

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR FROME NORTH: FROME TOWN COUNCIL: UPDATED 15 MAY 2023

ADAM BOYDEN, SOMERSET COUNCILLOR FOR FROME NORTH

New Somerset Council:

A reminder that Somerset Council formed just last month and now provides all the services previously managed by Mendip District and Somerset County Councils. To access council services there is now a single website www.somerset.gov.uk and a single telephone number **0300 123 2224** (open from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday). Council Access Points, including in Frome Library will remain (with several more opening elsewhere).

The Council also started a **weekly email newsletter** you can sign up to at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/newsroom/>, as well as a monthly climate, environmental and ecological newsletter – you can sign up to receive that [here](#).

The first meeting of the full Frome Area Local Community Network (LCN), will be arranged in June, but further discussions are needed to plan this – see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/local-community-networks/>.

Cost of living support:

The Somerset Household Support Fund may be able to help support for vulnerable households which are struggling to afford household essentials – [here](#). Information on discounts or exemptions on Council Tax and to claim a Council Tax reduction (previously Council Tax Support) is [here](#).

Recycling collections:

Recycling collection crews worked last Sunday (14th May) to catch-up on outstanding recycling collections in villages and towns around Frome and other parts of Somerset. Collections took place one day later all week due to the coronation bank holiday, some collections were disrupted by flooding this week, and staffing shortages at Somerset Council's waste contractor SUEZ meant some collections were also delayed for a further day this week. Somerset Council sincerely apologises to anyone who has been affected by recent delays to collections. Please see [here](#) and <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/>.

Following the success of expanded Recycle More collections, Somerset Council is now part of a national trial to recycle flexible soft plastics as part of household recycling collections. The small-scale pilot trial collections will be start at the end of May, for around 3,600 homes in and around Frome (including Beckington), with households being invited to take part by letter. This will pick-up a wide range of plastic bags and wrapping, including carrier bags, bread bags, confectionery wrappers, crisp packets, food wrapping and cling film – [see here](#) for details.

In Defra's recently published league tables, Somerset's 2021-2022 recycling rate of 56.2% ranks it 28 out of 228 local authorities – putting it in the top 15% and top 30 – see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset-recycling-goes-top-30/>

Councillor advice surgeries:

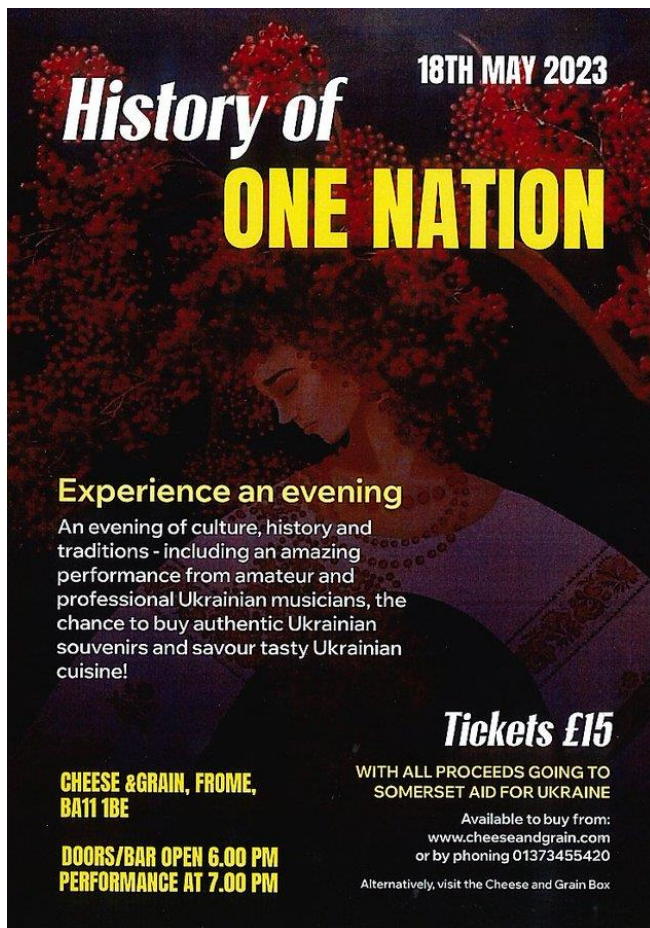
I have always kept in touch with residents via email newsletters and my website which has over 500 articles (to subscribe or get in touch please email me), but I know councillors need be visible and available, so I am holding new monthly informal advice surgeries where residents can come and talk about any issues or concerns. My first Community Chat was on Saturday 13th May in the Cheese & Grain café. My next is also there on **Saturday 3rd June** at 9.00-10.30am. More dates will be arranged in the villages.

