

NOVEMBER 2019

School Places: Applications for secondary/upper school places closed on 31st October and the team are now beginning the task of placing students in our senior schools. For those applying for their first school place, the deadline for applications is 15th January - further details can be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/apply-to-start-school/> SCC urge parents to submit three preferences, including their local school as one of those preferences.

Mental Health First Aid Course: A Two Day Free Mental Health First Aid Course is being held on Weds 29th November and 6th December and helps attendees to spot the signs of Mental Health and to provide assistance on a First Aid Basis. Further details are available from Sophie Chivers In Public Health [SChivers@Somerset.gov.uk](mailto:SChivers@Somerset.gov.uk)

Dillington House: Dillington's Winter Wonderland is back by popular demand for it's 3rd year, running from 30th November to 1st December with Christmas stalls and a skate rink. Other festive packages available at Dillington can be found at <https://www.dillington.com/page/christmas/22/>

Learning Disabilities – Independent Living: As part of the promoting independence strategy SCC are currently focusing on those with a learning disability. So far this year the County Council have moved, with individuals express agreement, 42 people with learning disabilities from residential care to supported living accommodation. This has resulted in a tremendous improvement in their quality of life.

Stepping Stones – Independent Living: Around 150 young people in Somerset leave care every year, and as part of National Care Leavers' Week, SCC are highlighting the urgent need for more Stepping Stone carers to help them on their journey to independent living. Stepping Stones carers welcome young people (usually leaving foster care) into their home and support them with managing bills, cooking, shopping, gaining employment opportunities and accessing further education. Stepping Stones carers receive a weekly fee plus extra for food and utilities. More information on how to support a young Somerset care leaver, is available on 0800 587 9900 or by visiting [www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk](http://www.fosteringinsomerset.org.uk)

Climate Emergency Strategy Framework: A lot of work has been going on behind the scenes since the SCC committed to being Carbon Neutral by 2030 and agreed to work together with all district councils in Somerset on a strategy to do so. Countywide drop-ins and online community consultations on the emerging Climate Emergency Strategy Framework are being throughout November and December.

The Somerset Climate Action Network (SCAN) on behalf of all five Somerset councils is running the drop-in events between 10am and 4pm:

Saturday 16 November – Taunton Library  
Saturday 23 November – Shape Mendip, Shepton Mallet  
Saturday 30 November – The Gateway, Yeovil  
Saturday 7 December – Bridgwater House, Bridgwater

**Somerset Rivers Authority:** This month the Somerset Rivers Authority, which is chaired by Somerset County Council, published its annual report. In 2018-19, just over £3.8million was spent on actions designed to protect both people and property across Somerset. Because there is no one simple solution to Somerset's flooding challenges, and everyone in the county is affected in one way or another, the SRA invests in a wide range of actions to reduce flood risks and increase resilience when floods do occur. All works are additional to those carried out by other Flood Risk Management Authorities in Somerset.

**Dementia Support Groups:** SCC is looking to invest more than half a million pounds to kick-start and extend projects and groups that run day-time activities for people with dementia and provide respite for their unpaid carers. Now two new projects are coming on stream. The Magdalen Environmental Trust, near Chard, is offering once-a-week sessions for adults with dementia and their carers on its organic farm. The dementia café based Wincanton will provide activities, memory stimulation, socialisation, music therapy and respite. Other scheme already supported include: Reminiscence Learning in Wellington; Dementia and Arts Programme run by the Creative Innovation Centre (CIC) in Taunton; The Active Social Minds project in Wells and the Filo project across the County.

**Unauthorised Highway Works:** Two utility firms have received substantial fines following successful prosecutions by Somerset County Council. BT and Royal Mail both pleaded guilty to several offences relating to unauthorised roadworks. BT were fined a total of £23,000 for offences in Curry Mallett, Bradford on Tone and Bishops Lydeard. Royal Mail were fined £22,000 for offences in Lopen and Tatworth. In addition both Companies were ordered to pay the County Councils costs.

**National Recognition Award:** SCC's Locality Manager Chris Denovan has been selected as a finalist for the Lifetime Achievement category in the annual Social Worker of the Year Awards in recognition of her contribution to the profession over four decades. The winner from each category will compete against each other to be named the "Overall Social Worker of the Year 2019". Chris has been at the forefront of Somerset's innovative community Connect approach, with a passion for helping people remain independent and live the lives they want to live. She and her team also featured in the recent Panorama care documentaries broadcast earlier this year.