

## **Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at the Morland Hub, Pearce Drive, Highbridge at 7 pm**

**Present:** Councillors L. Millard (Chair), R. Baker, S. Barber, P. Clayton, J. Flurry, G. Gudka, R. Keen, A. Mathews, B. Metcalfe, M. Murphy S. Perry, C. Searing, B. Vickers, J. Warren

**In attendance:** K Noble - Town Clerk, E Dutton – Deputy Town Clerk, Somerset Councillor Hendry, Police Sergeant Hardaway and 7 Members of the Public.

### **Public Participation:**

One member of the public stated that the railway leaflets and Town Crier postcards are nearly out of stock and the Council should consider paying for them to be reprinted.

The Mayor began the meeting by wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

### **164.0.T23 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Elrick, Facey and Wynn.

### **165.0.T23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda**

There were no declarations of interests.

### **166.0.T23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Town Council, held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, were presented by the Mayor.

**Resolved** that the minutes be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

### **167.0.T23 Matters arising from previous minutes**

A query was raised regarding the AGAR challenge and it was confirmed that an update would be given at the next meeting.

### **168.0.T23 To receive Mayors report**

The Mayor read out the following statement;

“On 31<sup>st</sup> October, I attended the LCN meeting and will now be joining a working group to look at developing relationships with the Youth of the parishes.

I joined Highbridge Youth Theatre on a ‘Spooky Tour’ of Sopha! The young people were very convincing and scary!!



**Burnham-on-Sea  
& Highbridge**

**TOWN COUNCIL**

I also attended a performance of 'Sister Act' at the Princess Theatre. It was great to see the theatre full of people, laughter and song!

I had a meeting with Mr Milford, the Principal of King Alfred's School, to discuss how we can work together in the future. I am pleased to say that Sally-Anne Hetherington, his PA, is representing the school on the Highbridge Regeneration Working Group. I was also pleased to switch on the Christmas Tree lights at the school on a very cold and frosty evening!

I met with a GWR representative, Luke Farley, to look at ways of enhancing Highbridge Station. Councillor Vickers and Keen joined us, also Ruth Coull from Our Highbridge. We have now had another meeting and have decided how we are going to spend the £5,000 that Luke has allocated to provide a Travel Plan for the station to include cycle and footpaths. He has now designed new signs to go on lamp posts and bus shelters to help people find their way around the 2 towns. These will be in place in January. We will then audit cycle and footpaths to ensure good signage to our town's assets such as Apex Park, River Brue, sea front and coast path. This is bringing together several projects, the Transport Strand of our Climate and Ecology work and the Highbridge Regeneration Framework.

I attended the Armistice Day and Remembrance Services in both Burnham and Highbridge, to remember the fallen and value the work of current members of the services at home and abroad.

I was pleased to accept an invitation from the Burnham Flower Group to attend their demonstration. It was good to see such a thriving and active group in the town. I also supported a Xmas Fair to raise funds for Breast Cancer and attended the Moose International Carol Service which has become a favourite tradition in the town.

I was pleased to attend both Burnham and Highbridge Christmas lights switch on. It was good to see the strong sense of community at both events. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to make the events a success.

I was happy to attend the Christmas Party for the Princess Volunteers to recognise their sterling work in helping to run the theatre. They do an amazing job".

#### **169.0.T23 To receive any reports from Somerset Councillors**

Somerset Councillor Murphy circulated a report at the meeting, which is attached to these minutes.

#### **170.0.T23 To receive minutes of previous committee meetings**

Planning Committee - 8<sup>th</sup> November and 29<sup>th</sup> November

Councillor Clayton presented the minutes and no questions were raised.

Signed by Chair.....

Date.....



**Burnham-on-Sea  
& Highbridge**  
**TOWN COUNCIL**

Town Improvements Committee - 13<sup>th</sup> November

No questions were raised.

Princess Management - 21<sup>st</sup> November

Councillor Perry confirmed the defibrillator had been installed outside the Princess Theatre. No questions were raised.

Finance and Resources Committee - 27<sup>th</sup> November

Councillor Gudka gave an overview of the budget that was considered, although it did not include devolution costs. No issues were raised.

Youth Town Council - 28<sup>th</sup> November

Councillor Millard confirmed that a new Chair had been appointed and new members would be appointed at the next meeting in the new year.

