

MDC Briefing

For publication

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Mendip news

Response to 'One Somerset' and The Future of Local Government in Somerset

A joint statement from The Leaders of Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West and Taunton Council and South Somerset District Council in Response to 'One Somerset' and The Future of Local Government in Somerset, has been issued.

"We want to make it clear that the District Councils of Somerset do not support 'One Somerset' and the proposals for a single council for Somerset.

"The detailed work which the five councils of Somerset commissioned together clearly concluded that a single council was the wrong solution for the people and communities of Somerset."

Read more here:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9349/Response-to-One-Somerset-and-The-Future-of-Local-Government-in-Somerset>

Mendip District Council changes

MDC Cllr Bente Height has joined the Conservative Party. Cllr Height (previously Independent) was re-elected in 2019 as District Councillor for Shepton East and is deputy chair of the Council. She is also a Town Councillor.

The move does not alter the balance of power at MDC – the LibDems remain the largest group with 23 councillors out of 47. The Conservatives are now the official opposition the 11 councillors.

If you have any questions please email: democraticservices@mendip.gov.uk

Mendip push ahead with social housing plan after 20-year gap

Mendip's ambitious plans to provide much-needed social housing right across the district is a step closer. The scheme promises to create jobs, boost skills and the local economy, while leaving a lasting legacy of social homes offering fair rents for residents. The Council has looked at Mendip-owned sites and identified numerous potential plots. Five of these could be shovel-ready within months.

Cllr Liz Leyshon, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Projects, said: *"It's time for us to step up and commit to providing residents with homes at decent, manageable rents - homes which are in extremely short supply. In so doing, we'll contribute to the local recovery through building and jobs, and we'll honour our own commitment to climate action."* Full story here: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/socialhousingplan>

Mendip Council transfers Boyle Cross

You may have heard that the much-loved local landmark in the centre of Frome is to be transferred, in its entirety, to Frome Town Council who will now look after the historic open space and fountain on High Street. Mendip also agreed to provide a one-off payment of £9K to support the annual requirements at the site for the next 12 months. It's not the first time Mendip has placed much-loved amenities into community hands. In January 2020, Bishops Barn and recreation ground in Wells, were offered back to residents. And Street Parish Council took back Merriman Park from the District Council some years ago.

Leader of Mendip District Council, Cllr Ros Wyke, said: *"We are delighted to be able to return Boyle Cross to the residents of Frome. We know it is valued by those who live there and that people take great pride in it. We look forward to seeing this historic landmark flourish."*

Full story here: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9360/Mendip-Council-transfers-Boyle-Cross-to-Frome-community>

NEW! Areas earmarked for rewilding available to view on maps

The Council recently announced it will rewild 17,000 square meters of land within the district and sow wildflowers. The Council will work with communities and parish councils to identify any land which is appropriate for wildflower sowing.

You asked for maps to identify areas earmarked for rewilding. Officers in Neighbourhood Services have obliged, and they are now available here:

<https://maps.mendip.gov.uk/>

If you are not familiar with how to use My Maps, a step-by-step guide to finding the Wildflower Areas is attached. **(Document 1)**

Love Parks this summer

This is a summer-long campaign by Keep Britain Tidy to reduce anti-social behaviour in parks and outdoor spaces, including launching a code of conduct for parks visitors and a pledge for local businesses. <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/love-parks-week>

All 45 Council-owned play spaces, kick-about areas and skate parks are now open. Read the full story here: www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9346/Lift-off-for-little-ones-as-Mendip-s-play-areas-reopen-this-weekend

A list of Council-run play areas are here: www.mendip.gov.uk/playareas

Mendip press releases

Keep up with the latest Mendip news. The Marketing and Media Team issue press releases which can be found here: <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/8926/July-2020->

COVID-19 local updates

Still here, still listening. Coronavirus helpline: 0300 790 6275

Please ring this number for help with personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions, support for the homeless, emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious, financial assistance, transport to medical appointments and waste collection and disposal.

A total of **7,000** calls have now been made to the Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline.

An infographic from the Community and Resilience team is attached to this email **(Document 2)**.

Mendip Council's phenomenal £30.5M pay out to save businesses

An incredible £30.5 million has now been paid out in grants to 2,625 eligible local Mendip businesses. Business Grants are still available. They are not loans, they are grants, which means firms will not be asked to pay this funding back.

Register here today: www.mendip.gov.uk/businessrates. Forms are easy to navigate.

Grants of up to £10,000 available to help charities and communities recover

The Somerset Coronavirus Appeal, launched by Somerset Community Foundation (SCF), is offering funding of up to £10,000 to local charities and community organisations delivering frontline work that will help communities recover from the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

<https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/coronavirus>

Press release: <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/news/379/73/Grants-of-up-to-10-000-available-to-help-charities-and-communities-recover>

Pavement Licences – coming soon

A press release will be issued w/c 20th July from Mendip – watch this space. In the meantime, current guidance and proposals can be found on our MDC website:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/pavement>

And here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pavement-licences-draft-guidance>

Reduced rate of VAT of 5% for firms

Mendip businesses can take advantage of this rate cut. This applies to hospitality, hotel and holiday accommodation and admissions to certain attractions. This temporary rate will apply from 16th July 2020 to 12th January 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vat-reduced-rate-for-hospitality-holiday-accommodation-and-attractions>

Kick-starting tourism

A £10m **Kickstart Tourism Grant** has been announced. The scheme isn't up and running yet, but will offer grants of between £1k and £5k to tourism businesses for either professional fees or services and/or for IT/online support this summer. It will be administered by the Growth Hubs - not Mendip – so local Mendip businesses should contact the **Heart of the South West Growth Hub** via the email address info@heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk – preferably with a subject line like 'Tourism Grant enquiry' so they can be added to the list to be contacted when the scheme opens properly.

