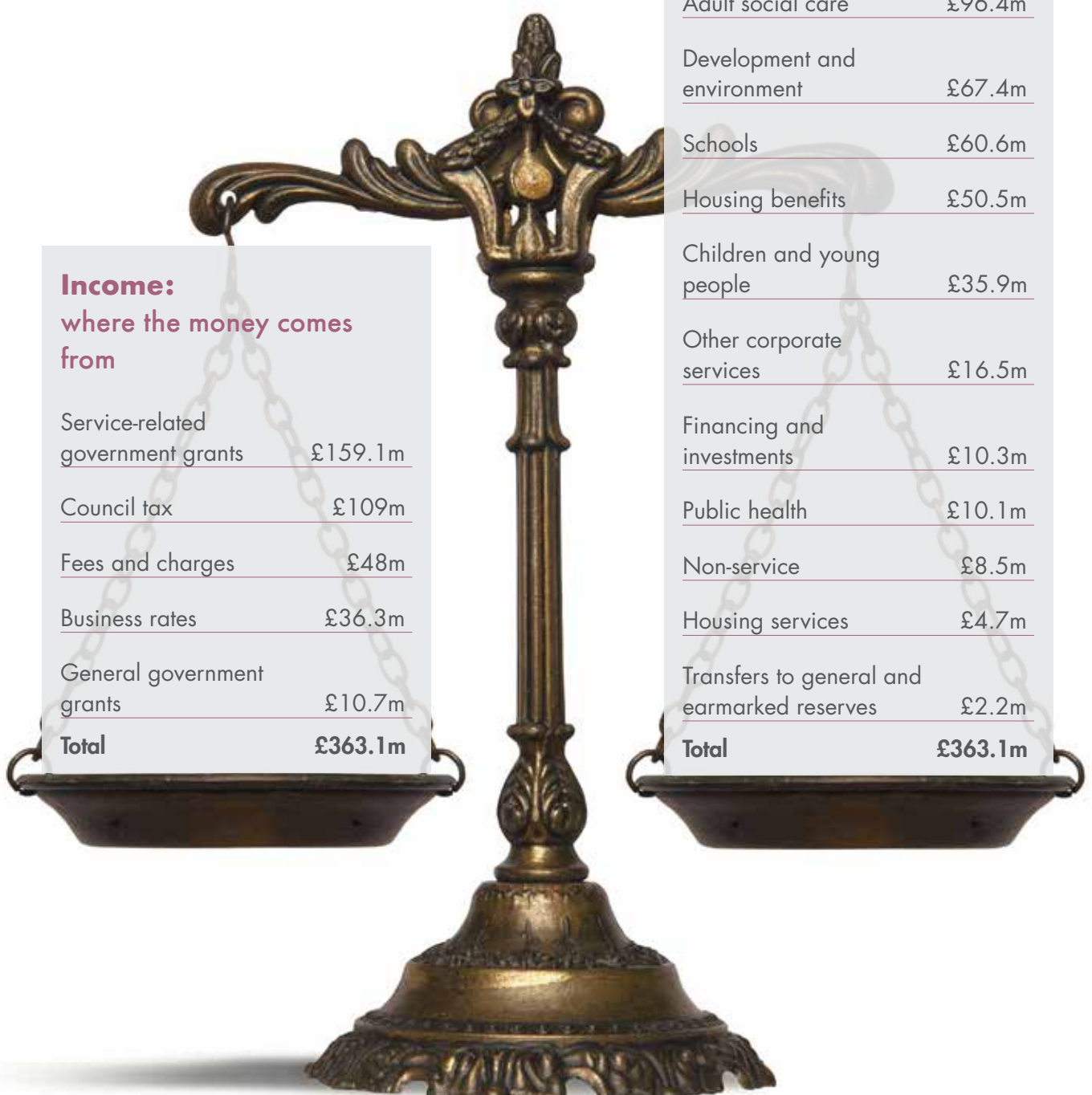


Income and outgoings

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 2018/19, this added up to...



Income:
where the money comes from

Service-related government grants	£159.1m
Council tax	£109m
Fees and charges	£48m
Business rates	£36.3m
General government grants	£10.7m
Total	£363.1m

Expenditure:
what it's spent on...