**171.0.T23 To receive list of payments up to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

The attached list of payments was received and noted and no queries raised.

**172.0.T23 To receive Town Council Accounts for month of November 2023**

Councillor Gudka confirmed that accounts are broadly where they should be and explained the changes to the Princess show income/expenditure figures and the reasons for the changes.

The accounts for November were received and no queries raised.

**173.0.T23 To approve the bank reconciliation for November 2023**

**Resolved** that the bank reconciliation was approved and signed by the Mayor.

**174.0.T23 To receive reports from town councillor representatives appointed to outside bodies**

The Fritzlar Twinning Group will be visiting Germany in July 2024 and Councillor Millard hopes to join them.

Councillor Gudka had attended the SALC AGM and a report was circulated with the agenda.

**175.0.T23 To receive Working Group update reports**

- Town Board/Better BoS – Councillor Gudka gave an overview of the previously circulated report and confirmed the group has been renamed as 'Better BoS'. The new website has been launched.
- Climate and Ecology – The new Annual Plans for next year have been created, which are in the process of being finalised and will be brought to the next Council meeting.

Signed by Chair.....

Date.....

The group have made the decision to start working towards the group becoming a CIC. This will enable them to apply for grants and build in sustainability for the future.

The Growing Group are now working in partnership with Burnham and Highbridge in Bloom. They are holding a workshop once a month to support the planting and maintenance of flowers throughout the 2 towns. They are working with Clean Surroundings to join together as a community, to improve the standard of our flower beds. The group is applying for a grant to support this aim.

The Somerset Wildlife Trust and Our Highbridge are providing some great opportunities for residents to join them as they plan to develop the Brue Green Pathway.

Two meetings have been held to create a Climate Adaptation Plan led by Somerset Wildlife Trust.

- Highbridge Regeneration – An overview of the notes from the meeting was given. The next meeting will be held on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024.
- Office Accommodation – No further update. Discussions with Somerset Council are ongoing.
- Homelessness – No further update.

#### **176.0.T23 To consider recommendations from Homelessness Working Group**

**Resolved** that following actions are approved;

1. Once a month feedback session, Homeless Watch (including but not limited to) Town Council representative, Somerset Council, Housing Associations, Waffle Hub, Morland Hub Food Bank (Trussell Trust), Police representation, NHS & other VCFSE's.
2. Promote how to present homelessness, seek help due to threat of becoming homeless or how the general public can report homelessness (via notice boards, website, social media, local press, VCFSE organisations).
3. Utilise Town Rangers to report any rough sleepers via Street Link, Somerset Council website or by calling the Somerset Council's Homeless Department directly and/or to advise where to present.

#### **177.0.T23 To consider and approve Highbridge Regeneration Working Groups Terms of Reference**

**Resolved** that the Highbridge Regeneration Working Groups Terms of Reference are approved.

**178.0.T23 To receive feedback from meeting with the Head of Education Places and to agree any actions**

An overview of the circulated meeting notes was given.

**Resolved** that the Council approves the actions as follows;

1. A further meeting to be arranged in January when more recent and detailed data will be provided. Overall, Councillors did not agree with the data being used for the decision. Councillor Metcalfe will analyse the data to enable us to understand the decision - making process better.
2. Letters are sent to Somerset Councillors representing Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge to ask them to advocate on the Town Council's behalf at Somerset Council, the importance of supporting the bid for a new school at the Brue Farm Estate.

**179.0.T23 To consider response to Somerset Council Public Space Protection Order 2023 consultation**

The proposed changes relating to Burnham beach were discussed.

**Resolved** that the Council does not agree with the proposed changes to areas 1-3 on Burnham beach and request that the order is not changed.

(Councillor Warren joined the meeting at this juncture)

**180.0.T23 To consider correspondence from Countrywide Partnership for the Council to consider taking on the ownership of the Community Centre, Isleport Lane, Highbridge**

A discussion took place and several concerns were raised regarding the need for another community facility.

**Resolved** that the Town Council would not take on the ownership of the Community Centre. That the Town Clerk is instructed to liaise with the developer regarding options for the space including a possible community shop and report back to the next meeting.

**181.0.T23 To consider a request from a resident for additional street lighting in Broadhurst Gardens**

Some councillors had been to the site and it was noted that some of the lights are being covered by vegetation.

