

## **Somerset Council Report**

### **Stoke Sub Hamdon Parish Council 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

#### **1.0 - Somerset News**

##### **1.1 - Highways: Somerset Council unveils scheme to refurbish Junction 26 and Chelston link road**

An important Government-funded Somerset Council infrastructure project (planned prior to 2022) will commence in June to rejuvenate the aging Junction 26 of the M5 and the A38 Chelston link road, originally constructed in 1974. Using the innovative rubblization technique, the existing concrete surface will not only be recycled but transformed into a new road sub-base, avoiding unnecessary waste and significantly reducing carbon emissions. Over a 14-week period starting June 16, traffic will be impacted due to full closures, but the council is committed to minimising disruption and keeping access open for local businesses. Two public drop-ins will be held May in Wellington on dates to be confirmed shortly and another is scheduled for 14 May in West Buckland Parish Hall from 4pm to 7pm to give people the chance to meet the team and find out more. FAQ's and further information, can be found here:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/major-refurbishment-of-junction-26-and-chelston-link-road/>

##### **1.2 - Public Health - Raising awareness, challenging myths – Somerset supports nationwide stalking campaign**

As part of national Stalking Awareness week (April 21-25), Somerset Council took proactive steps to raise awareness and debunk myths surrounding stalking. Highlighting that one in five women and one in ten men may experience stalking, the campaign offered essential resources for victims. The campaign highlighted the support available for those experiencing stalking, including:

- National Stalking Helpline: 0808 802 0300
- Paladin National Stalking Advocacy Service: 020 3866 4107
- Somerset Domestic Abuse: 0800 69 49 999

Victims are urged to report incidents online or by calling 101, or 999 in emergencies.

##### **1.3 - Schools - National Offer Day: Somerset secondary school places announced for 2025/26 academic year**

Somerset Council is pleased to report that 99% of children received primary school offers for the 2025/26 academic year at one of their top three choices, showcasing the council's commitment to accessible quality education. With offers emailed or posted to families, the message is clear: the council is dedicated to ensuring every child's educational journey begins positively. There are options and support available for families who did not receive their preferred choices, emphasising an inclusive approach for all.

Parents and carers of children not offered one or more of their three primary school preferences have various options available. Information can be found on the [Council's applying for a school place webpages](#):

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/applying-for-school/refused-a-place-at-your-preferred-school/>

##### **1.4 - Social Care: Unpaid carers in Somerset attend free information day in Bridgwater**

Somerset Council hosted a free drop-in event for unpaid carers in Bridgwater, highlighting the invaluable role these individuals play. The event featured tailored advice and informative seminars addressing essential topics like Lasting Power of Attorney and Direct Payments. Local organisations came together to provide guidance and show appreciation for the dedication of unpaid carers, enhancing their confidence as they continue their vital work in the community.

Adult Social Care staff guided unpaid carers through questions they might have. Other organisations involved providing advice, included:

- [Second Step](https://www.second-step.co.uk/), <https://www.second-step.co.uk/>
- [Age UK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/somerset/), <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/somerset/>
- [Open Mental Health](https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/), <https://openmentalhealth.org.uk/>
- [Healthwatch](https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/), <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/>

- [DeafPlus](https://www.deafplus.org/), <https://www.deafplus.org/>

There will be more information days taking place across Somerset for the rest of the year. Find out more here: [New Carer Information Roadshow – Somerset Carers](https://somersectcarers.org/uncategorised/new-carer-information-roadshow/): <https://somersectcarers.org/uncategorised/new-carer-information-roadshow/>

### **1.5 - Planning - New Local Validation Checklist is published thanks to your views following consultation**

Somerset Council proudly announces the launch of a new Local Validation Checklist for planning applications, shaped by invaluable community feedback from a November 2024 consultation. Effective from April 1, 2025, this checklist aligns national guidance with local needs, ensuring a smooth validation process for applicants. By taking local insights into account, the council exemplifies its commitment to collaborative governance and effective service delivery.

All applications will need to use the updated and consolidated checklist [which can be found here](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/information-requirements-for-planning-applications/): <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/information-requirements-for-planning-applications/>

### **1.6 - Tourism - Tourism boost as Exmoor takes starring role in The Salt Path**

Anticipation builds for the May 30 release of "The Salt Path," a film that promises to boost tourism in Somerset and Exmoor by highlighting breathtaking locations such as Minehead and Porlock. With the film based on Raynor Winn's best-selling memoir, it underscores the importance of sustainable tourism, urging visitors to utilize public transport and support local businesses. This film adaptation has the potential to attract new audiences, showcasing the region's natural beauty and promoting long-term economic growth in line with environmentally-friendly practices.

[Visit Exmoor](https://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/the-salt-path) (<https://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/the-salt-path>) and [SWPCA](https://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/about-coast-path/the-salt-path/) (<https://www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk/about-coast-path/the-salt-path/>) provide online information about the Somerset and Exmoor locations featuring in the film, along with information about accommodation for all budgets along the route and beyond.

