

Somerset Council Report

Stoke Sub Hamdon Parish Council 3rd June 2026

1 Somerset Matters

1.1 - Could You Foster a Child in Somerset?

To mark [Foster Care Fortnight](#), [Fostering in Somerset](#) recently held a series of informal drop-in events across the county, giving residents a relaxed chance to meet local foster carers and find out more. With more than 650 children currently in care in Somerset, more local foster carers are needed to help children stay close to their schools, friends and communities.

If the events sparked your interest, it's not too late to take the next step. Visit the [Get involved](#) page or follow [@FosteringInSomerset](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [X](#) to find out more about fostering in Somerset.

1.2 - Somerset Plans 580 New Council Homes by 2031

Somerset Council has adopted a new [Social Housing Development Strategy](#) with an ambitious target to build 580 affordable, energy-efficient council homes by March 2031. Developed jointly with [Homes in Somerset](#), the strategy focuses on affordability, sustainability and meeting the needs of diverse communities across the county, including rural areas. Schemes already completed include Minehead's [Rainbow Way Development](#) and Taunton's [Lavinia House](#), with [Penlea](#) in Bridgwater and [North Woolaway](#) in Taunton currently in development.

1.3 - Somerset Council Sets Out New Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Somerset Council has agreed a new [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2026–2030](#) with a focused set of priorities including improving access to services for digitally excluded people, tackling discrimination in schools, strengthening support for disabled employees, and demonstrating leadership on equality in the community.

Council Leader [Cllr Bill Revans](#) said: "Equality is not an add-on to what we do – it goes to the heart of how we serve our communities and employ people. Our aim is simple: a fairer Somerset where everyone has the opportunity to thrive."

1.4 - Somerset Council Builds Top Team to Seize the Opportunities Ahead

Somerset Council Leader Cllr Bill Revans has added new faces to his executive team, putting in place a leadership line-up best placed to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities facing Somerset.

Cllr Revans remains Leader with responsibility for Governance and Communications, alongside Deputy Leader Cllr Liz Leyshon covering Finance, Procurement and Performance. The nine-strong Lead Member team is completed by Cllr Sarah Wakefield (Adult Services, Housing and Homelessness), Cllr Heather Shearer (Children, Families and Education), Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts (Communities, Environment and Climate Change), Cllr Mike Rigby (Economic Development, Planning and Assets), Cllr Richard Wilkins (Highways and Transport), Cllr Evie Potts-Jones (SEND, Public Health and Equalities and Diversity) and Cllr Theo Butt Philip (Transformation, Human Resources and Localities).

Supporting the executive are eight Associate Lead Members: Cllr Ros Wyke (Active Travel), Cllr Cara Strom (Adult Social Care and Housing), Cllr David Woan (Business Strategy), Cllr Jo Roundell-Greene (Children's Services and Education Strategy), Cllr Steve Ashton (Climate Change), Cllr Claire Sully (Community Resilience), Cllr Nicola Clark (Culture and Leisure) and Cllr Ewan Cameron (Transformation and Prevention).

1.5 - Somerset Roads: Recovering from a Record Wet Winter

One of the wettest winters on record has caused a near 62% surge in potholes across Somerset, with 19,277 logged between January and early May 2026, compared to 11,908 in the same period last year. Extra teams and machinery were rapidly deployed, and 15,771 have already been repaired — averaging 876 fixes a week. March alone saw 4,964 potholes repaired.

The response goes beyond reactive repairs: 831,000 sqm of road have been surface dressed this year — a preventative treatment that extends road life and helps stop potholes forming — while a major resurfacing programme has already covered 31,000 sqm across the county.

<u>Potholes logged</u> April: 2,905 March: 5,035 February: 6,068 January: 4,711	<u>Repairs per month</u> April (4-week period): 3,739 March (5-week period): 4,964 February: 3,554 January: 2,541
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If you spot a problem on the road you can report it quickly and easily via the Council's [Report a problem on the road](#) webpage. Follow [@TravelSomerset](#) on [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) and [Facebook](#) for live travel updates, roadworks and other highways news.