**Resolved** that the shrubbery should be cut back in the first instance.

**182.0.T23 To receive Esplanade play area update**

It was confirmed that Somerset Council would not give permission for the play area to be installed. Options for the equipment to be installed on other sites is being progressed. A query was raised regarding funding

from Sedgemoor District Council and it was confirmed the High Street Fund of £50,000 given to the Town Council also covers the Esplanade. Discussions are taking place in relation to the remaining CIM funding.

**183.0.T23 To ratify decision to postpone Fireworks event and to consider rearranging the event**

**Resolved** that the informal decision to postpone the fireworks was ratified. It was unanimously agreed that the fireworks event should be postponed until November 2024.

**184.0.T23 To review the decision for the seawall art contribution**

**Resolved** that the project does not go ahead due to financial constraints.

**185.0.T23 To consider writing to Lloyds Bank following announcement of the Burnham-on-Sea branch closure**

**Resolved** that the Council writes to Lloyds Bank to ask if they would consider establishing a Banking Hub.

**186.0.T23 To receive community funded 20 mph speed limits update**

Due to the report only being received today and as there were some queries with the details, this will be deferred until the next meeting.

**187.0.T23 To receive verbal report regarding the Somerset Council asset and service devolution**

Councillor Gudka explained that due to the financial issues at Somerset Council some services will be cut unless the Town Council fund them. As yet very little information has been provided by Somerset Council.

The Town Council is holding a consultation to ascertain residents views to guide the Council on services to be prioritised.

**188.0.T23 To consider response to the Somerset River Authority draft Strategy and Flood Action Plan consultation**

Councillors and residents were urged to read the Strategy and to respond to the consultation.

**189.0.T23 To consider recommendation from the Finance and Resources Committee to release funds from property maintenance earmarked reserve to carry out a survey on the former school building and cost the works**

Councillor Gudka gave some background information and answered questions raised.

**Resolved** that monies are released from the earmarked reserves for a survey and project estimate to be undertaken.

**190.0.T23 To consider request from the Town Board to release funds from the High Street fund earmarked reserve cover start-up costs**

Some capital monies are required for set up costs.

**Resolved** that the Town Clerk is delegated to release up to £1,000 from the High Street Fund earmarked reserve for set up costs.

**191.0.T23 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 7 pm.



## SOMERSET COUNCIL

MIKE MURPHY

DECEMBER 2023

### An Update on the Financial Emergency

Last month Somerset Council declared a Financial Emergency because the costs of delivering services are rising much faster than the Council's income.

This is mostly due to the rise in social care costs, for instance in residential care placements where the weekly cost has increased from £577 per week in 2022/23 to £850 per week this year. Care home fees are still rising as inflation continues to affect staffing costs, energy and food. Increased interest rates have affected care service providers too, as they have household mortgages and rentals.

Although Council Tax rates are lower in Somerset than in other similar unitary councils in the south west, the annual increase is limited by Government and so the gap between income and expenditure is growing and we have to find more savings.

For the current financial year, the projected overspend has been reduced to £18.7million, an improvement of approximately £8million. However, we need further reductions in spending to better protect our reserves for future years as we know the difficult financial situation will continue. Every payment over £100 now has to be approved by an expenditure board and we are expecting further improvement before the financial year end.

In February, Somerset Council needs to set a budget for the next financial year (2024/5). The Chancellor's Autumn Statement was extremely disappointing for Councils as there was no acknowledgement of the difficult situation for local government, and so we already know that our budget setting will be both more difficult and painful.

33 Council Leaders of all political parties, including Cllr Bill Revans Leader of Somerset Council, have written to the Secretary of State to say they are in a significantly worse financial position than before the Autumn Statement. A new survey reveals that local authorities are having to plan more severe cuts to services and that seven in ten of the councils responding are no longer confident that they can balance their budget next year.

Recently, Nottingham City Council declared a Section 114 Notice because their finances are unsustainable. In Somerset we are determined to avoid a S114 by working proactively to find ways to set a budget without the intervention of Government Commissioners.

At December's Executive meeting in Shepton Mallet the Executive of Somerset Council set out the plan for dealing with next year's £87m budget gap. The approved actions include requesting what's called a Capitalisation Direction from the Westminster Government. This allows Somerset Council to fund day-to-day spending with proceeds from the sale of assets or borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board. In addition to this, General Fund Reserves are being strengthened and savings are being identified constantly.