Adult social care	£96.4m
Development and environment	£67.4m
Schools	£60.6m
Housing benefits	£50.5m
Children and young people	£35.9m
Other corporate services	£16.5m
Financing and investments	£10.3m
Public health	£10.1m
Non-service	£8.5m
Housing services	£4.7m
Transfers to general and earmarked reserves	£2.2m
Total	£363.1m



Capital investments

Commercial property investments are providing an annual return and supporting North Somerset Council's revenue budgets – and so protecting frontline services.

The council made another significant investment last August when it acquired the lease of the Sovereign Centre, in Weston-super-Mare,

The previous year it acquired the North Worle District Centre in Weston-super-Mare - the commercial site which includes a Sainsbury's supermarket, TK Maxx store, five other retail units, a pub and a 504-space car park.

These purchases fit within the council's vision for local growth and regeneration.

The council also spends capital money on improving its assets and the infrastructure across North Somerset.

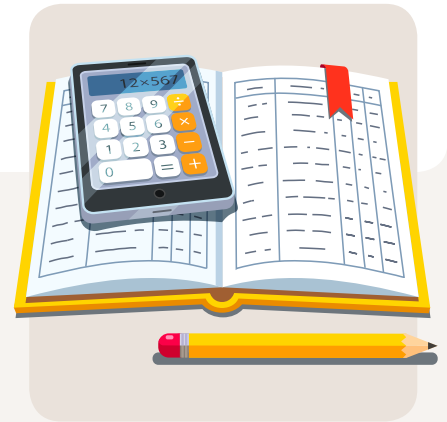


Capital spending in 2018/19

Commercial property investments	£21m
Roads	£8.3m
Schools	£6.4m
Other transport	£5.6m
Other capital investment	£3.1m
Strategic/regeneration projects	2.4m
Housing grants	1.8m
Housing - repurchase leasehold property	1.5m
Total	£50.1m

Where the money comes from:

Government grants and contributions	£23.8m
Finance leases	£21m
Sale of assets	£3.5m
Reserves and balances	£1.2m
Borrowing	£0.6m
Total	£50.1m



Balance sheet at financial year-end

The balance sheet shows the council's financial position on 31 March 2019, 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.

Despite the challenging economic outlook, the council maintains prudent levels of reserves to protect its services from future financial risks.

The council's net assets...

Property, plant and equipment	£327.4m
Money owed to the council and investments	£122m
Investment property	£75.6m
Other long-term assets	£13.8m
Other long-term liabilities	-£24.6m
Money owed by the council	-£87.1m
Long-term borrowing	-£160.6m
Pension liabilities	-£259.3m
Net assets	£7.2m

Which is financed by...

Earmarked reserves	£35.3m
Other usable reserve	£11.3m
General fund balance	£9.1m
Unusable reserves	-£48.5m
Total reserves	£7.2m



Current financial performance and plans for the future

As direct government funding is reduced, North Somerset Council must continue to look at other ways of generating income to pay for services.

The council wants to do this by investing in sites, promoting economic growth, regenerating and shaping the future of North Somerset.

Budgeting is a year-round process and details of the 2020/21 budget and its impact on your council tax will be available in *Life* next spring.



A full version of the council's audited statement of accounts for 2018/19 is available at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/accounts

Hard 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: **01275 884 037**





Preparing your community for an emergency



Emergencies are rare but communities in North Somerset are preparing themselves to be ready for if the worst happens.

North Somerset Council has launched a community emergency shelter scheme to ensure residents have a safe place to go temporarily if they need to be evacuated from their homes following an incident.

More local venues are now needed to expand the scheme.

A shelter can be any community venue, such as a local village hall, community centre, sports venue, religious establishment or any other building which is warm and dry.

It must have electricity and lighting, seating, kitchen facilities for making hot and cold drinks and toilets.

The emergency shelter would be in operation by North Somerset Council until evacuees can return home safely or until alternative accommodation is found, usually within 48 hours or much less.

Blagdon Village Club has recently registered for the scheme.

Club committee member Julie Chamberlain said: "The use of the building was given to the village by the Wills family for the benefit of the whole village, so it should be available for when the community needs it most."

"We are pleased to be supporting the village in this way."

Details of venues will be added to a searchable online database.

Stickers and posters are also available to display in the venue.

During an emergency, the council or emergency services will direct the public where to go.



Get involved

Could you help your local community in times of emergency?

Volunteers are needed to join the Community Resilience North Somerset scheme, whether it's making hot drinks or helping to warn and inform residents. Visit www.communityresilience-ns.org.uk

For more information about signing up to the emergency shelter scheme email emu@n-somerset.gov.uk or call **01934 426 706**.



