

# SOMERSET UNITARY COUNCIL REPORT

## CLLR SARAH DYKE & CLLR NICOLA CLARK

### JUNE 2024

#### This month's casework

Predominantly planning casework this month. Please do continue to keep in touch with us about planning matters, it is so useful to hear from residents who are directly affected by planning matters.

Other casework has included: Environmental Health, Potholes, overgrown hedges, speeding and more planning queries!

#### General Election!

As you will know, The PM has announced that a General Election will take place on Thursday 4 July. If you can, please do encourage your resident to make sure they are registered to vote, by 18 June. It's quick and easy to do – they will just need their NI number 🗳️ <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>

If a person was registered to vote in the last election and their details haven't changed, they don't need to take any action. If they have recently turned 18 or moved home, it's important they make sure they are registered to vote.

In this GE, voters will need photo ID – you can direct people to more information here - <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need?step-by-step>

#### Waste and Recycling changes

Recycling and rubbish collection days will change in June for more than 92,000 residents in these areas and the guides, which include an updated collection calendar, will begin to arrive next week, detailing collection days for the next twelve months.

Residents with a change of collection day will have received a letter letting them know that things are changing.

The new guides are funded by the council's collections contractor SUEZ recycling and recovery UK.

The changes will make rounds more efficient and manageable for crews, while reducing mileage and carbon emissions.

Cllr Dixie Darch, Executive Lead Member for Climate and Environment said:

“Please check your guide and keep it safe. Changes begin from Monday 17 June. It's important you take a note, as unfortunately we won't be able to return to households where bins and boxes have been put out on the wrong day.”

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“Residents wishing to check their days now, can do so using our online look-up and calendar download tool. All residents (whether part of the first or second phase of changes) can download a copy of their service guide.

“It is important that residents know what is happening. We are sending two mailings to help reduce the chance of residents not receiving this important information.”

Some residents with collection changes may also have an additional one-off collection of their rubbish on either Saturday, 15 or 22 June. Residents should check their letter for details, if it is not mentioned then the household will not need an extra collection.

If residents have any questions about the upcoming changes they can visit the Council’s website for further information: [www.somerset.gov.uk/reroute](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/reroute)

#### **Council’s new partner to kick off summer surface treatment programme**

Kiely Bros to begin extensive and innovative road surface treatments programme

Somerset Council and new partner Kiely Bros are launching a major programme of road repairs across the County’s network this month.

Road surface treatment specialists Kiely Bros were awarded a four-year contract from 1 April to carry out a wide range of services, including surface dressing.

This year Kiely Bros will be introducing a pioneering new piece of machinery known as the Multipatcher to Somerset’s roads, which is a vehicle that can carry out small scale surface dressing works, but also quickly and efficiently repair a range of other defects with just a driver and small team managing traffic.

You can find out more about the Multipatcher here - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzWkKQ98\\_Pc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzWkKQ98_Pc)

Following extensive surveys the team did 17,000 m<sup>2</sup> of pre-patching across the network throughout April. These advance works will tackle visible defects such as potholes, cracks or subsidence. It is essential to fill these defects and cracks to avoid water getting in, otherwise when it freezes and expands further potholes and cracks are formed.

Once this preparation work is done, the surface treatments programme, which includes surface dressing, starts in July.

Surface dressing is a nationally recognised maintenance technique for sealing a road, improving skid resistance, and preventing water getting under the surface. This is crucial to help stop potholes forming.

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It works by coating an existing road surface with bitumen, covering it with stone chippings and then rolling it. It can only be carried out in dry weather, so the programme is flexible, and dates can change at short notice.

Somerset Council's Lead Member for Highways and Digital, Councillor Richard Wilkins said: "We are delighted to welcome the Kiely Bros team on board.

"Surface dressing and surface treatments are critically important in keeping our highways running efficiently and Kiely Bros have a fantastic record for innovation, efficiency and cost-effectiveness."