### **What does all of this mean?**

Council Tax in Somerset will have to go up by the maximum allowed by Government. That will still leave our Council Tax rates lower than in other comparable Council areas. For example, if we had Dorset's council tax rate or Wiltshire's council tax base we wouldn't be in this situation. Dorset didn't freeze its council tax for six years and Wiltshire's homes were significantly more expensive and therefore in higher bands in 1991 when Council Tax was put in place.

We acknowledge that many household budgets are already stretched by the high cost of living, so it's important that one of the recommendations at the Executive meeting is to up-rate our Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with inflation, at the same rate as benefits will rise next year (6.7%). A further recommendation is that the Exceptional Hardship scheme will continue, ensuring that those on the lowest incomes in our communities are protected. The decisions will be taken by Full Council on 20th December.

Consultation on where savings may be made in next year's expenditure will be launched in the coming days, as we are determined that Somerset's voices will be heard at this difficult time and in the early years of the new Somerset Council.

This is a national situation. We are not on our own as a Council, but we will see a very real impact on local services.

## Changes are coming to waste collections next year

Recycling and rubbish collection days will be changing for more than 120,000 homes in Somerset in February next year.

The changes come as new collection routes are introduced by Somerset Council's contractor, SUEZ recycling and recovery UK. The new routes will make rounds more efficient, more manageable for crews whilst reducing mileage and carbon emissions.

The changes come at no cost to the council.

In February 2024, recycling and rubbish collection day schedules will change for around 85% of homes in the west of the county, covering the former Sedgemoor and Somerset West and Taunton areas, as well as a small part of South Somerset.

Anyone with a change to their collection day schedule will be written to twice before anything changes, first with a letter in January. Roughly, three weeks after the letter arrives, residents will receive a service guide which includes a collection day calendar for the next 18 months.

It is important that residents know their new collection days – crews will not be able to come back for either recycling or refuse if you miss your new collection day.

Because some towns and villages will be covered by more than one route, days may change for some households but not others.

Residents may have:

- a change to collection day
- a change in week that their rubbish is collected
- a one-off interim rubbish collection

There will be no changes to:

- collection days for garden waste subscribers
- clinical waste collections
- communal property collections with shared collections (such as blocks of flats, houses of multiple occupancy and retirement developments)
- schools waste collections

Changes to routes and collection days for the rest of the county – in the former Mendip and South Somerset areas – are expected to be introduced in June 2024.

Further information can be found online at [www.somerset.gov.uk/waste](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/waste)

### **Housing regeneration project in Taunton nearing completion**

Phase A of the North Taunton Woolaway Project (NTWP) is nearing completion and an opening ceremony with special guests took place, to celebrate the milestone.

To date, Somerset Council's regeneration scheme has replaced 26 Woolaway homes, which the Government designated as defective, with 47 new and more sustainable homes for tenants.

The new homes include a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom flats and bungalows, 3 bedroom chalets and 3 and 4 bedroom houses, including 5 wheelchair adapted properties.

The homes benefit from energy efficiency measures such as solar panels, triple glazed windows and air source heat pumps, which will allow tenants to live in highly insulated buildings, have lower energy bills and produce less carbon emissions.

A ceremony took place with speeches, a tour of one of the new homes as well as a presentation of a bouquet of flowers, to welcome one of the new tenants.

### **Willow Man receives study funding boost as public engagement starts**

A plan to revive the once-iconic Willow Man sculpture has received a funding boost from National Highways, the company responsible for England's motorways and major A roads.

Willow Man, close to Bridgwater, Junction 23 M5 has deteriorated in recent years and is now barely recognisable.

Created by artist Serena De la Hay and unveiled in 2000, the sculpture was commissioned by South West Arts to mark the millennium and celebrates the role of willow in the ecology and craft tradition of the Somerset Levels.

Somerset Council has been granted £35,000 of funding from National Highways' Designated Funding programme for an initial feasibility looking at the possibility of repairing/enhancing and relocating the Willow Man.

A future scheme could see the sculpture rebuilt using more robust materials.

The funding will cover a range of activities including engagement, initial designs and costings, artists impressions, as well as searches and surveys covering land ownership and topography to identify potential sites.

The Council is asking people for their views and is launching an online engagement page where you can have your say.

