

# County Councillor's Brief for Town & Parish Councils



South Petherton and Islemoor Division

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- **Travel Somerset – your new destination for live traffic and travel information. STOP PRESS** The Travel Somerset website can be found at [www.travelsomerset.co.uk](http://www.travelsomerset.co.uk) while the Twitter account is @TravelSomerset. Anyone planning a journey in Somerset can now find in one place all the information they need to avoid unnecessary delays. The new mobile-friendly website, launched on 3 Aug by Somerset County Council, offers live updates of unplanned travel incidents, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also has a searchable map showing details of all current and future planned roadworks and road closures in Somerset, provides live updates directly from the County Council's traffic control team. If you spot a problem which they're not aware of, you can tweet them directly so they can help share this with the travelling public. The new website also has information on buses and public transport, live departure boards for all Somerset's train stations, flight details for local airports, and sections on walking and cycling. This will continue to be developed and improved in future.
- **Childhood Health APP developed by Musgrove Hospital. Increasing numbers of parents using Musgrove's mobile app for common childhood health concerns - 06 July 2016.** Growing numbers of parents in the south west are now using an innovative NHS mobile app created by consultants at Musgrove Park Hospital to get the latest advice and information about common childhood health concerns. A total of 2,500 parents across the south west used the HANDi paediatric app in June 2016. The app was developed by paediatric consultants at Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton to empower parents to provide information about common childhood illnesses in an easily accessible form. Parents are therefore able to work in partnership with healthcare professionals to decide on the appropriate assessment and treatment for their own child. It gives parents access to home care plans, as well as GP and hospital clinical guidelines. It also ensures families are fully informed with information about when and how to ask for help, along with what to expect when their child is being assessed. It means there is a single care pathway from home, through community health care and into hospital that can be clearly seen by everyone involved in the 'system'. The most common childhood illnesses are covered in the app: are: Diarrhoea and vomiting, 'Chesty baby' illnesses, such as bronchiolitis, asthma and croup, 'Chesty child' illnesses, such as wheezing and asthma, High temperature, Abdominal pain, and Common

new born problems. The app takes parents through a series of questions about the symptoms their child is experiencing and then advises on the best course of action, whether that's to treat at home, make a GP appointment, go to a minor injuries unit, or head to A&E. The HANDi paediatric app is available to download for free onto any Apple or Android smartphone or tablet by searching for 'HANDi Paediatric' in your mobile app store.

- **New Memorial dedicated to Somerset holder of the Victoria Cross.** I would like to share a really touching story with you. On 2 July a memorial stone was officially dedicated to Arthur Batten Poole VC MC who lived in the parish of Rode and Woolverton near Frome. This came about because a resident of the parish pointed out there was no recognition of his valour and award in his family village. A former Royal Artillery Colonel, Peter Bates managed to get special permission for a commemorative stone to be placed at the War Memorial in the centre of the village. Special because these stones are normally only permitted in the Parish of birth and permission had to be granted from Chelsea and Westminster to allow the stone to be placed near to the family home. There was a very moving service at the graveside and a further dedication presided by Brigadier David Godsall, Deputy Lord Lieutenant with representatives of the Community, The Royal British Legion, the nearby garrison of Warminster and myself, representing the Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant partnership that works to ensure the armed forces are not disadvantaged in Somerset. Arthur Batten Poole won his VC during the Battle of the Somme whilst leading trench raid and assisted the rescue of several of his men, during which he was severely wounded. A very brave officer. Somerset boasts 10 holders of the Victoria Cross, nine are buried in Somerset Graveyards but only one was actually born in the County, Frederick Cockayne Elton from Whitestaunton. <http://www.victoriacross.org.uk/cosomers.html>
- **Combined Authority on the table following positive Devolution summit. Somerset and Devon councils have been reassured that their devolution proposals do not require an elected mayor.** At a recent summit meeting with council leaders, Local Government Secretary Greg Clark said Government would not impose an elected Mayor as part of any Heart of the South West (HotSW) Devolution Partnership deal. New powers would instead be overseen by a Combined Authority consisting of representatives of Devon and Somerset county councils, Plymouth and Torbay councils, the 13 district councils in the two counties and Dartmoor and Exmoor national parks. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) would also have a non-voting seat on the Combined Authority. Leaders of the councils and partners have already backed the plan. Full public consultation on any proposal to introduce a Combined Authority will take place as part of the negotiation process with the Government and is required before an Order can be made in Parliament to establish such an authority. The HotSW Partnership has already submitted its 'Prospectus for Productivity' to the Government in a bid to win more powers to boost jobs and growth. The partnership says it wants a 'devolution revolution' to improve the lives of people in Devon and Somerset. The prospectus was endorsed by every local authority in the two counties and they are now being asked to give the green light for more detailed negotiations with the Government. The document says the proposed changes would result in higher productivity and better-paid jobs, improved road, rail and broadband links and more homes for the region's growing population. There would also be radical reforms to integrate health and social care to allow the ageing population to be better looked after, tailored support for growing businesses and the creation of a centre of excellence for skills development. The devolution revolution would see more powers and finance devolved from Westminster to the region to close the productivity gap and allow local people to benefit from a thriving economy. Currently productivity in the South West is running at less than 80 per cent of the national average.
- **Somerset County Council's Listening Learning Changing roadshow**, part of a series of 11 visits across the county, spent two days at the Yeovil Showground (15/16 July) and on Friday, 5 August & Sunday 6 August, they were at the Taunton Flower Show. You can also