1.6 - M5 Closures: Council Leader Sparks Debate Over Impact on Somerset Roads

Somerset Council Leader Cllr Bill Revans has prompted growing debate about the impact of M5 closures on Somerset's road network. Cllr Revans warned that local roads around the M5 are struggling to cope with the volume of traffic diverted onto them during motorway closures, which he says are happening with "significant regularity". He called on National Highways and Avon and Somerset Police to work with the council on new plans for managing the motorway, arguing that the surrounding road network is simply not built to handle displaced traffic when major incidents force the M5 to shut.

Cllr Revans has opened up a wider conversation about what needs to change. In response, Avon and Somerset Police acknowledged that some A-roads struggled with "huge volumes of traffic" and signalled that improving traffic flow and reviewing traffic light systems would be a goal through partnership working. National Highways said it would continue to engage with emergency services and Somerset Council to identify opportunities for improvement.

The debate reflects a widely felt frustration across Somerset communities and businesses — and a growing consensus that the status quo is no longer acceptable.

1.7 - Somerset's First Electric Bus Launches in Frome

Somerset Council has launched its first public service electric bus on the 30 route in Frome. The 16-seat, low-floor, wheelchair-friendly vehicle is zero emission and provides a sustainable link for residents needing to reach town centre services

1.8 - Somerset Council Team Shortlisted for National Award

Somerset Council's Major Infrastructure Programmes Group (IPG) has been shortlisted for the *Team of the Year* award at the [CIHT Annual Awards 2026](#). Established in 2015, the team has delivered more than £110 million of highway infrastructure, including major schemes at M5 Junctions 23, 25 and 26, Colley Lane in Bridgwater, and Creech Castle in Taunton.

Councillor Richard Wilkins said: "Being shortlisted for this prestigious national award is a testament to the dedication, expertise and collaborative spirit of our Infrastructure Programmes Group. Their consistent track record of delivering high-quality projects that benefit our communities, while maintaining strong cost and programme control, sets a benchmark for infrastructure delivery across the public sector." Winners will be announced at the CIHT ceremony in London later this year.

1.9 - Somerset on Screen

[Screen Somerset](#), Somerset Council's film office, exists to attract productions to the region — and last summer it helped bring one of the biggest: [Masters of the Universe](#), the new He-Man film, which shot scenes at [Wells Cathedral](#) and [Wookey Hole Caves](#). Last financial year, film and TV productions supported by the initiative brought an estimated £6.6 million into the local economy.

To mark the film's release, [Wells Film Centre](#) is hosting a charity screening on 3 June in aid of Medicinema, which brings cinema to hospital patients across the UK. Tickets are £10 and include a drink. Somerset's own [James Purefoy](#) features in a leading role as King Randor.

[Masters of the Universe](#) is released in the UK on 3 June, starring [Nicholas Galitzine](#) as Prince Adam/He-Man, [Jared Leto](#) as Skeletor, [Camila Mendes](#) as Teela and [Idris Elba](#) as Duncan/Man-At-Arms. Also released on 27 May is [Season 2 of A Good Girl's Guide to Murder](#) on Netflix and BBC, with the Somerset town of [Axbridge](#) again

standing in as the fictional Little Kilton. A small city. A global franchise. And a council quietly making it happen!

1.10 - Bulky Waste Given New Life Through British Heart Foundation Partnership

Somerset Council and collections partner SUEZ have teamed up with the [British Heart Foundation](#) so that suitable bulky items — sofas, tables, chairs and more — are taken to the SUEZ depot in Bridgwater and passed on for resale at the BHF's [Taunton store](#), rather than being recycled. When booking a [bulky waste collection](#), residents can opt in to have their items reused, provided they are in good condition and carry the required fire safety tags.

