

**SOMERSET COUNCIL**  
**Frome Town Council**  
**Cllr Dawn Denton**  
**May 2024**

**Somerset Press Releases:** You can view all the Somerset County Council press releases for the last month using this link: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/newsroom/>

**Selwood Academy:** I have been liaising with the school in relation to the school crossing funding that is being dramatically reduced by the Somerset Council. Cllr Adam Boyden and I have also met with them about their Academy Trust application.

**Business development:** There are many gaps in the work experience offering in the Frome area. I have arranged to meet with a range of different Somerset Council / government funded organisations to discuss how we can increase the offering and connect the business community with the education and youth services sectors.

**Bath Road tarmacking:** there is funding for this road to be repaired, but there is a hold up with the contracting. The council hopes to get this work started as soon as possible.

**Saxonvale:** the decision about the sale of the land will be made by the Somerset Council Executive committee. We are hoping this meeting will be held in Frome.

**Rode Solar Farm:** the planning application has been deferred for 3 months in the hope that the community, parish council, developer and landowners can come up with an application that works for everyone.

**Customer Service Access Point in the library:** there are many organisations and community members who rely on this in-person service. Without it, the library staff and the Discover Frome volunteers feel they will be trying to fire fight and are already stretched. I will be exploring options with the Somerset Council, but I fear with lack of finances, there is little we can do.

**Suez waste collection contract:** The Council's waste contractor, SUEZ, has disclosed figures showing significant annual losses on its £24m a year contract. It has made a number of contractual claims seeking adjustment to payment and while these are in dispute, without an increase in payments there is a risk that SUEZ may exit the contract, to limit its losses over the contract's remaining six years. A report to the Council's Executive Committee meeting recommends giving the Council's Chief Executive a mandate to negotiate with SUEZ to broker a deal which would stop SUEZ exiting the contract. The ongoing rerouting of collections is helping make rounds more efficient and as cost effective as possible, but even with this SUEZ considers the contract unviable.

**Revised waste collection routes:** Recycling and rubbish collection days are changing for 92,000 households in eastern parts of the county in June following changes made to the rest of the county earlier this year. From Monday June 17<sup>th</sup>, new collection routes are being introduced for many homes in the former South Somerset and Mendip districts. The new routes will make rounds more

efficient, more manageable for crews while reducing mileage and carbon emissions. The changes come at no additional cost to the council.

**Roadside grass-cutting:** From May 2024, where safe to do so, mowing routines across managed highway verges, open spaces, country parks and council property grounds will be reduced although safety and visibility around verges and public spaces such as play areas will be cut more regularly. On wider verges, only a 1-meter swathe is mowed, leaving the rest untouched to maintain biodiversity. Further information on the cutting schedule can be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/grass-cutting/>

**Children and Young Peoples Plan :** The new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for Somerset sets out the Council's aims for 2024-2030 including how services and communities are accountable for children and young people and how they will work together to ensure the ambitions of the plan are achieved. Members of Somerset Youth Forum have suggested that the most important priorities are:

- Having a better experience in education
- Leading healthier lives
- Help to improve your mental health
- Living in safer communities
- Building better relationships
- Being prepared for adulthood

The Council wants to encourage all individuals under the age of 25 to share their thoughts on these priorities via the online survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/dNHr44HCfn>

**Volunteer Drivers:** Since Covid-19 the numbers of volunteer drivers in Somerset has reduced by about 67 per cent. These dedicated drivers play a pivotal role in the community, providing essential transportation services to residents so the Council are calling out for new volunteers. Many residents who need the service live in rural areas with little or no access to public transport and are unable to drive. If you are working part-time, a parent, retired or just have some spare time on your hands and you have a car and at least half a day to a day to offer then you can get involved and make a positive impact on people's lives. Volunteer drivers receive training and are reimbursed expenses at 45p per mile (or 50p per mile with passengers).

Best wishes,

*Dawn*