

# Full Council Meeting – 6 December 2022

## Portfolio Holder Report for Climate Change.

### Electric Vehicle Charge Point Update

SWT has approved grant funding for 4 more parish/town councils to the value of £5,850 to enable Electric Charge Point installation for community use.

SWT has been working with Sedgemoor District Council as part of our Climate Change Partnership on EVCP roll out in Sedgemoor. 4 x 22kw EVCPs have now gone live at the new Northgate development in Bridgwater.



SWT has been involved in the Somerset wide EV charging strategy. A report taken to SCC Environment Scrutiny on 26 October set out the challenges and opportunities in supporting the National EV infrastructure vision for 2030, exploring options to solve the issue of trailing cables to enable residents without access to off-road parking to be able to safely charge their EV.

### Self-driving vehicles visit Taunton

From 24 to 27 September, Taunton residents had the opportunity to experience cutting edge technology, riding in self-driving vehicles as part of an innovative study lead by the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, a joint Department for Transport and Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy unit.

The self-driving pod and shuttle carried out a total of 140 trips over the two days, with a total of 447 passengers taking part. The shuttle which was based at Somerset County Cricket Club travelled an overall distance of 68.8km and the pod which was transporting passengers in Vivary Park travelled 48.5km overall.



## Extension of Taunton and Minehead E-scooter trial

Self-driving vehicle technologies could help to improve everyone's access to transport wherever they live, whatever their income level, and whether they have a disability that currently limits their ability to access transport services.

### Zipp Safety

⚡ Users must be over 16 years old & have a valid driver's licence

⚡ Do not use scooters under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

⚡ 1 person per scooter at a time.

⚡ Users must park in the designated bays.

⚡ Do not ride on pavements.

⚡ Wear a helmet.

⚡ Zipp

E-scooter trials in Minehead and Taunton are to be extended following public consultation and approval from the Department of Transport (DfT).

It was announced in June that participating Local Authorities could extend existing e-scooter trials until 31 May 2024, enabling the DfT to gather further evidence where gaps are identified and to build on the findings of the current evaluation.

SWT held a consultation to survey public opinion on safety preferences and potential future trial enhancements. The consultation was aimed towards the Minehead trial and was launched at the end of August for a period of one month.

364 responses were received in total, of which 252 (69%) of respondents were local to Minehead and 192 (53%) had experience using the trial's e-scooters. In response to opinions on the trial being extended, with the exception of two abstentions, 199 (55%) were either satisfied, more than satisfied or very satisfied, compared with 163 (45%) being partly satisfied or not satisfied.

Since launching in October 2020, Taunton's e-scooter trial has seen 121,750 rides by nearly 15,000 riders travelling over 228,500 miles, removing an estimated 31.4 tonnes of atmospheric carbon compared with fossil fuel powered vehicles. Minehead's trial has seen almost 30,000 rides by over 12,000 riders travelling over

43,000 miles, removing an equivalent 6 tonnes of carbon since launching in June 2021.

## Energy Efficient Grants for businesses

Somerset West and Taunton (SWT) and Sedgemoor District (SDC) councils have launched a new grant scheme to help small and micro businesses become greener as part of our commitment to reaching net zero emissions by 2030.

Carbon cutting grants worth up to £2,500 are available to businesses with up to nine employees to help fund energy reduction and net-zero transition projects.

The EDF fund for business support is to mitigate the impact on the local community from the development of two new nuclear reactors at Hinkley Point C. There are many ways in which businesses can reduce their carbon footprint, from reducing waste (by re-using and recycling) to limiting energy use at night and replacing fuel powered vehicles with electric cars and bikes.

Applications opened Wednesday, 16 November and will close 8 December.

### **Guidance and Support for home retrofit**

Householders wishing to make their homes more energy efficient can access information through the Somerset Retrofit Accelerator project, a joint initiative with the other Somerset councils and Somerset Independence Plus.