1.11 - Free NHS Health Checks Now Available in Wellington

Residents aged 40 to 74 can book a free NHS Health Check at [Wellington Library](#) every Wednesday or [Kings Arms Hub](#) every Tuesday. The 20–30 minute check covers blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar, and screens for early signs of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and diabetes. Book via the Council's [booking page](#).

Battery fires prompt recycling warning

Two fires at a Taunton recycling facility and in a collection lorry have led Somerset Council and contractor SUEZ to remind residents to dispose of hazardous items correctly. Both were likely caused by an undetected battery.

Lithium-ion batteries and vapes must never go in the rubbish; place them in a small clear tied plastic bag on top of a recycling bin. Gas canisters should be taken to a recycling centre. [Further guidance here](#).

1.12 - Reminder: Check or Renew Your Garden Waste Subscription

Somerset residents are reminded that garden waste subscriptions do not auto-renew, so an annual renewal is needed to avoid a break in collections. The service offers fortnightly collections for 50 weeks of the year. Residents can check their renewal date via the Council's [Check Garden Waste](#) form, or renew and sign up via the [Garden Waste subscription page](#).

1.13 - Somerset Gaming Sessions Clock Up 15,000 Visits in Four Years

[GameChanger](#), a free weekly gaming session for adults who are autistic, have learning disabilities, or identify as neurodiverse, is celebrating its fourth anniversary this June. Run by Love Community CIC across libraries in Taunton, Yeovil and Glastonbury and a community centre in Bridgwater, it has clocked up 15,140 visits across 581 sessions since launching in 2022.

There are no referrals, no assessments and no pressure — people come and go as they please. The aim is as much about social connection as gaming itself.

1.14 - Ageing traffic signals to be replaced across Somerset

Somerset Council is replacing 30-year-old traffic signals at Stapleton Cross in Martock, the A37 Lydford Cross Keys, and the B3153 at Lovington. Work begins on 22 June, with phased closures and overnight works running through to November 2026.

A [public drop-in session](#) is being held at Charlton Community Centre, Charlton Adam on Monday 1 June, 3–6.30pm. For travel updates follow [@TravelSomerset](#).

1.15 - Cub Scouts take on dog fouling at Ham Hill

Three siblings from West Coker Cub Scout Group — Jasper, Nancy and Leo Bradshaw — have designed a series of posters to tackle dog fouling at Ham Hill, working alongside the site's rangers as part of their Scout award programmes. [Somerset Council has praised the initiative](#), with 28 bins available across the site for dog waste disposal.

1.16 - A30 Hendford Hill, Yeovil — Road Closure for Repairs

The A30 Hendford Hill in Yeovil closed from 26 May for up to two weeks for urgent repairs following embankment damage caused by Storm Chandra. The road had already been restricted to northbound traffic only after a bank slippage and fallen trees. Repair work involves clearing soil and debris, then installing concrete barriers at the base of the slope to prevent future falls. Diversions are in place, and the road is expected to reopen fully in both directions once work is complete.

1.17 - Somerset Food Waste Campaign Recognised at National Awards

Somerset Council and waste contractor SUEZ were finalists in the *Food Waste and Organics Initiative of the Year* category at the [National Awards for Excellence](#) in London on 13th of May. The campaign to boost [food waste recycling](#) delivered a 38% rise in food waste bin orders, a 5% increase in food waste collected, and savings of more than £40,000 in disposal costs.

1.19 - New Food Waste Recycling Trucks Rolling Out Across Somerset

A new fleet of food waste collection vehicles, introduced by [SUEZ](#) in partnership with Somerset Council, means every household in Somerset — including flats and Houses of Multiple Occupancy — can now recycle food waste. The trucks feature illustrated livery explaining the journey from kitchen caddy to green energy and fertiliser. For more information on collections, visit the Council's [waste pages](#).