New fund to help **North Somerset community groups flourish**

Giving to national charities is hugely worthwhile but sometimes you might want to help organisations a little closer to home.

A new fund has now launched which will see money distributed purely within North Somerset – so you can be sure your money is going to local good causes.

North Somerset Realising Potential Fund has been set up by North Somerset Council, Quartet Community Foundation and the businesses, voluntary and public sector partners which make up North Somerset Partnership.

It has been set up to enable local people to support local organisations.

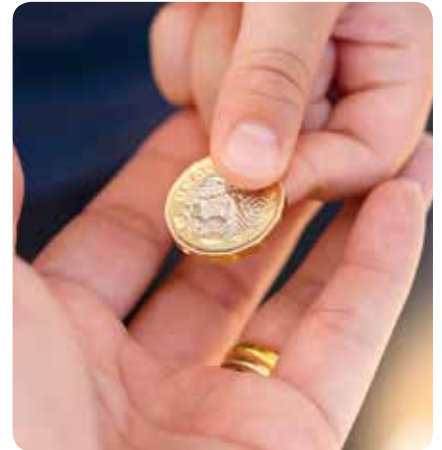
The new fund is a permanent endowment fund managed by Quartet Community Foundation.

So far, nearly £200,000 has already been invested.

Interest from the fund will be allocated in grants to support the valuable work of voluntary and community organisations across North Somerset.

Quartet also now manages a one-off £1m legacy fund which will provide an additional 50 per cent match to all local donations.

UK tax payers can also add an additional 25 per cent gift aid on their donations.



To donate to the Somerset Realising Potential Fund visit www.quartetcf.org.uk/donate-now and select NS Realising Potential Fund from the drop-down menu.



Shopfront design guide gets approval



The look and identity of high streets in North Somerset will be enhanced thanks to a new shopfront design guide.

The guide was adopted by North Somerset Council in September following a public consultation.

It sets out best practice and recommendations to improve the physical quality, historic features and appearance of local streets to positively impact the retail and visitor experience.



The guide has been produced with support from Historic England through the Weston Heritage Action Zone.

Money will also be available through a grant scheme to help independent commercial businesses in Weston-super-Mare's Heritage Action Zone have their shopfronts renovated.

Cara MacMahon, North Somerset Council's Heritage Action Zone officer, said: "People recognise the importance of an attractive central shopping area to encourage tourism and provide an appealing environment for residents.

"A high standard of shopfront design has a significant impact on the way people experience a town and I'm delighted that this has been approved and we can now work with local businesses and residents to put this guide into action."

A new High Street Heritage programme will also be created after North Somerset Council successfully won a bid for £1.2m of funding from Historic England's High Street Heritage Action Zone fund.

This new programme is separate to the current Heritage Action Zone and will focus on Weston's southern High Street, around Oxford Street and north Walliscote Road.

Additional grants for shopfront enhancements will be made available at a later date.

The Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) is part of the Weston town centre regeneration programme, which is delivering improvements to key sites within the town and encouraging inward investment.

Weston was one of the first places to be awarded Heritage Action Zone status.

There are now 18 zones in villages, towns and cities across England.



Repairs notice served on Grade II* listed pier

A repairs notice has been served to the private owner of Weston-super-Mare's derelict Birnbeck Pier.

North Somerset Council, working with Historic England, had exhausted all other options to encourage the owner – CNM Estates – to improve the condition of the historic pier.

Structural engineers have been working on site this year to establish what needed to be done to bring the pier back to the condition it was when it was listed in 1983.

The repairs notice is a swift and effective tool for alerting a proprietor of their statutory duties to repair and maintain the property they own.



Birnbeck Pier in 2018. Picture courtesy of Historic England

It was issued in September and the owner has a minimum of two months to respond. If that time limit expires without a response, the council will then agree a future course of action with relevant parties.

Birnbeck Pier is Grade II* listed with five further Grade II structures and buildings located on the island and the inward end of the site.

These include the....

- entrance gates and turnstiles
- clock tower
- toll house lodge
- north jetty
- lifeboat house and slipway.

The pier was designed by noted Victorian engineer Eugenius Birch.

Construction took place between 1862 and 1867, with the foundation stone laid in 1864.

It opened in 1866 but closed to the public in 1994 for safety reasons. The RNLI left in 2013, after 131 years on the pier.



The final event - 20 marketing ideas for independent retailers - takes place on **Tuesday 19 November.**

The free seminar runs from 6-8pm, at Weston Museum in Burlington Street.