It will also be liaising with local parish councils and other key stakeholders over the coming weeks to gather their views.

Have your say here: visit <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com> and search 'Willow Man'.



### **Somerset Council awarded £5m for new health research partnership**

Somerset Council has been awarded £5m over five years by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) to form a Health Determinants Research Collaboration' (HDRC) - a new research partnership to improve health and reduce health inequalities across the county.

The HDRC will see Somerset Council join forces with Spark Somerset, UWE Bristol and the Institute of Health Equity at University College London to enable the Council to make better decisions to improve health in Somerset, informed by existing evidence and new research and shaped by local people.

The NIHR will provide £1 million per year for the next 5 years to support the creation of a staffed unit within the council that will work to involve communities in research, provide council staff and the public with opportunities to develop their skills, and help the council to use evidence and do research.

The funding of £55m NIHR is investing in 11 new HDRCs across the country to enable local authorities to use evidence and undertake research to improve health in their communities and tackle health inequalities.

Somerset's HDRC, which is expected to launch in January 2024, will focus on the building blocks of good health such as housing, education and the physical environment to tackle the root causes of health inequalities and wider deprivation. Because of this it intends to involve directorates across the Council, such as Transport, Housing, Planning and Education among others, to apply health evidence and to develop research capability.

Through the programme, the council will involve communities in applying evidence about the building blocks of health to local decisions, and in doing new research where there is not enough evidence.

### **Somerset Young People in care win award for their work on homes for children**

A group of young people in care and care leavers have won an award from a leading advocacy group for their work on homes for children.

Young people from Somerset in Care Councils (SiCC) and Somerset Leaving Care Councils (SLCC) were presented with an award from A National Voice - a leading advocacy group for care leavers and children in care. Winning the 'Collaboration' category, the award recognised the efforts of young people on the Homes and Horizons project, a partnership between Somerset Council, Shaw Trust, and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust to develop 10 homes for children, 2 therapeutic schools and a therapeutic fostering service.

Young people from both SiCC and SLCC have been actively involved on the Homes and Horizons project from the start, helping the Council decide to partner with Shaw Trust. The young people visited children's homes across the UK to see how they were run, interviewing staff and residents to find out what worked well. They also represented young people in decision-making groups, and spoke to neighbours about the project. They even selected furniture and décor and chose the name of this award-winning initiative – Homes and Horizons.

As a result, Somerset's children have homes for children designed with people who have direct experience of the care system, which led to the Homes and Horizons project winning an MJ award for partnership and innovation.

## Swimming Pool Support Fund

Somerset Council has been awarded £211,208 from the government's Swimming Pool Support Fund (Phase 1). The money will be divided across five swimming pool facilities within Somerset at Frome Leisure Centre, Shepton Mallet Lido, Wells Leisure Centre, Brean Splash and Burnham-on-Sea Swim and Sports Academy. The funding is designed to help swimming pool operators with the increased costs of utility bills and swimming pool chemicals.

Somerset Council has also submitted an application to Phase 2 of the Swimming Pool Support Fund which will provide grant funding for capital investments to help swimming pools become more energy efficient. We await the outcome of our application for Phase 2 which is expected in the new year.

Find out more about the Support fund at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/nearly-200-leisure-centres-supported-by-swimming-pool-support-fund>

## Royal Recognition for Somerset Charities

Four Somerset charities are celebrating today (November 14) after winning the coveted King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS).

Equivalent to an MBE for individuals, KAVS is the highest award given to voluntary groups in the UK, celebrating outstanding work done by charities.

They are awarded annually and normally only about a third of groups nominated nationally actually receive an award – but in Somerset this year all four charities nominated were successful.

This year's local recipients are:

- **West Somerset Food Cupboard** - Originating in 2007 from the response of a church group to real food deprivation on their doorsteps, the WSFC is now a charity in its own right. It has an approach to delivery quite unlike other food banks.
- **Refugee Aid From Taunton** - Entirely volunteer run and led, it functions with minimal overheads and uncomplicated structures but has improved the lives of thousands of displaced people in Britain and abroad.
- **Crewkerne and District Museum and Heritage Centre** - This is small independent museum in South Somerset entirely run by volunteers and is financially sound so does not rely on public funds.
- **Share and Repair, Bath** - There are other repair charities, but the combination of repairing, lending, training and educating is out of the ordinary. The initiative in providing environmental lessons for schools demonstrates the wide-ranging approach of this charity.

