

# **SOMERSET COUNCIL**

**October 2024**

**Devolution proposals:** In response to a request from government, Dorset, Somerset, and Wiltshire Councils have submitted an expression of interest in devolution, seeking to unlock greater powers and resources for the area. The submission for devolution represents a step towards addressing local aspirations aligning with the Government's devolution agenda. All three councils have stressed that they remain open to amending their expressions of interest as further details of the English Devolution Bill emerge and will continue their own discussions with other councils across the region.

**Recycling centre winter opening times:** From Tuesday, 1 October all 16 of Somerset Council's recycling sites will revert to their autumn/winter opening schedule. Sites will be open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 4pm at the weekend. Opening days vary across all sites midweek, however all sites are open on a Saturday and Sunday. There are queue cameras at Bridgwater (Saltlands), Chard, Highbridge, Minehead, Street, Taunton (Priorswood), Wellington (Poole), Wells (Dulcote), and Yeovil accessed via <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/recycling-site-queue-cams/>

**School places:** Somerset parents and carers of children due to start school or move on to their next school in September 2025 are being urged to apply for their place online and on time. Parents and carers of children due to transfer to Secondary or Upper School can apply for places for their children until 31 October 2024. Please visit: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/applying-for-school/starting-at-a-secondary-or-upper-school-in-september/> Parents and carers of children due to start school for the first time or transfer to Junior or Middle School can apply for places for their children from 30 September 2024 until 15 January 2025. Please visit: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/applying-for-school/apply-to-start-school-for-the-first-time/>

**Parking text scams:** Fraudulent text messages about unpaid parking fines have been sent to some Somerset residents. The council are therefore reminding the public that the council does not text residents with parking fines (PCN). If you receive one of these texts, it is not from Somerset Council and may be a scam. If anyone is unsure if the text is real, they should contact the Council. In addition suspicious text messages should be forwarded to 7726. This free-of-charge short code enables your provider to investigate the text

**Winter Coat Exchange:** Somerset's Libraries service is relaunching its Winter Coat Exchange scheme, designed to support the community by providing access to warm coats for everyone in need. As children settle into the new school year, a 'Back to School' appeal has been launched for children's/teen coats that may have been outgrown, but the scheme

welcomes donations of coats for all ages. The initiative was launched to help people stretch tight budgets that little bit further. Last winter's donations of 1,022 coats and the uptake of 904, were so successful that the exchange is being repeated. Donors are asked to hand items directly to a member of staff at one of the participating libraries: Taunton, Priorswood (Taunton), Bridgwater, Yeovil, Glastonbury, Chard, and Dulverton.

**Residents survey:** Somerset Council has launched a new consultation to ask local people for their views on where they live and the services the council provides. The 2024 Resident Survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and the results will be used measure progress against Somerset's priorities and shape future services. You can take part in the <https://somersetcouncil.citizenspace.com/comms/resident-survey-2024/> The survey closes on Monday 21 October.

**Recycling rates:** Figures which cover the recycling from the 296,000 kerbside recycling collections made each week, and the recycling taken to the county's 16 recycling sites shows that more than 130,000 tonnes of carbon was saved last year thanks to the material being recycled and reused in Somerset. The equivalent of taking 50,000 cars off the road for a year. The amount of waste going to landfill - approximately 5,500 tonnes - is a record low and nearly 96% of the recycling material stayed in the UK to be turned into new products and packaging, including more than 99% of plastics. Overall the county's recycling rate of 55.96% puts it in the top 20% of waste authorities in England.

**Flu and Covid vaccinations:** NHS England has confirmed that, based on the latest scientific evidence, the JCVI has recommended adults over the age of 65 will be eligible for a flu with the offer starting from October 3rd, to maximise protection for patients right across the winter months. The flu season typically peaks in January when more people gather indoors. The flu vaccine is also available at the same time with other vaccines such as the COVID-19 and shingles vaccines. More information and booking is available at <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/book-flu-vaccination/>

Kind Regards  
Cllr Tom Power & Cllr Lucy Trimnell  
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Somerset Council