No need to book. Just turn up for nibbles from 5.45pm.

Free advice for independent retailers



Inspirational free seminars are going down a treat with independent retailers in Weston-super-Mare.

The seminars are giving independent retailers ideas about window dressing, merchandising, reducing retail theft and more.

Attendees also have a chance to win a coaching session for their business.

The programme is a partnership between the Great Weston

Heritage Action Zone, Weston Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses and Weston Business Improvement District.

Cara MacMahon, Heritage Action Zone Officer at North Somerset Council, said: "The feedback we've received so far has been phenomenal.

"We were asked to hold these seminars by local businesses and they have delivered beyond expectations."

How to have an eco-friendly Christmas



Christmas can be a time of excess but there are ways to be more mindful and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill.

Follow these top tips to be more eco-friendly and ensure your waste ends up in the right place...

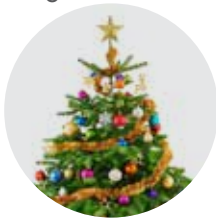
Christmas trees

If you already have an artificial tree then keep using it for as long as possible. Using it every year for 10 years will offset its carbon footprint.

If you buy real trees every year, buy from a local stockist and choose an eco-friendly variety if possible. Check it's grown sustainably by looking for the FSC or Soil Association logo.

Christmas-tree hire services are now available from more and more places, such as garden centres and nurseries. The tree can then carry on growing after it's been returned.

Potted Christmas trees from nurseries are ideal for short-term decorating and can then be planted in your garden afterwards. Make sure the tree is in a container or has a wrapped root ball.



Advent calendars

Consider getting a traditional wooden or fabric advent calendar which can be reused annually and made a family tradition.

If getting a single-use chocolate calendar, separate the cardboard and plastic tray before putting in your recycling box.

Food waste

Reduce food waste by shopping with a list and only getting what you need, using up leftovers and maximising use of your freezer.

Visit www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/recipes for leftover recipe ideas.

All food waste, including turkey carcasses, can be placed in your food caddy for recycling.



Wrapping paper

About five million tonnes of paper is sent to landfill every year in the UK. It can be hard to determine if wrapping paper is recyclable or not.



If you can rip the paper or scrunch it your hand without it bouncing back, this is recyclable and should be placed in your box with other paper items.

Plastic cellophane, metallic wrapping or paper with glitter or foil decoration can't be recycled and will end up in landfill. Sellotape and many types of ribbons can't be recycled either, especially those with wire mesh.

Newsprint, paper grocery bags or other natural-fibre paper are a great alternative as are gift bags that can be used several times.

String or ribbon are a good and reusable substitute to Sellotape.

Cards

Only non-glittery cards can go in the recycling box.



Cut the pictures out to reuse for next year's gift tags.

Crackers

About 100 million crackers are estimated to be pulled over the festive period in the UK.

Crackers are extremely wasteful and contribute to the huge amount of plastic waste.

Instead, crackers are now available made from eco-friendly materials with eco-friendly gifts inside. Reusable crackers are also available or make your own and personalise them.

Napkins

Paper ones are not recyclable and should go in the general waste.



Try reusable, cloth ones where possible.

Sweet wrappers

Soft, plastic wrappers should go in the general waste but foil wrappers can be scrunched together into a foil ball and put in your recycling box.

Black plastic is not currently recyclable so should go in your general waste.

Last year's busiest collection day was 27 December, when an additional 90 per cent of recycling was picked-up.



Help crews collect more quickly and efficiently by sorting recycling boxes into different material types.

Any excess waste can be taken to one of North Somerset's three recycling centres (all will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day though).

