

# **SOMERSET COUNCIL**

## **Frome Town Council**

### **Dawn Denton**

**APRIL 2023**

**Somerset Press Releases:** You can view all the Somerset County Council press releases for the last month using this link: <https://somersetnewsroom.com/category/press-releases/>

**Parish Roadshow:** The first Parish Roadshow will be held on *Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April between 4pm and 6pm in the Rode Village Hall*. Organisations that offer services and support across the district will be there to answer questions. We welcome the Village Agent, Mendip Health Connectors, the Heritage Connector, Somerset Bus Partnership, and Gardening Together. Please spread the word and pop in to say hello.

**Berkley School:** I have requested information about when the S106 conditions on the Edmund Park site kicked in so we can work out what is possible within the remaining time frame. I will nudge after Easter.

**FlexCollect Recycle Trial:** Houses in Frome North (and a few in Frome East) have been selected to participate in a recycle trial to collect plastic bags and wrapping at the end of May. These extra materials will be collected weekly from the kerbside along with all other recycling. Those households in the trial area will receive two letters before the trial begins. The council will also have two information sessions at venues in or near the selected areas. As soon as more information is made available, I will update.

This trial is to assess how the programme will be rolled out nationwide.

**Local Planning:** I have now received the first phase of planning training. The 2<sup>nd</sup> session is after Easter and once I understand the on-going issues I will update. Cllr Shannon Brook will be doing a full handover with me and Cllr Adam Boyden.

**Local Government Reorganisation:** Following the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) decision to support the move to a single Unitary Council, the new Council came into being on 1st April 2023. Somerset Council replaces the four District Councils and County Council providing a range of over 500 services. Both a single point of telephone or website contacts are available on 0300 123 2224 or [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk)

**Somerset County Council Finances:** Somerset County Council continues to show a significant projected overspend of £24.3 as at Month 9 (the latest figures available), with the main areas of Social Care causing the greatest overspends. There remain significant challenges in delivering the new Somerset Council budget given the current trend in overspend and the risk to some savings which are planned.

**Covid-19 Spring Booster:** As COVID-19 continues to infect thousands of people every week, over-75s and those with weakened immune systems will be offered a further dose of the vaccine this spring. The vaccine offers the best protection against the virus but immunity

wanes over time. The NHS plan will offer spring boosters to eligible members of the public from between 17 April and 30 June 2023.

**Younger drivers:** Somerset Council is backing a major new campaign aimed at younger drivers to raise awareness of the dangers of excessive speed on rural roads. A quarter of incidents involving fatalities or serious injuries on Somerset's rural roads involve younger drivers. The Department for Transport launched its Think! campaign earlier this month on video and radio. The adverts underline key messages around taking care, reducing speed, and respecting the road layout, particularly on rural roads. Visit [www.somersetroadsafety.org](http://www.somersetroadsafety.org) to find out more about initiatives and courses.

**Online Support for Carers:** Somerset Council has recently launched a three-month pilot project with Mobilise, an online business created by carers to help unpaid carers get the support they are entitled to. Mobilise will work directly with the existing commissioned Carers Service, including the Community Council for Somerset Agents, to ensure that targeted information will be given to carers and their families. This will include a range of online support including individual support calls – seven days a week. The Mobilise service is free for residents of Somerset and can be accessed via <https://support.mobilise.co.uk/somerset>

**Housing Support Scheme:** A new scheme to support people leaving hospital and returning to their own homes is demonstrating the advantage of bringing services together in the new unitary Somerset Council. The headline benefit of the scheme, is the provision of stairlifts on loan, cutting through the processing of the Disabled Facilities Grant. The loan gets Somerset residents back into their own homes while the grant is processed. The policy, includes support for insulation, help for essential repairs for residents on means-tested benefits and support to make homes dementia friendly. The new Council services will be accessible through [www.somerset.gov.uk](http://www.somerset.gov.uk)

**Lettings Agents:** Trading Standards is reminding letting agents of their legal obligation to protect money they are holding on behalf of a client after a tribunal upheld an £8,000 fine imposed on a firm. Somerset Trading Standards imposed the fine on a Frome letting agent, after they had repeatedly ignored advice to obtain Client Money Protection that protects landlords' and tenants' money held by a letting agent. The Client Money Protection Schemes protect the money of both the landlord and tenant in the event of the insolvency of the agent.

**Have a lovely Easter break!**

*Dawn Denford*