1.20 - Government Backs Bid to Reinstate B3191 Cleeve Hill Road near Watchet

The Department for Transport has confirmed it will support Somerset Council's bid to the Government's Structures Fund to reinstate the B3191 Cleeve Hill road near Watchet, which has been closed to motor vehicles since January 2023 following cliff movement. The proposed scheme costing an estimated £30 to £40 million would either make the existing route safe for vehicles or redirect it further inland.

1.21 - New Sexual Health Clinic Opens in Yeovil

A new [SWISH](#) (Somerset-Wide Integrated Sexual Health) clinic has opened at [Summerlands Health Park](#) on Preston Road, Yeovil. Commissioned by Somerset Council and run by [Somerset NHS Foundation Trust](#), it brings together sexual and reproductive health services under one roof for the first time in the town. The free, confidential service — open to all ages without a GP referral — offers STI testing and treatment, contraception including coils and implants, emergency contraception, HIV prevention medication, and sexual health vaccinations for eligible people.

1.22 - Somerset's Little Book of Health and Wellbeing Relaunched

Somerset Council's Public Health team has relaunched its Little Book of Health and Wellbeing, a free, practical guide offering evidence-based advice on managing stress, improving sleep, diet and physical activity, and building resilience. It can be downloaded via the [Healthy Somerset](#) website. If you are concerned about your own or someone else's mental health, call NHS [111](#) and select option 2 for the 24/7 mental health helpline, or call 999 in an emergency.

1.23 - Help Shape Alcohol Support Services in Somerset

Somerset Council and Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service (SDAS) are inviting residents to take part in an [anonymous survey](#) to help understand why people don't seek help for alcohol problems. Open to anyone aged 18 and over in Somerset, it takes just a few minutes and covers both personal experiences and those of someone you know. Findings will be used to shape how services are designed and delivered. If you need support now, visit turning-point.co.uk/services/sdas or call [0300 303 8788](tel:03003038788).

2 - Local Issues

2.1 - Roadside trees at East Stoke – Included in the next contract out for tender now. Still awaiting details of this tender. Ongoing monitoring. Recent report suggests no current action.

2.2 - Traffic and Road Safety - Request to update lines and 'SLOW' at the end of West Street to improve visual notification of junction, complete. New pole sign expected to be placed for earlier notification of junction. This has been agreed, no known date for it to be done at this time.

New speed data taken by Avon and Somerset Police indicating no significant concern that would prompt further action or active measures by them at this time.

2.3 - Brocks Mount – John N to follow up with officers on confirming the current situation and seek solutions to outstanding missing digital plans and data.

2.4 - Stoke drainage Survey - Report shared with Highways for comment and action. Productive meeting with John N, to which he will put forward requests for more in depth inspections to then ascertain the work that needs to be carried out to rectify broken gullies and damaged pipes. Paper docs issued which assisted in full understanding whilst discussions and walk around took place.

2.5 – Seawall – Discussed and viewed condition and concerns during drainage meeting. Communications between SC and the Dutchy proposed to look for solutions before further deterioration and possible collapse.

Regards Emily and John

Report it first: useful Links to share with your communities

Visit Report a problem on the road: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

Potholes and road damage

Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

For traffic updates and roadworks follow @travelsomerset on X and Facebook.

Live travel information

<https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/>

Report a problem with a street light

We maintain and repair street lights to national standards to provide safe access to all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-with-a-street-light/>

Roads, travel and parking, road signs, markings and lighting

Includes information about non-illuminated bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate and how to apply for a new road sign Speed limits: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/road-signs-bollards-and-road-markings/>

Speed limits

Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/speed-limits/>

Traffic lights

We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the county

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/traffic-lights/>

Street and roadworks

We maintain the roads and pavements that are managed at public expense in Somerset

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/street-and-roadworks/>

Sign-up for the latest climate news:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-food-safety/climate-and-ecological-emergency/newsletter-sign-up/>.