Mike Kiely, Managing Director of Kiely Bros Ltd said: "The preparation is time consuming, but this essential programme ensures that once our crews return later in the Summer to start the surface dressing work, we are able to deliver efficient and effective surface treatments, with minimal disruption to the residents and road users of Somerset."

As well as surface dressing the team from Kiely will be carrying out footway crack sealing, preparatory drainage, patching and cleaning, as well as post surfacing road markings, studs and high friction surfacing.

You can check out our surface dressing programme here during the summer. Please note the page is currently being updated. <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/surface-dressing/>

If you do spot a problem on the road, you can alert us quickly and easily here: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

You can see dates of planned works here: [www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/roadworks-and-travel/](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/roadworks-and-travel/)

#### **Environmental call for sites**

Somerset Council are seeking submissions of land for potential phosphate mitigation schemes and Biodiversity Net Gain to support the delivery of new development in Somerset.

Find out more here <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/planning-buildings-and-land/environmental-call-for-sites/>

#### **Why not 'bus it' to walkies?**

Summer's on the way so why not 'Bus It' to walkies?

Somerset Council is launching a summer campaign encouraging people to make the most of cheap bus travel and help to safeguard routes at the same time.

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Somerset is blessed with fantastic countryside, historic sites, towns and beaches and fabulous dog walks. So, with fares still at £2 for any single journey the message is leave the car at home, take the bus and why not take your dog too?

Over the coming weeks the Summer Bus It campaign will highlight great places, days out and activities in our county you can get to by bus.

The first phase of the Bus it campaign – supported by the Somerset Bus Partnership, local communities and Buses of Somerset – saw passenger numbers increase across four at risk route, in some cases by up to 50 per cent more each week.

A spokesperson for Somerset Council said:

“Our buses connect some of Somerset’s most beautiful locations and are a cheap and convenient way to get out and enjoy the countryside which is good for your health and local businesses.

“You can head to the beach on the 28, Exmoor on the 25 or explored the Levels and South Somerset on the 54 and 58. Well-behaved dogs travel for free, so you can have a great day out with your four-legged friend for under a fiver.”

James Eustace, Commercial Director, Buses of Somerset, said:

“With so many beautiful places to explore in Somerset, why not catch the bus to take in some of the county’s most stunning scenery?

“With the current £2 fare cap still in place this summer, passengers have the chance to take these journeys at exceptional value for money.”

#### **Successful music hub bid for Dorset and Somerset to deliver music education**

The next generation of budding musicians in Dorset and Somerset have been given a boost after a joint bid to become a Music Hub Lead Organisation by Somerset Council and Dorset Council was successful.

The Octagon Theatre has been appointed by Arts Council England to lead the Music Hub for Dorset and Somerset from September 2024, as part of an ambitious national programme to provide high-quality music education for all children and young people.

The newly combined Music Hub for Dorset and Somerset will operate through Somerset Council’s Octagon Theatre and will be one of 44 Hub Lead Organisations nationally, replacing 117 currently. This collaboration will draw in the expertise of partners and stakeholders from across the existing music education hub communities in each area so even more young people can access musical and creative learning opportunities.

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Becoming a Hub Lead Organisation will secure approximately £1.46 million of funding from the Department for Education. The Octagon's National Portfolio operation will receive just under £1.1 million of revenue grant to coordinate music education in the local area, plus around £360,000 to invest in new musical instruments, equipment and technology tailored to the needs of children and young people in Dorset and Somerset, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

The Octagon Theatre will deliver high quality music education accessible to all children and young people across Dorset and Somerset through diverse partnerships between educational, creative and community organisations, in their local communities and throughout the country.

The Theatre's appointment is part of a major investment in a new generation of the nationwide network of Music Hubs. This investment will help to deliver the Government's National Plan for Music Education, and give all children and young people the opportunity to develop their musical interests as far as they wish, including helping them to begin careers in the music industry.

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