

SOMERSET COUNCIL

Frome Town Council

Cllr Dawn Denton

AUGUST 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/>

Berkley School: The Secretary of State for Education, Gillain Keegan MP, visited the Berkley School to find out about the work they are currently doing and their current struggle with moving. I am getting the final details and triggers of the S106 conditions next week from the Frome Planning Officer and will submit this (with the completed report) to Cllr Tessa Munt (Somerset Council Lead for Education) and to Sarah Dyke MP. My frustration has been that some statistics of school placement predictions (coming out of the same Somerset department) say that the schools are full, and others say that schools are not full. I believe this is as far as I can take this. It will cost up to £14 million to move the school, so this needs to be with decision-makers who can make it happen. This report will be completed and submitted in August.

Showfield Play Area review of shortlist: It was lovely to be invited to be part of this review and I look forward to seeing how it develops.

Housing meeting: Having attended the housing crisis meeting, I would like to offer my support in any way needed.

Council Tax Discounts: The council has asked for names of those who have not been able to access their discounts. I responded asking about their criteria and how it is calculated etc. I have not heard back and will chase in August.

Thomas Bun Close: I am pleased that this work has finally been carried out and the residents now have an improved (and completed) entrance to their close.

LCN: I am pleased we have had our first meeting and look forward to offering my support in whatever capacity is needed.

Council Finances: Although the 2022/3 Accounts for the five legacy Councils (District and County) are yet to be finalised and may still not be audited before Christmas, the latest projection is that there will be a £20m overspend which will need to be met from reserves. Perhaps more worrying is the first accounts available since April for

the new Unitary Council shows a projected overspend more than £28 million for the current year. Again reserves will have to be used unless significant savings are made in the remaining 9 months of the year.

Phosphate mitigation: Somerset Council is hoping to secure £10.5m Government funding to deliver phosphate mitigation measures which will unlock the delivery of 18,000 new homes across the area. The funding would be used to expand the existing phosphate credit scheme and deliver mitigation measures including the installation of modular units to provide a secondary treatment process at wastewater treatment works in the catchment area. Salinity Solutions and Wessex Water have delivered a no-cost trial to demonstrate the efficacy of their modular water treatment units for phosphate mitigation. A unit has been in place at the Fivehead Wastewater Treatment Works for two weeks allowing independent water sampling to be undertaken. Early indications show promising results with the first verified laboratory results showing over 98% of phosphates and 88% of nitrates removed.

Volunteers needed: From supporting people looking for work to making a real difference to young people, there's a Somerset Council volunteer role just waiting to be filled! Two openings are available with the Youth Justice Team:

- **Family Group Conference Volunteers:** A family group conference is led by family members to plan and make decisions for a child who is at risk. Volunteers in this role support parents who may struggle to express their views.
- **Reparation Mentors:** Volunteers in this role support young people to fully participate in reparation work as part of a Court Order. This is a really rewarding role where you are actively supporting the young person to develop life skills whilst supporting their local community.

In addition the Schools Appeals Panel is looking for independent members either with or without direct experience in schools. Panel members help to make sure all the appeals for maintained schools and academies are conducted in a fair and transparent way. Appeals can include admissions, exclusions, and transport. Information can be found at <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/>

Yeovil Literary Festival: Yeovil Literary Festival takes place this year between Thursday 26 and Monday 30 October with events taking place at Westlands Entertainment Venue and Yeovil Library. Tickets have gone on sale for events including Deborah Meaden, Sarah Beeny, Noel Fitzpatrick, Chris Packham, Kate Mosse, Ian Dunt, Roger McGough and Tommy Jessop. Visit <https://www.yeovilliteraryfestival.co.uk/> to book tickets or call 01935 422884.

Allergen laws: 100 sandwich shops, delis across Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay have recently been tested for compliance of new governments legislation on allergens. Trading standards found that 56 out of 100 businesses were in breach of the new rules which require full ingredient and allergen labelling on all food made on premises and pre-packed for direct sale. Of those 56 some 34 premises failed because they contained an undeclared allergen, often because the product had little or no labelling. All 56 premises are now being advised as to how to meet the new safety standards.

Have a lovely summer,

Dawn