Organisations wanting to be considered for next year's KAVS can get all the information they need here: [www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk](http://www.kavs.dcms.gov.uk)



## Somerset Council offers businesses six hours of expert advice

Somerset Council is offering local businesses the opportunity to get mentoring support from some of the best business minds in the county.

Following a highly successful search for mentors it is now time to match them to local business owners who can benefit from six hours of free mentoring. All businesses who have been trading for over a year and employ two or more staff are welcome to apply, although the programme is particularly aimed at businesses who are looking to hire new staff or those planning to introduce new products and services.

Forty Mentors have been selected from executive and senior management level business leaders and successful entrepreneurs. They include a former NASDAQ CEO, a soft drinks manufacturer who supplies major retailers internationally and a multi-million pound NHS equipment supplier. All understand the challenges associated with running and growing a business and the value of an impartial sounding board.

Aside from offering valuable feedback, mentors specialise in a range of subject areas including; growth strategy, finance, marketing, HR, e-commerce, bid writing, acquisition, exit strategy, and much more.

There are 40 spaces for mentees available so businesses are encouraged to visit the website to find out more information <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/business-economy-and-licences/somerset-business-mentoring/>

## A vision for Tonedale

Somerset Council is delighted to hear that the Government has awarded nearly £20 million for ToneWorks and Tone Dale project.

Somerset West and Taunton Council previously submitted bids to Round 1 and 2 of the Levelling Up Fund, from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Communities. This recent announcement has been awarded based on the Round 2 submission.

The £19,987,663 will provide an opportunity for Somerset Council working in partnership with stakeholders and the community, to transform and sustainably regenerate the nationally significant heritage site at Toneworks and enhance associated land for community use.

The Toneworks site, which is in Somerset Council ownership has already received funding from DCMS/Historic England from the Heritage Stimulus and Covid Cultural Recovery Fund for repairs since its acquisition in 2020. This has allowed decontamination, structural repairs, and vital stabilisation to the most vulnerable parts of the site.

Over summer and autumn of 2023, Somerset Council has welcomed over three hundred local people into the site on guided tours which have allowed a glimpse at the works that have been achieved to date. The tours were also an excellent opportunity together knowledge, memories and understanding about the history of the site from the community in and around Wellington.

The ambitious plan for Tonedale will restore and save a nationally important heritage site and a much-loved historic landmark.

This funding has been awarded by the government and does not affect Somerset Councils' financial emergency. The money can only be spent on this specific project and cannot be used for services that Somerset Council delivers. Somerset Council will not be making a financial contribution to this project.



## Beyond the bruises – Somerset's new fight against non-physical domestic abuse

A new campaign aims to raise the profile of lesser-known types of domestic abuse and encourage those who may not realise they are being abused to come forward for support and advice.

Launching on White Ribbon Day and at the beginning of the worldwide campaign 16 Days of Action Somerset Council has commissioned 12 short films to shine the spotlight on non-physical types of domestic abuse.

The films direct anyone who is experiencing these forms of abuse to a new website, [somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk](https://somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk), where they can get more information, support and advice or by contacting the service on 0800 69 49 999.

The films, available to view here: <https://bit.ly/12DACF>, will be launched on TV and across a range of social, digital and video sharing platforms.

The new films are part of Somerset Council's ongoing commitment to raise awareness of domestic abuse.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 created a legal definition of domestic abuse:

1. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards are aged 16 years or over
2. Both persons are "personally connected" (including ex-partners and family members)

You do not have to be living with the person who is being abusive to you.

There are many types of behaviours that can form non-physical domestic abuse, these may include:

- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Controlling or coercive behaviour
- Economic abuse
- Psychological or emotional
- Stalking and harassment - including online or via text message

If you are experiencing any form of domestic abuse, worried about someone you know, or are concerned about the impact of your behaviour towards others, then help is available: [somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk](https://somersetdomesticabuse.org.uk) or by telephoning 0800 69 49 999 - between 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week.

In an emergency you should always dial 999. If you are worried that an abuser may overhear your call you can remain silent, tap the phone and dial 55 when prompted by the operator who will send help.

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired you can register with [emergencySMS.net](https://emergencySMS.net). Once registered you will be able to send a text to 999 if you require help in an emergency.

## Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Renamed National Landscapes

From 22<sup>nd</sup> November, all designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales are becoming National Landscapes, including Somerset's Mendip Hills, Quantock Hills, and Blackdown Hills National Landscapes.

The new name reflects their national importance; the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work that they do.

This is a significant milestone for the UK and the next step in fully realising the National Landscapes' vision to be the leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people's health and wellbeing.

National Landscapes teams have been at the forefront of delivering natural solutions to the main challenges facing the nation for many years. The new brand underscores their commitment to redoubling their efforts and engaging with a wider audience. In 2019, teams set themselves the most ambitious targets for nature in the sector and continue to work to meet them.

By 2030, National Landscapes aim that, within their boundaries: at least 200,000 hectares of the most valuable natural areas (Sites of Special Scientific Interest or SSSIs), which equates to 1 ¼ times the size of London, will be in favourable condition; 100,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside of SSSIs will be created or restored, which is roughly nine times the size of Manchester; and 36,000 hectares of woodland, which is a little smaller than the Isle of Wight, will have been planted or allowed to regenerate.

National Landscapes Partnerships will also focus on habitat restoration to ensure the protection of some of our most endangered species and increase their work to help more people to enjoy time spent in beautiful places.

Because of their size and scope, National Landscapes are ideally positioned to address the environmental issues the UK is facing. There are 46 National Landscapes in the UK, covering 14% of England, Wales and Northern Ireland including moorland, farmland, coast, forests, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, a Geopark and International Dark Sky Reserves. They are the UK's nearby countryside - 66% of people in England (44 million) live within 30 minutes of a National Landscape and at least 170 million people visit them every year.



## Somerset Council scores A- for climate work

Somerset Council has been recognised as a leader in its work to respond to the climate emergency.

The authority achieved a score of A- ("Leadership") from CDP for its performance in 2023. This rating compares to a regional average of B and a Global average of C.

CDP is seen as the 'gold standard of environmental' reporting and this is the first time the new Somerset Council has been scored by the not-for-profit charity.

CDP runs the environmental disclosure system and helps organisations make their environmental impact transparent, reduce their impact and act as environmental leaders.

The score is based on the Council's climate-related projects, strategies and activities. These include its plans for expanding the county's electric vehicle charging network, its Tree Strategy and work to encourage the uptake of 'retrofit' home heat efficiency.

The A- score demonstrates that through these documents and climate activities, Somerset Council has demonstrated best practice standards across adaptation and mitigation, set ambitious goals and made progress towards achieving those goals.

Ahead of, and post vesting day of the new unitary authority on 1 April 2023, officers across Somerset Council have been working collaboratively on climate related activities.

## New waste reforms for businesses in England – Simpler Recycling

Somerset Council is urging businesses to log-on and start planning early for new rules on recycling.

The national 'Simpler Recycling' reforms announced in October mean all businesses - and organisations like hospitals and schools - must have separate food waste and recycling collections in place by the end of March 2025.

Businesses have a legal Duty of Care to store waste safely and to dispose of it using a registered waste carrier.

The Somerset Council-supported 'Business of Recycling' website has advice on how to prepare for the new regulations, including a tool that lets you check if your waste carrier is registered.

Businesses with fewer than ten full-time employees have until 31 March 2027 to meet these requirements.

Recyclable materials to be separated from general waste include:

- Glass such as drinks bottles and rinsed empty food jars
- Metal such as drinks cans and food tins
- Plastic such as rinsed empty food containers and bottles
- Paper such as old newspapers and envelopes
- Cardboard such as delivery boxes and packaging
- Food waste including tea bags, coffee grounds, leftovers or waste generated by food preparation (NB. There is no minimum amount for food waste)

Businesses will need to have a separate food bin, and a refuse bin, but recyclable materials can be mixed to reduce the number of bins needed.

Plastic, film, and flexibles collections across all premises will also be implemented by 31 March 2027.