Flooding in Somerset:

Recovery work continues after parts of Somerset were hit by flash flooding last week – see [here](#). To prepare every area of Somerset to cope in future, we will need extreme weather resilience plans for each parish, which will involve Somerset Council, parish councils and local councillors.

History of One Nation – Ukraine benefit concert:

Somerset Aid for Ukraine is hosting a special concert of entertainment and discovery in the Cheese & Grain on Thursday 18th May, ‘designed for the British who opened their homes and hearts to refugees from Ukraine’ – please see <https://www.cheeseandgrain.com/events/history-of-one-nation/> for tickets ‘This theatrical production is educational from a historical point of view, fascinating by the musical talents of participants and exciting from the emotional side. It combines elements of the performance, video clips from the history of Ukraine and wonderful music numbers performed by famous stars, professional singers and amateurs. The evening reveals the wealth of Ukrainian history and culture, the difficulties that Ukrainians faced on the historical path of development of the state ... All funds raised at this event will go to send medicines and humanitarian aid to people in Ukraine – please see www.somersetaidforukraine.org’.



18TH MAY 2023

History of **ONE NATION**

Experience an evening
An evening of culture, history and traditions - including an amazing performance from amateur and professional Ukrainian musicians, the chance to buy authentic Ukrainian souvenirs and savour tasty Ukrainian cuisine!

Tickets £15

**CHEESE & GRAIN, FROME,
BA11 1BE**

**DOORS/BAR OPEN 6.00 PM
PERFORMANCE AT 7.00 PM**

WITH ALL PROCEEDS GOING TO
SOMERSET AID FOR UKRAINE

Available to buy from:
www.cheeseandgrain.com
or by phoning 01373455420

Alternatively, visit the Cheese and Grain Box

Help make Somerset more accessible:

A year-long project to make Somerset more accessible for disabled people was launched on 1st April. ‘Accessible Somerset’ is an ambitious project which will ask disabled people how life could be improved in various areas. The project is seeking volunteers to share their views and is asking for individuals and organisations to get involved by contacting Disability.Inc@wecil.org.uk - please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/help-make-somerset-more-accessible-your-views-needed/>.

Mental Health Awareness Week and new app for students:

This week is Mental Health Awareness Week – see here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/get-snap-happy-this-mental-health-awareness-week-15-21-may/> and residents are being asked to share photos of their own ‘Happy Place’.

A new mental health app for young people has been launched in Somerset – the free *Tellmi* app is now available for all local 11-18 year olds, and gives young people the tools to manage their own mental health and support others – please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset-youth-parliament-urges-schools-to-promote-new-mental-health-app-for-students/>.

Great Big Green week:



I'm aware that Frome's Great Big Green Week will host 40 events and activities for all ages over 10 days from Saturday 10th to Sunday 18th June – <https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/great-big-green-week-2023-programme-announced/>.

The Rode, Beckington and Norton St Philip Climate Emergency Group are also organising four events in local villages, and you can sign up to the newsletter [here](#):

- Green Open Doors, Sunday 18th June in various locations with visits to over a dozen homes and businesses to see environmental initiatives in action – see [here](#).
- Tour of Tellisford Mill, Sunday 18th June – a guided tour of the hydro electric plant (well worth a visit) - free but tickets need to be booked in advance to manage numbers – see [here](#).
- Veggie Week 12th-18th June, extra vegan and vegetarian meals in participating pubs and restaurants including Cross Keys, Rode; The Mill at Rode; The Foresters, Beckington; The Woolpack, Beckington; The Full Moon at Rudge.
- How do we tackle the Climate Emergency? Saturday 17th June 2pm - 5pm at Rode Memorial Hall: A series of talks setting out ways in which we can tackle the Climate Emergency, from individual action to community initiatives – see [here](#).

Swimming Club to propose Bathing Water designation on River Frome:

As discussed at Norton St Philip Parish Council's meeting in April, Farleigh & District Swimming Club is planning to apply to the Government to designate their stretch of the River Frome at Farleigh Hungerford as an official Bathing Water. Designation of the site would recognise that the river is legitimately used for swimming here, and help put pressure on Wessex Water and the Environment Agency to reduce river pollution. Recently, I and Dawn visited the swimming club, and I have sent a letter of support for the application, and requested and received (via cllr Sarah Dyke) a letter of official support from Somerset Council. The club is expected to apply to DEFRA in the near future. Please see the club's website <https://farleighswimming.co.uk/>.