The Somerset Green Directory has been created to help householders find local businesses and services to help with eco retrofit projects. Using the Somerset Green Directory, you can search local businesses for your retrofit project including architects, construction companies, insulation, and renewable energy installers (there are currently over 90 listings). You can also learn about energy efficiency and low carbon retrofit through the Retrofit resources [Retrofit Resources - useful links to help your retrofit project \(retrofitsomerset.info\)](https://retrofitsomerset.info)

Find out what some Somerset homeowners have already done to retrofit their homes, along with other news, in the Retrofit Stories [Retrofit Stories - Retrofit Somerset](https://retrofitsomerset.info)

For more information email Retrofit Somerset [website@retrofitsomerset.info](mailto:website@retrofitsomerset.info)

### **Carbon emissions baselining**

All Somerset Local Authorities are working together to produce a carbon emissions baseline for the new council. This project went out to tender and the contract has been awarded to CGI. Gathering accurate baseline data is crucial for mapping our progress on reducing carbon emissions.

### **SWT corporate carbon emissions for 2020/21**

The 20/21 Corporate Carbon Emissions Report for SWT is complete and will be published shortly.

### **Carbon Disclosure Project Feedback Report 2022**

SWT has been recognised as a leader in responding to the climate emergency by the not-for-profit charity CDP.



The Council achieved a score of A- (Leadership) for its 2022 disclosure, an improvement on last year's score of B (Management).

The disclosure identifies the ways in which SWT are working to mitigate and adapt to the projected impacts of climate change.

The score demonstrates that SWT has made progress towards its ambitious goals.

All councils in Somerset have been working collaboratively on climate related activities which is contributing to Somerset West and Taunton's recognition as a leader.

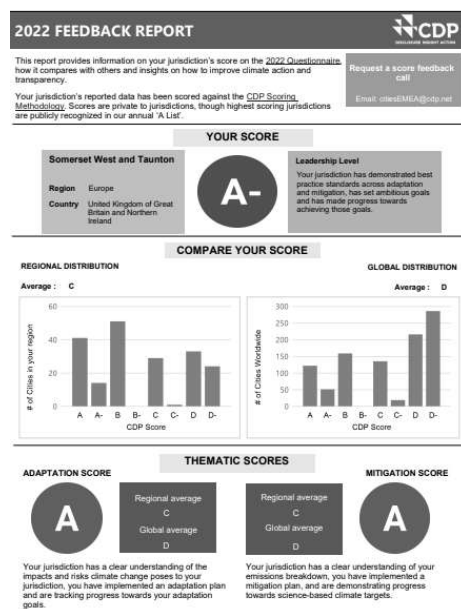
## Exmoor National Park/SWT partnership tree planting project

Assessments of potential sites for urban tree planting have been completed by the ENP tree officer. Short term and long-term opportunities have been identified; short term opportunity will offer the potential to plant this winter and/or the following years whilst long term opportunities need further thought and collaboration with partners.

SWT officers are now reviewing the winter schedule to include the short-term opportunities, working with ENP to ensure that right trees /right place ethos is implemented.

## Free tree giveaway to parish/town councils and community groups

27 parish/town councils or community groups will be collecting 581 trees (species include oak, beech, lime, hawthorn, silver birch, wild cherry, hazel, blackthorn and crab apple) from SWT Nursery to support National Tree Week.



## Employee Volunteering Scheme launched

All SWT staff can take an additional day's annual leave to carry out volunteering which will benefit Climate Change and the Environment in the County of Somerset. The scheme is optional and allows employees to choose a voluntary activity to support SWT to continue working towards making the Council and the area carbon neutral by 2030. This could include litter picks; tree planting and beach cleans.

## Climate Change Newsletter

Don't forget to subscribe to the SWT climate change newsletter, which is published monthly.

Subscribe here: [Climate change newsletter \(somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk\)](https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk) where you will also find all previous editions available to download.

## *Cllr Dixie Darch, Executive Member for Climate Change*