DATE OF INVOICE	SUPPLIER	INVOICE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	NET	VAT	GROSS	Notes
22/11/2023	Amazon	DS-ASE-INV-GB-2023-484358334	Town Criers wig			£33.98	EMR
23/11/2023	Amazon	GB3GC2NABEY	hoover attachment	£17.48	£3.49	£20.97	
29/11/2023	AM Productions	Rave on	show settlement			£2,221.73	
27/11/2023	Bravo		716 equipment hire Greatest Magician Show	£21.34	£4.27	£25.61	
29/11/2023	Bravo		722 Technician - Cinderella show	£95.00	£19.00	£114.00	
01/11/2023	Business Waste	P1245877	paper waste collection - TC	£22.00	£4.40	£26.40	
27/11/2023	Hellends Kitchen	BHTC9	Mini buffet - Volunteers xmas do			£105.00	
21/11/2023	Highbridge & Burnham-on-Sea Carnival	BOSH 107	Remembrance Day Parade			£695.62	
23/11/2023	ITEC		929960 photocopier services	£82.48	£16.50	£98.98	
22/11/2023	J&R Food Service Ltd		948196 Icecreams - Princess Theatre	£532.86	£106.57	£639.43	
16/11/2023	JRB Enterprise Ltd		26240 Dog bag dispenser	£108.55	£21.71	£130.26	
22/11/2023	Loyal Company of Town Criers		40 Membership 2023 for Town Crier			£25.00	
15/11/2023	MJ Church Plant Ltd		495146 Waste services - cemeteries	£25.50	£5.10	£30.60	
15/11/2023	MJ Church Plant Ltd		495147 Waste services - cemeteries	£27.10	£5.44	£32.64	
15/11/2023	MJ Church Plant Ltd		495148 Waste services - cemeteries	£20.74	£4.15	£24.89	
09/11/2023	The Nornen Project CIC	N204	Show revenue - All Hands			£5,066.50	
23/11/2023	PPL PRS Ltd	01733196SIN2571100	PRS Music licence	£362.90	£72.58	£435.48	
27/11/2023	PPL PRS Ltd	01733196SIN2574697	PRS Music licence	£136.03	£27.21	£163.24	
27/11/2023	PPL PRS Ltd	01733196SIN2574699	PRS Music licence	£172.77	£34.55	£207.32	
22/11/2023	Proper Job	Z0009T02-467999	sweets, adapter, cable ties	£28.93	£5.80	£34.73	
29/11/2023	Purnells		125983 printing gift vouchers	£24.00	£4.80	£28.80	
23/11/2023	Radio Solutions	SO685776	4 x 2 way radios - Princess	£491.94	£98.39	£590.33	fixed asset
29/11/2023	Screwfix	A15202473182	Battery charger	£29.16	£5.83	£34.99	
22/11/2023	Screwfix	1438142811	thermal work gloves	£16.65	£3.32	£19.97	
23/11/2023	Screwfix	1438575505	gloves, ratchet anvil lopper	£57.47	£11.49	£68.96	
24/11/2023	SLCC	MEM246561-1	Town Clerk membership fee			£357.00	
27/11/2023	Somerset Council		30039788 Joint Funding public services contribution			£37,280.60	
24/11/2023	Spot on Supplies		31651264 cleaning supplies - PT	£100.68	£20.14	£120.82	
21/11/2023	TWC		63 window cleaning - Princess			£48.50	
30/11/2023	Biffa	308C31723	Waste services - Princess	£236.61	£47.32	£283.93	
27/11/2023	Burnham Evening Flower Club	27.11.23	Show settlement			£554.10	
01/12/2023	Business Waste	P1275703	paper waste collection - TC	£33.00	£6.60	£39.60	
30/10/2023	KJ Cleaning Services	PrincessT002	Cleaning - Princess			£570.00	
04/12/2023	KJ Cleaning Services	PrincessT004	Cleaning - Princess			£675.00	
30/11/2023	Lyreco		61505454 chairs, stationery & sundries	£410.68	£82.14	£492.82	
03/12/2023	Robson Electrics		91660 Defibrillator installation - Princess	£337.50	£67.50	£405.00	
01/12/2023	Sansum Solutions	INV-10697	Cleaning - TC	£280.16	£56.03	£336.19	
28/11/2023	V Jones		6368 Plumbing - Princess			£386.00	

09/11/2023	Robson Electronics		91629 Christmas tree lights & installation	£3,000.00	£600.00	£3,600.00
06/11/2023	PF Cusack		1449425 Road sign clip	£3.00	£0.60	£3.60
08/12/2023	Re:ACT	R-046	Cinderella settlement			£4,693.42 added on 11/12/23
						<u>£60,722.01</u>