Check locations and opening times at www.n-somerset.gov.uk/recyclingcentres

The ethical tree of gift purchasing

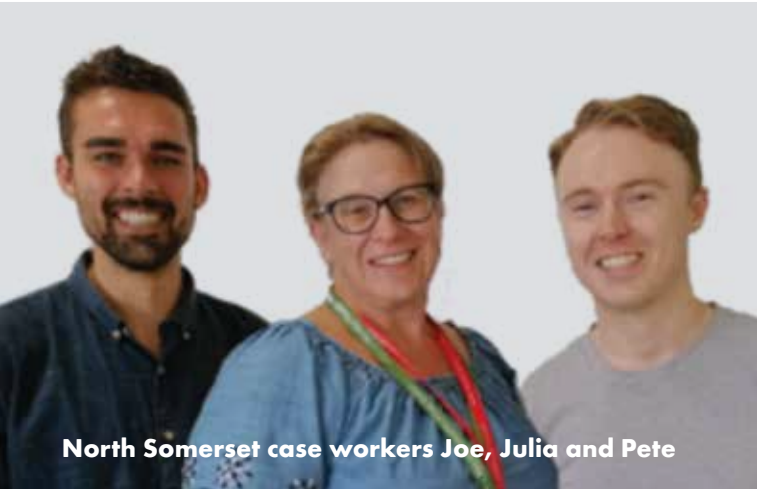


For waste tips, recycling advice and questions, follow the team on social media.

 @ns_recycling  NSrecyclingandwaste



Advice available to keep you warm, safe and well



North Somerset case workers Joe, Julia and Pete



Joined-up advice is now available to help you lower your energy bills, deal with debt and make your home safe, secure and warm.

The Warmer Homes, Advice and Money (WHAM) project is being run by the Centre for Sustainable Energy to give North Somerset people advice on energy, money, housing and welfare rights, as well as getting help with home repairs.

Joe, Julia and Pete are three new caseworkers working for the WHAM project in the area.

Joe is based in Citizens Advice, widening the services on offer to include housing and welfare rights.

Julia rotates between hospitals in the area to ensure patients don't go home without the support package they need.

Pete is on the road visiting homes and offering advice such as making the most of your heating system, improving insulation, keeping warm or getting rid of damp.

One local person who received advice through the project said:

"I was in despair when I rang you with nowhere left to turn and didn't know how I would manage with a broken boiler. Thanks to your support I am now a lot warmer and happier. All the staff were very kind and helpful. Thank you."

The WHAM project offers:

- ✓ benefit advice
- ✓ access to grants and discounts
- ✓ ways to make your home warmer and less damp
- ✓ help with budgeting and getting out of debt
- ✓ advice on how to use less energy and switch supplier.



For free and impartial advice call the Centre for Sustainable Energy on **0800 082 2234**
www.cse.org.uk



Stay safe and well at home

Helping older people stay safe, well and independent at home for as long as possible is a key factor in ensuring their quality of life and happiness.

North Somerset Council offers a range of advice and services to help people achieve this...

Disabled facilities grant

If you are disabled and need to adapt your home then the means-tested Disabled Facilities Grant could help.

The grant could pay for improvements such as...

- installing access ramps, hand rails or widening doors
- providing a stairlift, a level-access shower adaptation or alterations to the kitchen
- adapting heating or lighting controls so they are easier to use.

For more information visit www.gov.uk/disabled-facilities-grants

Visit the Equipment and Demonstration Centre, based in the Motex Centre in Winterstoke Road, Weston-super-Mare, to see a range of aids and adaptations. It's open 10am-4pm, Tuesdays - Fridays.

Dementia care assistance

Many people with dementia live safe and well in their own homes but sometimes small changes are needed.

North Somerset Council has recently introduced a Dementia Care Assistance Grant that will cover the cost of minor adaptations to help people with dementia stay safe and well in their own home.

To be eligible, the applicant must have a dementia diagnosis or confirmation of the condition from a GP or hospital.



Handy person service

Small repairs, odd jobs, maintenance and adaptations can be carried out by the handy person service.

North Somerset Council offers a subsidised handy person service to older people, or those with a disability.

The service is provided by AMS Electrical and the council contributes to the cost to keep it affordable.