### **1.7 - Assets: Somerset Council sells part of County Hall to developer of key worker housing**

In a move to support essential workers, Somerset Council has sold part of County Hall to Prime plc for the development of key worker housing. This initiative will not only address local housing needs but also exemplifies the council's commitment to enhancing community welfare while generating funds to support vital services. As Prime and its housing partner, Hyve, work towards creating comfortable living spaces for public service workers, the council looks forward to the positive impact on both housing availability and community wellbeing.

### **1.8 - Regeneration: Yeovil Refresh: Glovers Walk demolition gets underway**

A significant milestone has been reached in Yeovil's regeneration with the start of demolition work on Glovers Walk. This project is part of the larger Yeovil Refresh scheme and speaks to the council's commitment to revitalising the town centre. As local leaders and stakeholders collaborate throughout this process, community input remains a priority, ensuring that the future redevelopment reflects the aspirations of residents and fosters local pride while driving economic renewal.

### **1.9 - Regeneration: Somerset Council advances Bridgwater Docks regeneration with new design consultants and plans for sustainable development**

Somerset Council is moving forward with the Bridgwater Docks regeneration by appointing design consultants WSP. This project, part of the £23.2 million Bridgwater Town Deal, includes new walking and cycling routes across a swing bridge at Newton Lock and will modernize the marina to increase leisure berths.

With £5.2 million from the Towns Fund Deal, WSP will consult with local businesses and residents to shape the design. Key next steps include public consultation and securing planning permission for development.

### **1.10 - Work Starts to Protect Dam at Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve**

Somerset Council has initiated a major project to strengthen the dam at Chard Reservoir Local Nature Reserve, aimed at

protecting it from extreme flooding events. Partially funded by Somerset Rivers Authority, the project includes building a wave wall, reconstructing culverts, and re-grading the Anglers car park.

Contractor Kier will carry out the work, expected to be completed by summer, with some traffic disruptions as Chaffcombe Lane will fully close from April 28 for about 10 weeks. Pedestrian access to the reservoir will remain open, while the Anglers car park will be available for anglers only; other visitors should use the Oaklands car park (TA20 1HU).

The need for the wave wall was identified during an independent safety audit and is a legal requirement under the Reservoirs Safety Act. Somerset Council has collaborated with engineers from Stillwater Associates and conducted an ecological survey to monitor local wildlife during construction. Community engagement is underway to raise awareness about the project's significance.

## **2- Local Issues**

**2.1 - Roadside trees at East Stoke** – Included in the next contract out for tender now. Still awaiting details of this tender.

### **2.2 - Traffic and Road Safety Meeting**

Good to see that the sign prior to the left turn onto West Street from the A303 has been cleaned. Other points discussed that day, especially repainting the North Street speed bumps I will chase and give a verbal update on those matters.

### **2.3 - Overhanging vegetation and surface green creep**

Still awaiting an update.

The removal of slip road foliage and surface green creep has proved difficult due to there being no existing agreement on responsibilities between Somerset Council(SC) and National Highways (NH) on the stretch of the A303 between Ilchester and S. Petherton. Sadly, we have now passed 1<sup>st</sup> March which is the no cut back period due to nesting birds. Given the growing safety issues this may possibly be considered outside of that timetable. Neither can either party close the road as neither has that authorisation. This will be discussed with continued urgency between SC and NH and legal depts. Will keep the council updated with any positive progress or outcomes.

As you are aware, this slip is not the only one along this stretch of the A303 that is in need of specific guarantees and agreements.

**2.4 - Bonnies Lane** – Length to be jettied in 2025-26

**2.5 - Lamp posts** – These are on the High Street, one completed and the one near the corner of Ham Hill Road yet to be complete as of writing this doc. Will chase and give a verbal update if available.

**2.6 - Bins** – As there are often questions, should there be any news or requests unanswered this will remain on the report until replacements and admin with SC complete.

**Regards**

**John and Emily**

## **Report it first: useful Links to share with your communities**

Visit Report a problem on the road: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

### *Potholes and road damage*

Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

For traffic updates and roadworks follow @travelsomerset on X and Facebook.

### *Live travel information*

<https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/>

### *Report a problem with a street light*

We maintain and repair street lights to national standards to provide safe access to all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-with-a-street-light/>

### *Roads, travel and parking, road signs, markings and lighting*

Includes information about non-illuminated bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate and how to apply for a new road sign Speed limits:<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/road-signs-bollards-and-road-markings/>

### *Speed limits*

Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/speed-limits/>

### *Traffic lights*

We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the county

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/traffic-lights/>

### *Street and roadworks*

We maintain the roads and pavements that are managed at public expense in Somerset

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/street-and-roadworks/>

Sign-up for the latest climate news:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-food-safety/climate-and-ecological-emergency/newsletter-sign-up/>.