Fly nuisance:

This follows my report to you last month about the swarm of chironomid flies re-appearing at Frome's sewage treatment works, and some residents complaining of flies in their homes again. I heard back from Wessex Water's Head of Water Recycling that they had not had any complaints in recent months, and the netting on all the filter beds is in place and being maintained. Somerset Council's Environmental Health officers visited site the next day, and have informed me that officers observed the netting to be in place and fully intact for all the filter beds, that the previously adopted Fly Management Plan (v8) will be updated to include the netting and its maintenance and monitoring, and that they have not received any complaints around that time. However, since then, several residents have confirmed they have had a large number of flies in their homes, although less people seem to be affected. If flies enter your property and cause a nuisance, I am advising residents to make an official complaint, to:

- Wessex Water's complaints line **0345 600 4 6000** (Monday – Friday 8am-6pm) or at <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/customer-commitments/enquiries-and-complaints>
- Somerset Council – <https://mdc.somerset.gov.uk/make-an-environmental-complaint>

Please also let me know by email to adam.boyden@somerset.gov.uk and I will collate responses in a report to both Wessex and the Council. Frome Nub News covered the [story here](#), and BBC News wrote about it [here](#), after a radio interview on BBC Somerset radio on [11th May here](#) (the item starts at 7.35am, 1 hr 35 mins in). Wessex Water will hold a review meeting in June (which residents will be invited to). Please see [here](#) for more information.

Noise from idling freight trains:

I am also looking into complaints from some residents about the noise from idling engines at night in the Innox/Welshmill area along the quarry freight rail line at the rail traffic lights, which can disturb residents sleep, especially during warmer months when windows are opened. Please let me know if anyone is hearing complaints or has had previous contact with the minerals companies.

Public consultation on Saxonvale proposals:

I'm aware of the Acorn Property Group public consultation event on detailed planning proposals for a riverside park, footbridge and children play area at the Saxonvale site in Frome, on Thursday 25th May, and that the site is now subject to further legal action. Somerset Council's lead on the site remains Cllr Ros Wyke, Executive Lead Member for the Prosperity, Assets and Development portfolio which assumed responsibility for the land asset from Mendip District Council.

Affordable homes proposed at North Parade car park:

Plans have been submitted for the development of 18 new low-carbon affordable homes on an apparently underused part of Somerset Council's North Parade car park, comprising 9 houses and 9 flats. The scheme was initiated by Mendip District Council as part of the first social and affordable housing programme by a local council here for 20 years ([see here](#)), and draft plans were shown a public consultation last autumn ([see here](#)). The consultation runs until **17th May** – [please see here](#) for details.

My response as one of the division councillors is that I will not comment in detail at this stage as the application is likely to come to Planning Committee (as the site is owned by Somerset Council) of which I am a member, and that plans for social housing on brownfield sites should be supported, but that issues raised by residents on the impacts on trees, access, the use of the car park, and potential noise from freight trains, should be investigated. I note that Frome Town Council are in support (subject to caveats) and there have been only two comments from members of the public).

Public consultation on new solar farm near Rode:

Renewable energy developers 'Low Carbon' are holding a public consultation into their emerging plans for a solar farm development. The solar farm with battery storage, is being proposed on approximately 69 hectares of farmland adjacent to the A361, Bradford Road and Rode Hill to the east of Rode, and will have the capacity to generate approximately 49.9 Megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity. A public consultation is underway until Thursday 25th May, including a Webinar last week and a Drop-in event at Rode & District Memorial Hall on **17th May from 2.30 - 7.30pm**. The developers have also asked Somerset Council whether the future planning application will require Environmental Impact Assessment, submitting a description of the development and potential environmental impacts, and the proposed methods for assessing them including proposed photo viewpoints – please see [here](#) for details.

New homes proposed in Norton St Philip:

Three planning applications have been submitted recently for new housing in Norton St Philip by housing developer Lochailort:

- [2023/0640/FUL](#) – Land West Of 67 Fortescue Street, Erection of 8 dwellings, a new vehicular access & footpath links;
- [2023/0643/FUL](#) – Fortescue Fields Phase II – Erection of 27 dwellings including 8 affordable housing, with associated access and works; and
- [2023/0644/FUL](#) – Fortescue Fields Phase II – Erection of 30 dwellings including 9 affordable housing, with associated access and works. (the same site as 2023/0643/FUL).

