



27th April 2021

Good Evening Mayor and Councillors.

➤ INTRODUCTION

- Here we are at the end of April and a lot seems to have happened since we last met. Scotland beat France in Paris for the first time in over twenty years. The Duke of Edinburgh passed away and HM Queen saw in her 95th birthday without her life partner.

➤ COVID

- As we slowly emerge from the lockdown and begin to move into a recovery phase, the District Council is working on a way forward which will support our businesses and communities and help them get back on their feet. This can be viewed in the '*South Somerset District Council Recovery and Renewal Strategy*.' In the meantime, the officers are returning to their posts after being deployed in helping with the vaccine roll-out programme and many have been able to enjoy a well-earned leave after the pressures of the last few months.

➤ UNITARY & LOCAL ELECTIONS

- As you will already be aware, the public consultation period for the unitary proposals ended on the 19th April, with all the councils involved submitting their arguments and analysis to the Ministry for consideration.
- As you may also be aware, the District Councils proposed organising a poll of Somerset electors in order to gauge their opinions and inform the decision makers. An approach was made to include the County Council in conducting the poll, however, in light of legal arguments raised by both the Leader of Somerset County Council and the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), the District Councils agreed to defer their decision until further legal advice was sought. That advice has now been received and special meetings of the District Councils will be convened in the next few days, to discuss and vote on the proposal to hold a poll.

➤ SOUTH SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

- **Leisure Facilities Management.** At our full council meeting held on the 15th April, the council was officially informed of the new operator of our leisure facilities across South Somerset. These include the Goldenstones Leisure Centre, Wincanton Sports Centre, Westlands Sport and Fitness Centre and the new facility currently being built in Chard. From April this year, these facilities will



be managed and operated by Wealden Leisure (Freedom Leisure), who emerged as the preferred bidder. They are a not-for-profit organisation and currently manage 106 facilities for 24 other councils, as well as schools and academies and have a good track record of delivery.

- **Annual General Meeting (AGM).** SSDC's AGM has been brought forward slightly to enable the meeting to still be held remotely. Due to the revocation of current remote meeting legislation, due to end on the 7th May. In response, SSDC are looking to re-instate its delegated powers arrangements that were first brought into force last year when the pandemic hit. This arrangement will be continually reviewed as circumstances evolve or due to the outcome of pending court cases.

➤ AREA WEST

- Area West's Committee meeting was cancelled in April with no major planning applications coming forward for discussion at this time.

➤ ILMINSTER

- **Coming to a bin near you soon!**



that [the roll-out] will be robust and achievable'. This will build on lessons learnt with the roll-out programme in Mendip, which included better, wider and earlier publicity about the scheme and its benefits. At the moment, everything is on track to launch the scheme at the end of June as planned.

This follows on from a successful introduction of *Recycle More* in the Mendip District, which saw an increase of more than 20% of recycling collected. This included over 200 extra tonnes of plastics, 25 tonnes of small electrical items and over 2 tonnes of batteries.

Recycle More. As you will have seen from Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) have begun to engage with councils and the public via Social Media posts, e-mails and an information programme. SWP are looking at all aspects of route planning and their data in order to 'ensure





Recycle centres adjusted to their summer times from Thursday the 1st of April across all recycling sites, which means all sites now close at 6pm rather than 5pm

➤ WIDER DISTRICT

➤ **Octagon Theatre.** As reported to the Town Council previously, a proposal was being put in front of SSDC's Full Council for approval to invest £23m in the development of the Octagon Theatre. This was unanimously voted in favour of at our 25th of March meeting. A public consultation will be launched in the next few months to help shape the final plan.

➤ Elsewhere in South Somerset District, the council is forging ahead with its regenerative investment plans for **Yeovil** and **Wincanton**.

➤ In **Yeovil**, Westminster Street (linking Tesco with Yeovil town centre) will see work commence on 'public realm work' commencing at the end of June with an end date of September being predicted. This is part of the wider Yeovil Refresh project that will see investment by South Somerset District Council designed to improve the shopping environment of Yeovil and make it more attractive for businesses and shoppers alike. Over the next few months, works will take in The Borough, Middle St., Lower Middle St. and the High Street.



➤ In **Wincanton**, a public consultation was launched recently by SSDC in order for people, visitors and businesses to have their say on what they would like to see in their regeneration programme. Similar to Chard and Yeovil, this will see improvements to the environment and aesthetics of the town centre.

➤ **Environmental – e-Scooters:** As previously reported, the e-scooter trials in cooperation with the Department for Transport and Zwings have been expanded to include Crewkerne and Chard. In Yeovil, usage of the scooters appears to be holding up even after the initial novel excitement period has passed. In Yeovil, the scooters are being upgraded to 2nd generation which comes with additional benefits.



Environmental – EV Car Share Scheme: A survey was launched to determine the appetite for an electric vehicle share scheme in cooperation with Co-Cars. This survey is still open until the 30th of April and has already





had a great response.

Val Keitch

Brian Hamilton



INFORMATION REFERENCES:

Links to South Somerset District Council's agendas, minutes and other useful information can be found at the following links:



YouTube recordings of SSDC meetings:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDst3IHGj9WoGnwJGF_soA



SSDC agendas, minutes and decisions can all be found either through the 'Modern.Gov' application or by following the link:

<https://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>



For a guide to vaccinations in Somerset, visit:

<https://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/health/local-services/health-services-during-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccinations-in-somerset/>



Coronavirus. For information on a range of different support that is available visit: www.southsomerset.gov.uk/coronavirus

For more information on the Self Isolation payments –

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/life-events/coronavirus-support/covid-19-test-trace-support-payment/>



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Somerset Unitarisation Consultation:

<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/governance-reform-and-democracy/somerset/>



Somerset Waste Partnership: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/>

Recycle More: <https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/recycle-more/>

Recycle More South Somerset:

<https://www.somersetwaste.gov.uk/rmheadssouth/>

SSDC NEWS:



Links to South Somerset District Council's latest news stories can be found at the following link: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/news/>