

Council – 6th September 2022

Executive Portfolio Holder for Community Report - Cllr Chris Booth

Somerset West Lottery

Latest round launched on 5th September with a closing date for applications on 7th October. The fund will have three firsts this year: this will be the first year that it will be accessed via the SWTC-Firmstep system whereby applicants will apply via an online form; there is a new process and guidance for applications, and it is also the first time it will be managed in-house, giving us control of who we fund, enabling us to properly promote it and with no external fees to pay.

Community Funds

The SWTC Partnership grants process will open for 2023/24 (on 1st September). This involves assessment of previous six months performance, governance and finance-checking, and assessment of 2023/24 partnership grant applications. This will also be the first time in six years that the Partnership grants are managed entirely in-house so again no external fees to pay.

Cost of Living Event - Cost Of Living Crisis event at the Creative innovation Centre in Taunton on 14th September

Date
Wednesday 14th
September

Location
Creative Innovation
Centre, Memorial Hall,
Paul St, Taunton TA1 3PF

Time
10am - 2pm

**Are you worried
About the Cost of
Living Crisis?**
Join us to find out what support is
available

Organisations Attending:

Citizen Advice,	Mr Fixy and the Repair Café,
Christians Against Poverty,	Somerset Independence Plus,
DWP,	Libraries,
Credit Union, SPARK,	The Centre for Sustainable
Navigate,	Energy
Somerset Waste,	and more.

Local Counselling

Christine Gale has also been working with Minehead Eye and Wellington Counselling to bring together interested parties to progress the creation of “Minehead

Community Counselling”. Rhonda Lovell of Wellington Counselling is collating evidence of

need and has established various locations for consultations throughout West Somerset. The service in West Somerset would broadly align to the Wellington model and Spark Somerset have agreed to work with Rhonda to secure funding for the project.

Local Pantries

We now have two strong Local Pantries operating in Somerset West and Taunton area. Rowbarton, which opened in March 2021, and in Minehead, which opened in May this year. Between them they support 68 households who benefit from the weekly fee of £3.50 for foods worth between £15 - £25. As the food is surplus food bought or collected from a variety of sources no one knows what will be available each week nor its value, but fresh fruit and vegetables feature highly, especially at this bountiful time of year. As well as supporting households the Local Pantries are diverting food from going to waste and between them they have distributed the equivalent of 27,000 meals and saved over 4.5 Tonnes of CO2.

The Local Pantry in Wellington, to be known as the Best Before Food Store (BBFS), will open on Tuesday 20 September. Paula Appleby, who is setting it up has invested her time in putting down good foundations and working with wraparound support partners, so it will launch with additional features.

On the horizon are two exciting developments, a potential partnership for East Taunton (not yet suitable for the report as it is very early days and may not come off) – and the shortlisting of Rowbarton Local Pantry in the BBC Radio Somerset Make a Difference Awards. They have been nominated in the environment category and will find out how they have done at the awards ceremony at the County Cricket Ground in September.

Community Employment Hubs

The Employment Hubs are a free employment support service covering Taunton, West Somerset and Wellington.

They can help residents with:

- Guidance on opportunities for learning, training and work
- Confidence building to return to work
- Help with job applications, covering letters, CVs and interview skills
- Funding to access employment and learning opportunities (e.g. transport, PPE and books)
- Referral for further support including IT, Citizens Advice, apprenticeship advice, Citizens Advice and positive mental health
- Links to volunteer work
- Identify any other barriers that stop you from progressing
- Regular one to one support for as long as you need it

The next set of hubs are at:

- Minehead Eye Youth Hub, TA4 5BJ. 1:30pm to 2:30pm (every Thursday weekly)

- Priorswood Community Centre, Taunton, TA2 7JW 10am to 12pm (4th Tuesday of the month)
- Halcon Link Centre, Taunton, TA1 2DD 12:30pm to 2:30pm (4th Thursday of the month)
- @ The hub, Alcombe Minehead (next to fire station) TA24 6DJ 10am to 12pm (2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month)
- Stogursey Hub at the Stogursey Youth Hub TA5 1PR, (next to the Victory Hall) on a Tuesday once a month, please use employment support email below to book an appointment
- Taunton United Reform Church, TA1 3PF 10am to 12pm (1st Tuesday of the month)
- Wellington Baptist Church, TA21 8NS 10am to 12pm (1st Wednesday of the month)
- Williton, Parish Council, TA4 4PY 10am to 12pm (3rd Tuesday of the month)

Somerset Recovery Fund: Opportunity Boost Scheme project

To qualify you must be a resident in Somerset and over 16. Not be entitled to any other financial assistance for job seeking activities via your local Job Centre, and if you are working you should have a pre-covid salary of less than £25,000. This is currently being administered by West Somerset Citizens Advice to benefit West Somerset residents.