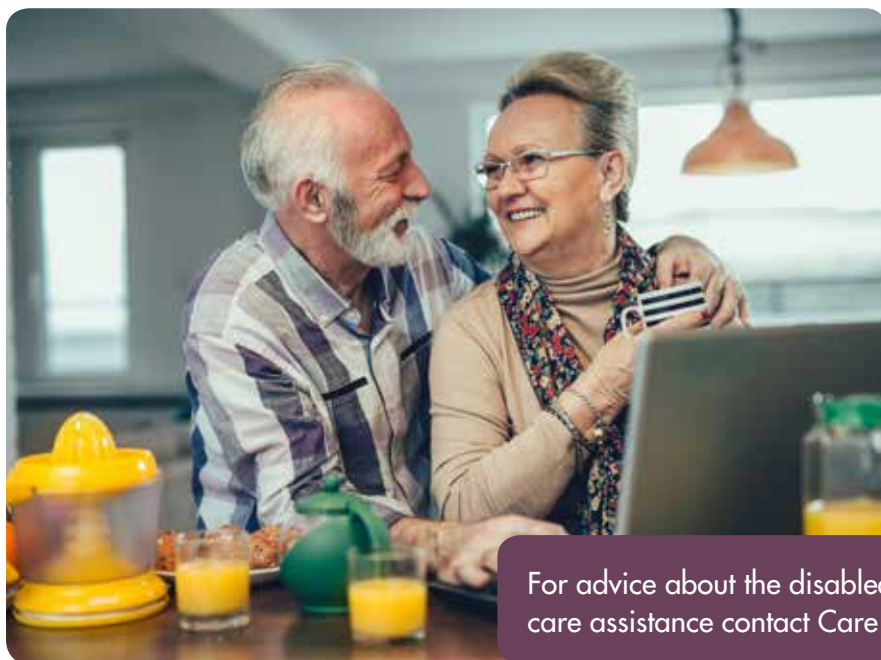
It costs £15.60 an hour, for a maximum of three hours per visit and six hours per year.

To book call 01934 520 116, email info@amselectricalservices.co.uk or visit www.amselectricalservices.co.uk

Low-cost home improvement loans

Low-cost loans may provide financial help for people struggling to repair or maintain their home.

For more information contact Wessex Resolutions on **01823 461 099** or www.wrcic.org.uk



For advice about the disabled facilities grant or dementia care assistance contact Care Connect on **01275 888 801**



Get more pedal power with electric bikes

Electric bikes are increasing in popularity and proving to be one of the most accessible forms of transport.



The thought of cycling long distances might be daunting but because e-bikes have a motor to provide electrical assistance, they help you go further without the slog.

This opens the door to travelling further and more frequently by bike.

Now businesses in North Somerset have the chance to get some pool e-bikes for their staff to get around, thanks to funding from the Department for Transport's Access Fund for Sustainable Travel.

Get an e-bike for your business

Grants are now available for businesses to encourage staff to leave their cars at home and use electric pedal power for more business journeys.



Up to £3,000 is available per business – £1,000 per bike for three bikes – and grants must be 50 per cent match-funded by the organisation.

This follows a recent scheme where local businesses could borrow an e-bike for six months to test it out.

Organisations including Avon Fire and Rescue, Weston College, Worle Community School and Bristol Airport all made use of the initiative.

Paul Baker, surface access strategy manager at Bristol Airport, said: "The loan was a great opportunity to get more of our employees cycling and it was great fun too.

"Staff from across the airport tried the bike, many of whom hadn't cycled for years, and were amazed at how easy it was to ride.

"Some have even gone on to buy an e-bike for their commute."

Bristol Airport is now using the match-funding grant scheme to buy a fleet of e-bikes for their staff to use.



The current funding window to apply for up to £3,000 is open until Friday 14 February.

Download an application form from travelwest.info/businesses/north-somerset and email it to sustainable.travel@n-somerset.gov.uk

North Somerset Life

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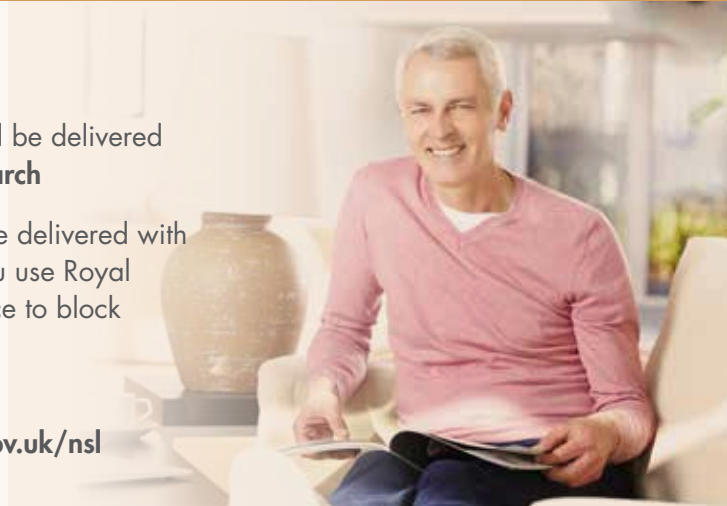
For advertising and sponsorship opportunities contact Will Jenkins: **01934 426 474** or **will.jenkins@n-somerset.gov.uk**

For editorial contact **editor@n-somerset.gov.uk** or **01275 884 139**

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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)

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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.
- 





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