complete the survey on line. [www.somerset.gov.uk/listening](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/listening) Central Government funding for the County Council fell by £15m last year and is due to fall by a further £40m by 2019/2020. At the same time, demand for the authority's services, particularly Adult Social Care, is increasing, driven largely by Somerset's ageing population. In less than 20 years, people aged 65 and over will make up more than a quarter of the population in almost every part of the county. This is the fourth year the authority has run the events, asking people to try their hand at balancing its budget on a giant set of scales and asking questions about its priorities and other key issues. We have big ambitions for future, with initiatives like the Vision for Somerset, but we also have savings to make because of the big reductions in funding from central Government and increasing demand for our services." People can also show their priorities by placing coins in 'Think Tanks' and complete a short questionnaire. The next roadshows are to be held: 20 August, stand at Bridgwater Market (9am - 2pm); 21 August Shepton Mallet, Mid Somerset Show 8am - 6pm and Saturday, 3 September at the Wellington Food Festival (10am - 4pm).

- **New dimension for learning disability services. A pioneering plan to transfer Somerset's Learning Disabilities services to a social enterprise was given the green light (Monday 11 July).** The County Council's Cabinet endorsed proposals to move the management of the services currently provided in-house by the Council's Learning Disabilities Provider Service (LDPS) to a new, not-for-profit Social Enterprise organisation. The LDPS is jointly commissioned by the County Council and the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). On 23 June, the CCG considered and approved the recommendation, subject to the final financial position of the contracts. The contract to set up the new social enterprise will be awarded to Dimensions UK, a national not for profit company, in a move to secure the long-term sustainability of the services. As more younger people opt to get their support from non-council providers, the LDPS is supporting an increasingly aging group of customers. Without change it faced potential decline and instability. A social enterprise will be more flexible, able to set up new services quickly and offer the kind of support that younger people are seeking. The aim is that by spring next year services supporting around 900 people would transfer to the new social enterprise, including long-term residential care, supported living, home care, crisis support and employment support. Around 1,100 Council staff (over 900 FTE) will transfer to the new enterprise under the proposals. Trade unions have been engaged throughout, and transferring County Council staff will be able to continue their membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- **Somerset children in care's achievements praised at annual Awards.** The progress, positivity and achievements of Somerset children and young people looked after have been celebrated at their Annual Achievement Awards. 240 children were recognised for their efforts through nominations from Somerset County Council foster carers, schools, social and youth workers and other Children's Services professionals. The children and young people, spanning toddlers to young adults, were commended across five categories: Personal Achievement – showing resilience or personal development; Positive Pastimes – doing well in sport, music, social, arts or leisure activities; Education, Training and Employment – achieving at school, college, in training or work; Helping Others – helping or making a difference to other people; Courage – being brave in dealing with personal illness or tragedy, or helping and supporting those around them. Among those nominated were the 11 to 16 year-olds who had created the 'Dreams and Aspirations' exhibition, celebrating their hopes and ambitions for the future, which launched Foster Care Fortnight in May. Their bright and brilliant artwork is currently on display at Taunton Library, following stints at the Brewhouse Theatre and Yeovil and Bridgwater Libraries. Other young people's commendations were given for volunteering with the RNLI and for rugby success, including winning the Sedgemoor Area competition and becoming county runners-up.
- **Celebrating the work of Somerset's first ever Young People's Champions.** At the end of a very successful year, the first ever Young People's Champions to work for Somerset County Council's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Engagement and Participation Team are heading to University. Somerset has developed this pioneering way of working, providing work experience to young people and giving them the opportunity to shape the services they and others receive. Ellen Collard and Shane Dangar were the first

young people to take on the role early in 2015 and have worked with the Participation Officer, Jemma Lang, to ensure the voices of other children and young people with SEND are listened to. Harry Tavare and Kiah Durham have been successfully appointed as Young People's Champions for the coming year and will continue to lead the way for engagement and participation of children and young people with SEND in Somerset. Since the team was established they have been involved in a number of projects that have helped improve the engagement of children, young people and their families including Hosted an annual conference on the first anniversary of the SEND Reforms; Created 'The Unstoppables' – a forum that gives children and young people with SEND a chance to have their say on things that matter to them; Developed online learning modules raising awareness of SEND and the SEND Reforms for Somerset County Council staff; Produced videos which gave children and their families a chance to talk about their experiences of SEND.

- The SEND Engagement and Participation Team have a Facebook page. Follow them by visiting [www.facebook.com/sendparticipationteam](http://www.facebook.com/sendparticipationteam).
- **Double celebrations for World Breastfeeding Week. Somerset County Council is proud to celebrate two recent achievements to promote the benefits of breastfeeding to women during World Breastfeeding Week (1-7th August 2016).** World Breastfeeding Week 2016 promotes the essential role breastfeeding plays in the world's survival and for good health and wellbeing. 'Baby Friendly' stage 3 status has been achieved for a second time by Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton, with the support of Somerset County Council. The celebrated UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) award is in recognition of the support provided on breastfeeding and parent-infant relationships. Plus, it is a double celebration as both acute hospitals, Musgrove Park Hospital and Yeovil District Hospital have signed up to the Somerset County Council 'Positive about Breastfeeding' scheme. The scheme encourages public places and businesses to offer support and a warm welcome to mothers who wish to breastfeed when out and about and encourages them to initiate breastfeeding and do so for longer.
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