Outside Bodies

West Somerset Opportunity Area

The WSOA Board is now finishing up having been extended anyway because of Covid and the inability to use the money during over the lockdowns and discuss legacy work to ensure the progress made in West Somerset since 2017 does not go to waste such as now reaching the national average in early learning goals. With a lot of this now in place, legacy work is also helped by Somerset's inclusion in 12 of the Government's Education Investment Areas will have a key focus on improving standards in English and Maths at Key Stage 2 and 4.

A&S Police and Crime Panel

Improved crime recording processes, within Avon and Somerset Police, have driven the increases in recorded crime for domestic abuse and stalking and harassment. Project Bluestone is going to be critical in ensuring a better response to male violence against women and girls.. By 31st March 2022 there were 57.2 (full time equivalent) officers in the Bluestone teams; against an authorised establishment of 100

Avon and Somerset VRU 2021/22 – working in partnership to tackle serious violence 923 young people at risk of serious violence discussed at multi-agency VRU meetings 851 young people at-risk or involved in violence have received targeted interventions 3469 young people receiving universal intervention through schools programmes 3269 contacts made with young

people through detached outreach 727 professionals have received training on trauma-informed practice, as well as 78 attending further training for managers/supervisors. The PCC has successfully secured VRU funding for the next three years, from 2022/23, at an increased level: £2.04 million; £1.53 million; and £1.51 million.

Unlike most overall crime, recorded hate crime increased during the pandemic. Hate crime has continued to increase at a national level as well as locally. In 2021/22 the number of recorded hate crimes in Avon and Somerset has increased by 26% to over 4,500 crime. The increases in crime are thought to be caused by a combination of more offending, more reporting to the police and better recording practices.

In July 2021 a new Avon and Somerset Police Rural Affairs Delivery Plan was launched. The overarching aim of this is for rural communities to have more trust and confidence in the police and some of the key actions are below. Improve training and internal communications about rural affairs. Improve collection and analysis of rural crime data. Co-ordination of force resources to tackle rural crime. Increased collaboration across the South West forces with a focus on disrupting Organised Crime Groups. Better crime prevention by upskilling the workforce and working with partner organisations and community groups like Farm Watch.

Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board

SEND assessment by her Her Majesty's Chief Inspector:

27% of the Somerset populations is under 25 and that one in six of those young people will have some kind of disability or special educational need. They reported the following:

1. The lack of focus on the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families when formulating strategies to improve the area
2. The lack of leadership capacity across area services
3. Weak partnership working between services across education, health and care
4. Poor joint commissioning arrangements that limit leaders' ability to meet area needs, improve outcomes, and achieve cost efficiencies
5. The ineffective assessment pathway for autistic spectrum conditions
6. Too many children and young people not accessing education because of the disproportionate use of exclusion and poor inclusive practices across the area
7. Poor assessment and meeting of need caused by inconsistent practice leading to poor outcomes for children and young people with SEND
8. Poor timeliness of the assessment, writing and publication of education, health and care plans
9. The wide variances in the quality of education, health and care plans caused by weaknesses in joint working

Somerset Moves - encouraging more physical education, led by SASP in conjunction with SCC and NHS:

Over a 1/3 of adults (36%) across Somerset do not meet physical activity guidelines

- 45% of people with a disability in Somerset are inactive
- 30% of people with a long term condition are inactive

1 in 3 children leaving primary school overweight or very overweight

Covid exacerbated this but measures are suggested:

- Embedding physical activity across all aspects of school life
- Working with our state funded schools to enable all children and young people to have a great experience, to build their confidence, competence and enjoyment through activity.
- Putting children and young people first. Listening, understanding and working with children and young people and their families when we seek to create or improve activities and opportunities.
- Improving community provision in areas where fewer young people are active Making it easier for children to be active within the neighbourhoods where they live.
- Enhancing support to those receiving free school meals or at risk Assisting more children and their families to have equal opportunities to be active.
- Enriching and expanding holiday activity opportunities Exploring funding models with partners to expand the holiday activity provision across Somerset.
- Targeting teenagers who show the greatest drop off in activity levels Making the activity offer relevant and attractive for teenagers in their schools and communities.
- Working with Early Years education providers Supporting children and their families to have the best possible active start in life