These are all resubmissions of previous applications, and were discussed at Norton St Philip Parish Council's meeting on 10th May. The larger applications are likely to come to Somerset Council's East Planning Committee, and I will consider the need to refer the other. Somerset Council has agreed to extend the public consultation period on all three until **14th June**.

Neighbourhood Plans:

Norton St Philip Parish Council is consulting parish residents, landowners and stakeholders on the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish, until 25th June 2023. If adopted, it would become part of the development plan. The Draft Plan together with supporting documents are at <https://nortonstphilipneighbourhoodplan.com>. Comments should be submitted at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CVNXXS6>

Beckington Parish Council are also considering whether to start a Neighbourhood Plan, at their next meeting on Monday 22nd May (5pm, Beckington Memorial Hall). The agenda will be posted at <http://www.beckingtonparishcouncil.org.uk/meetings.php>. The new Locum Clerk is Paul Russell.

Appeal for 49 new homes in Rode rejected:

An outline planning application for up to 49 new homes on agricultural land at Church Lane, Rode, has been rejected at appeal. Application ref. [2021/0071/OTS](#) (appeal ref APP/Q3305/W/22/[3292838](#)) was rejected by a decision on 21st April after a two day virtual hearing, on the grounds that the harm to the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding landscape, and considerable harm to the settlement pattern, outweighed the benefits of the provision of housing, open spaces and biodiversity, and economic benefits.

Farleigh House licensing application causes residents concern:

Also discussed at the NSPPC meeting last week was the application by Bath Rugby Ltd for a premises licence for their training facility at Farleigh House, Farleigh Hungerford, to permit the sale of alcohol, late night refreshment, and recorded music and live music until 1am – [see here](#) and [here](#). Concerns are being raised by local residents about the potential impacts of noise and traffic, and the current and advertised uses of the facility. A number of meetings are now taking place to go through the issues. Representations can be made on the application until **23rd May**, to The Licensing Department, Somerset Council, Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet Somerset, BA4 5BT or by email to licensing.mendip@somerset.gov.uk

Rudge Lane:

On 26th April I met a group of residents in Rudge who are concerned about a new large unauthorised development along Rudge Lane. I have had discussions with the Planning team at Somerset Council and a Beckington Parish councillor. I understand that there has been a breach of planning control, and await news of the enforcement actions to be undertaken.

Frome College ‘school 20’:

I have had confirmation from Somerset Council officers that the proposed ‘20 when lights show’ informal speed limit lights around Frome College should be implemented in the next month.

Car park charging:

The potential for car park charging to be introduced at the Frome College/Merlin Theatre/Leisure Centre car park owned by Somerset Council (raised at your last meeting) has been subject to discussions between the parties, including with Dawn and I and Fusion Lifestyle. I asked Somerset Council (Exec lead member cllr Ros Wyke) to look into how charging can be avoided with outcomes satisfactory to all users. Discussions continue.

Rode roads:

I have asked Somerset Council officers for updates on the timescales and public consultation on the Traffic Regulation Order for the 30mph extension and 20mph speed limit, and Glasdon gates, village name plates and terminal signs, from Somerset Council’s Traffic Management, Road Safety and Parking Service. Officers have confirmed the proposed works for the Rode Hill/ Bradford Rd crossroads, to finalise the Small Improvement Scheme there (drawings circulated in March) should be implemented by mid-late June.

Police call for witnesses after fatal accident:

Police are calling for witnesses to come forward after a tragic fatal accident occurred between a car and a van at the junction of the A361 and Parkgate Lane, between Beckington and Rode, on Friday 24th March – [please see here](#). I have asked for a review of road safety in this area.

Truespeed broadband:

Broadband provider Truespeed is proposing to bring ultra fast broadband to Frome, Beckington and Norton St Philip this spring and summer – [see here](#). I went to the recent Town Council meeting with Truespeed to help relay resident’s concerns about the telegraph poles proposed in some areas of Stonebridge, and await their final decisions on how to respond to the objections.

