

Councillor Update

*From your
Unitary Councillors
Andy Sully and Mike Rigby*



Barriers installed to stop unauthorised camps at Silk Mills Park & Ride



Somerset Council has completed work to install two height barriers at Silk Mills Park and Ride Car Park, as part of planned improvements to deter unauthorised encampments.

The Council is advising drivers of vehicles over two metres in height not to attempt to access the site, as both entry and exit points are now subject to height restrictions.

Andy says "These barriers are a practical step to improve security; help prevent unauthorised encampments and ensure the site remains safe and free from disruption."

Throughout the year there have been multiple instances of unauthorised encampments parking up at Silk Mills Park and Ride Car Park, causing disruption to services.

Taunton Flood Alleviation Scheme Progresses



The £6 million flood protection project in Taunton is moving forward, thanks to partnership work between Somerset Council and the Environment Agency.

Mike says “The scheme will enhance flood defences along parts of the River Tone in North Town, safeguarding hundreds of homes, key roads—including Bridge Street, Staplegrove Road, and Station Road—and important buildings like North Town Primary School, the police station, swimming pool, and sheltered housing.”

The plan includes building a reinforced concrete and brick flood wall on the river’s left bank, with work scheduled to start in 2026. Funding comes from Defra, the Somerset Rivers Authority, and Homes England. Design work will continue in the coming months, with construction planned for 2026/27.

Garden Waste Collection Changes for Somerset Subscribers



From 24 November, around 53,000 Somerset garden waste subscribers will have changes to their collection day due to increased subscriptions and route capacity limits. Some residents will see a change in collection week or collection day. Notices will have been sent via email or post, and online calendars will be updated. Residents are encouraged to check their new collection **schedules online**.

Somerset Council's Winter Service Ready for Ice and Snow



Somerset Council, in partnership with Kier Transportation Ltd, is fully prepared for winter with a fleet of 23 gritters ready to treat roads when temperatures drop. Gritting involves spreading salt on key routes to prevent ice formation and ensure safer travel during cold weather.

Mike says "Last winter saw teams make 1,679 visits covering over 117,000 miles, using more than 6,000 tonnes of salt, often during day and night shifts. The council's preparation included summer depot work, weather monitoring, and coordinated snowplough efforts with farmers."

The council prioritizes critical routes, and community support is encouraged—roadside grit bins can be refilled on request, and residents can join the snow warden scheme.

This winter, two new gritters will be added to the fleet, with a creative competition inviting school children to name them.

Stay updated with gritting plans via @TravelSomerset on X (Twitter) and Facebook.

Drivers are reminded to drive cautiously, especially in wintry conditions, and to avoid overtaking gritters during salting operations. For tips on winter driving, visit **[the Council's Road Safety webpage](#)**.

Third Year of Somerset's Winter Coat Exchange



Libraries across Somerset are now collecting donated coats again to help residents stay warm and reduce waste. Last year, 2,470 coats were donated, with most given to the charity RAFT, supporting displaced people locally and abroad.

Participating libraries include Burnham-on-Sea, Chard, Dulverton, Glastonbury, Ilminster, Langport, Minehead, Porlock, Shepton Mallet, Street, Taunton, Wellington, Williton, and Yeovil.

Donations are welcomed in good, clean condition—any size or age—and can be left with library staff. For more info, visit your local library, the **Somerset Libraries UK Facebook page**, or email librariesmail@somerset.gov.uk.

Cost-of-Living Support for Somerset Residents This Winter



Somerset Council and community partners are offering support like food banks, mental health advice, council tax relief, housing payments, and heating assistance.

Visit [somerset.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support](https://www.somerset.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support) to check eligibility and apply. If you lack internet access, call **0300 123 2224** and ask for 'cost of living crisis support'.

Christmas wishes to you all.

*Best wishes to you all,
Andy and Mike*

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