Phased return of sport and recreation in Mendip

Mendip is currently in dialogue with leisure providers *Fusion*, about their reopening plans and we will provide updates when available. Government guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation has been updated:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation#history>

Have your say on temporary travel measures

Temporary measures, including pedestrianised high streets, have been introduced to encourage social distancing during the pandemic and positively support the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists. An online mapping tool called 'Commonplace' has been launched alongside this so people can have their say on temporary walking and cycling measures in Somerset. Please explore and leave your comments.

<https://somersetcovidactivetravel.commonplace.is/>

Relieve your money worries with Citizens Advice

Local communities and businesses in Mendip are being reminded that the UK's largest advice provider is there for you. If you need help, there are some new finance films and other online resources available, to help those with money worries.

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/how-we-provide-advice/advice-partnerships/money-advice-services/>

COVID-19 national updates

Plan for jobs

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, presented his 'Plan for Jobs' to Parliament to outline how the Government will boost job creation in the UK.

Among the measures are details of how the Government will introduce a one-off payment of £1,000 to UK employers for every furloughed employee who remains continuously employed through to the end of January next year.

Full details and speech: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/a-plan-for-jobs-2020>

Masks are mandatory in shops

The wearing a face covering in shops and supermarkets in England is to become compulsory from 24th July. Enforcement will be carried out by police and anyone failing to comply will be subject to a fine of up to £100, [or £50 if paid within 14 days].

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

Disposing of face coverings and PPE

With all that extra PPE about, we must ensure our streets remain litter-free and safe. Below is the Government's guidance on how to dispose of personal or business waste, including face coverings and PPE, during the coronavirus pandemic.

If the public needs to throw away used face coverings or PPE, such as gloves, they should:

- dispose of them in the 'black bag' waste bin at home or at work, or a litter bin if outside
- not put them in a recycling bin as they cannot be recycled through conventional recycling facilities
- take them home if there is no litter bin – do not drop them as litter

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-disposing-of-waste>

Meal deal this August

Restaurants, bars, cafes and other establishments have been signing up to take part in the UK-wide Eat Out to Help Out scheme. The scheme will offer a 50% reduction, up to a maximum of £10 per person, to all diners who eat and/or drink-in throughout August.

Businesses simply reclaim the discounted amount through an online service, supported by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). Claims can be made on a weekly basis and will be paid into bank accounts within five working days.

The Eat Out to Help Out scheme will operate as follows:

- all day, every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 3 to 31 August 2020
- to offer a 50% discount, up to a maximum of £10 per person, to diners for food or non-alcoholic drinks to eat or drink in
- alcohol and service charges excluded and not applicable to takeaway food/drink
- claim the money back from the Government

All information is available on Mendip District Council's website:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/eatouttohelpout>

Also here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-more-information-about-the-eat-out-to-help-out-scheme/get-more-information-about-the-eat-out-to-help-out-scheme>

Eat out to help out promotional materials

Businesses who are taking part in the scheme can download promotional materials, developed by Government, including posters and images to display in their premises. You'll find them here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eat-out-to-help-out-scheme-promotional-materials>

Leisure centres, indoor pools and gyms open

More businesses can re-open from 25th July. These operators must ensure customers, staff and volunteers can maintain social distancing before, during and after participation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-gyms-and-pools-to-reopen-safely>

Safe use of multi-purpose community facilities

The guidance for those managing multi-use community facilities was updated at to reflect the new Performing Arts guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-multi-purpose-community-facilities#history>

Advice for accommodation providers updated

This link sets out how accommodation providers can open businesses safely while minimising the risk of spreading coronavirus. Good luck all.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-advice-for-accommodation-providers>

COVID-19 health updates

Local breakout management

The Somerset COVID-19 Local Engagement Board has devised a management plan detailing actions to take in the event of an outbreak. As part of this work they have worked with South West partners to devise flyers and posters to help businesses, employees and customers know what to do when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported.

You'll find FAQs, checklists and action plans all prepared here:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/9282/Reopening-of-the-High-Street-Frequently-Asked-Questions->

Get the latest health guidance

Public Health England (PHE) continues to provide COVID-19 guidance for members of the public, as well as for people in clinical and non-clinical settings. This is published and updated regularly on the [GOV.UK collection page](#).

Travel Corridors

Last week the government announced the relaxation of quarantine rules affecting everyone returning to England from a list of countries within a [travel corridor](#).

Useful numbers and links

Mendip District Council: www.mendip.gov.uk/coronavirus

Government information on coronavirus: www.gov.uk/coronavirus

NHS information: www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

The LGA have issued some general guidance specific to elected councillors that you may find useful: www.local.gov.uk/covid-19-outbreak-councillor-guidance

LGBTQ+ services helpline and counselling service

<https://www.intercomtrust.org.uk/item/214-we-are-here-for-you>

Mind in Somerset, available on 01823 276 892

<https://www.mindinsomerset.org.uk/our-services/adult-one-to-one-support/mindline/>

Somerset Waste Partnership

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

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWaste/>

Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/SomersetWaste/>

You can also sign up to SWP's e-newsletter [here](#).

Keep connected

A version of these, suitable for publication, is available as a pdf, a Word document, and a web link. The shareable version can always be found here:

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/mdcbriefings>

Mendip District Council's corporate Facebook page

www.facebook.com/mendipcouncil

We are also on Twitter twitter.com/MendipCouncil

And LinkedIn www.linkedin.com/company/mendip-district-council

Finally, here's our official website: www.mendip.gov.uk