Bus use is rising:

Figures show more people in Somerset are choosing to ‘Bus It’ following the introduction of lower fares and evening buses as part of Somerset Council’s Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). After the introduction of the £2 fare for a single journey in Somerset, funded by the Government, along with the Somerset Council and Somerset Bus Partnership ‘Bus It’ campaign, supported by Frome Town Council, passenger numbers have increased by around 14 per cent across the county. The Government has also officially announced its intention to continue the £2 fare across the country until **30th June**. Somerset Council and the Somerset Bus Partnership launched the ‘Bus It’ campaign last summer to try and encourage more people to ‘Bus It’, see [here](#).

Parks and Recreation:

I and Dawn attended the meeting with play contractors with Rob Holden on the Old Showfield to discuss the refresh and I look forward to further involvement in this important project.

The playground at Hawksworth Close has a new multi-purpose unit with a climbing frame and a slide, finished last week, and the twister playground should be finished this week. Already a parent of young children has sent thanks: *“My girls have been watching the building of the park all week and finally got to go and play this morning. The roundabout isn’t finished yet but they were very excited that they could play on the play set this morning...”*



Frome Skatepark project:

The Frome Skatepark project (which is raising money to design a new skate park in Frome) are holding a Ramp Antics event at Frome College on 27th May with skate lessons and free sessions from 11am – 5pm. See their Instagram account and posters for details.

Packsaddle Fields briefing:

Somerset Councillors were recently given an online briefing on the land at Packsaddle Way owned by Somerset Council by Estates team officers, including of a history of the involvement of the former

County Council. I and other councillors asked questions of the officers presenting, including about the decision last year and the local response. No decisions were made at the briefing. LiveWest is expected to submit a planning application later this year, after their pre-application consultation in March and April on a development of 74 houses and a disabled children's respite home

Greener homes project wins crucial grant funding:

Somerset Climate Action Network (SomersetCAN) has won a grant to set up a not-for-profit service (Retrofit Somerset) promoting and supporting 'retrofitting' to Somerset homes to help reduce energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions, in collaboration with Somerset Council and Frome, Glastonbury, and Bruton Town Councils – [see here](#).

Deadline approaches for two energy payments:

Householders can apply for Government payments to help towards the costs of heating their homes, but deadlines are approaching at the **end of May**. One is for people who heat their homes with an alternative fuel such as wood pellets, LPG or oil, as many do in rural areas; the second scheme is for households that have not received a £400 discount on their energy bills from an electricity supplier (in six instalments from Oct 2022 to March 2023) – so please see <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/deadline-approaches-for-two-alternative-fund-energy-payments/> if you might be eligible.

Meetings:

Meetings I have been to (online* or in person) since mid-April include:

- 18 April: Somerset Council briefing on Local Community Networks*.
- 22 April: Farleigh & District Swimming Club.
- 24 April: Fusion Lifestyle at Frome Sports Centre.
- 26 April: residents in Rudge.
- 27 April: Frome Town Council team and bidding play contractors at Old Showfield play area.
- 4 May: Somerset Council briefing* on Packsaddle Fields.
- 9 May: Truespeed at Frome Town Hall; Beckington Parish Council, and Rode Parish Council
- 10 May: Norton St Philip Parish Council meeting on planning and licensing applications.
- 11-12 May: Farleigh Hungerford residents, Farleigh House, Somerset Council licensing officer and NSP parish councillors.
- 15 May: Tellisford Parish Meeting AGM, at The House, Woolverton

Meetings in the near future include:

- Somerset Council [meetings](#):
 - 17 May: 10am Climate & Place Scrutiny Committee: phosphates mitigation, electric vehicle charging, the highways service, and the new approach to scrutiny, [see here](#)
 - 24th May – AGM Full Council – agenda and reports are now [online here](#). This will include:
 - Annual and various reports, including on redundancies arising from the senior leadership restructure
 - Motions on treating experience in care as a protected characteristic, and a discounted bus pass for 16-25 year olds.
 - 31st May – Adults & Health Scrutiny
- 17 May, 7pm: Frome Town Council: Annual Town Council

- 22 May: Beckington Parish Council, Extraordinary Meeting, 5pm at Beckington Memorial Hall
- 22 May: Lullington Parish Meeting, 6pm at All Saints Church
- 24 May: Norton St Philip PC Annual Council and Annual Parish meetings

There are plenty of other issues going on that cannot currently be reported. Please get in touch if you have any concerns or questions. I hope this is useful. Most of this newsletter is also posted online.

Best wishes,

Adam

Adam Boyden, Somerset Councillor for Frome North (Liberal Democrat)

Email: adam.boyden@somerset.gov.uk

Phone: 07809284817

Web: <https://adamboyden.mycouncillor.org.uk/>