

VIADUCT

February 2022



Editor's Letter



Hello,

Although it is by degrees only, I welcome the lengthening of the days. Of course this is the month for love, with St Valentine to be celebrated on 14 February. With that thought in mind, let's all think more kindly of one another and respect our community. Let's look after our town, remember not to drop rubbish or leave litter anywhere and, for everyone's safety, keep to our speed limits.

Also, Wessex Water are carrying out extensive works, repairing sewers and replacing the water mains. Naturally there will be some disruption, but you should have received notification as to where and when. However, if you need any further information, you can call their Customer Services team on 0345 600 4600 Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm. You can also find out more at wessexwater.co.uk.

I hope you enjoy this month's issue of Viaduct, and remember, it's your contributions that make it so interesting, so please keep them coming.

Editor, Viaduct

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News from your town council

Meeting	Date	Time	Venue
Full Council (Planning if required at 6.30pm)	8 Feb 2022	7.00pm	Edgar Hall
Land and Properties (Planning if required at 6.30pm)	22 Feb 2022	7.00pm	Edgar Hall

Everyone is welcome to attend and there will be opportunities to ask questions. Please refer to the Somerton Town Council (STC) website for Covid 19 related information.

Results of the Full Council Meeting

Full Council met on the 11 January. A grant of £750 was awarded to Ace Arts supporting a project entitled 'Flock Together'. The money will help provide kits for people to create squares of fabric, which will be joined together to make large panels. These panels will be on display in January 2023. The Council also approved the Budget and precept request for 2022/23. The minutes of the meeting are available on the STC website.

The Somerton Community Awards evening planned for the 14 December had to be cancelled but the awards have been distributed to the winners and runners up, with a couple presented at the Full Council meeting on the 11 January. Once again thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the nomination forms and congratulations to all our winners and runners up.



Behind Berry Give Way Scheme

We are aware of concerns about the priority give way scheme on Behind Berry. The scheme was initiated following calls, over a number of years, for improvements to pedestrian safety in that area. There is evidence that the scheme has slowed traffic down and given some kind of order to the flow of traffic across the railway bridge. The original footpath on the south side was only 2ft wide, which made it extremely dangerous for accessing the new surgery and care home by foot.



Safety has always been the priority, with Councillor Ruddle ensuring that safety checks were completed by Somerset County Council (SCC) before the scheme was implemented. No major safety issues were found. However, having seen the scheme in operation over a period of time, and listening to residents, STC are seeking advice from an independent highway consultant. The responsibility for the scheme remains with SCC but STC will share the findings from the consultant with SCC.

News from your town council

Somerset Bus Service Improvement Plan



Councillor Peter Simmonds has provided input to the Somerset Bus Partnership on behalf of STC in respect of the Somerset Bus Improvement Plan. This included comments on the existing bus services, the need for additional services and a survey of the facilities provided at the bus stops in the town.

Getting to know our friend SID...



It has been just over 12 months since we purchased our first Speed Indicator Device (S.I.D.). The data captured by these devices really helps us to understand the traffic issues facing our town. We have compared the data from December 2020 with December 2021 for Langport Road. For a 9-day period in 2020 the data showed 4,633 movements per day compared with a 16 day period in Dec 2021 which showed 6,232 movements per day. This is an increase of 1,599 movements a day (most likely as a result of the Covid rules for December 2020).

When we come to the data of average speeds on the road we see in 2020 an average 28mph inbound to Somerton and 31mph outbound from the town. For 2021 the data is almost identical. The overall figure for movement under 35 mph was 88% in 2020 and 73% in 2021. You can see all the data from the SID's at <https://www.pf-stc.uk/speedwatch.html>.

...and our community speed watch volunteers

The Speed Watch team are out and about recording drivers speeds. The team have the support of police and traffic enforcement along with Mark Shelford, the Police and Crime Commissioner, who has been in Somerton offering help and advice. Although many people drive within the limits, speeding remains a big problem, and sadly if enforcement is the only way to slow some people down then the police will not fail to act. Over the last month there has been a drop in traffic volumes in Somerton and the team are pleased that there have been fewer offenders. Your actions and attitudes make a huge difference to everyone's safety. If you need to contact Speed Watch regarding a speeding issue, or if you can spare a few hours and would like to join the team, please contact David Cundle on 01458 897224.

Please respect our town

Unfortunately as you may have seen, there has been an increase in littering in the town and on the lanes around Somerton. We're lucky to have our brilliant litter pickers here in Somerton but it is everyone's responsibility to put litter in the bins provided in and around town, or take it home. Dog fouling also continues to be a problem, with some dog owners even allowing their dogs to foul in the Church grounds. Church volunteers are having to clear up the mess. Wherever you are walking around Somerton please pick up your dog's mess and use the bins provided, including the multi bins that can be used for dog waste if it's double bagged. Please don't make it someone else's problem.



News from around town

Getting back to gardening

The best laid plans... sadly, members of Somerton Gardeners' Club were disappointed that an outbreak of seasonal coughs and colds meant that it was wiser to postpone our AGM for January. However, you can make your views known when we meet at the Edgar Hall on Wednesday 9 February at 7.30pm.

Isn't an AGM boring? Not this one. Of course there are routine items to be decided, like electing a new committee member. And during the last few months we have welcomed many new members, so this is your opportunity to come and join us, and tell us what you'd like to see included in this year's programme.

We are also delighted to welcome David Chase, former owner of Midney Gardens, who will talk about 'After Midney, what next?' He's also offered to answer your gardening questions, a little along the lines of Gardeners' Question Time.



We are reintroducing a number of activities that have been held in abeyance because of Covid restrictions, and we are also introducing some new activities which you can see on our website somertonlibrary.com. We now have an electronic noticeboard by the library front door which you can check to see what's going on and when. Here are a few of the things you can look forward to:

- The Chess Club on Saturday mornings – 10.00am to 12.00 noon
- A treasure hunt inside the library mainly for younger children
- The Lego Club on Saturday mornings – 10.30am to 11.30am
- Story time – check the noticeboard and website for details
- Our Digital Media student from Strode College who will soon be starting a "Digital Drop in" session on Fridays and possibly a "Coding Club"

The library has again been chosen as a beneficiary of the Co-op Community Fund for 2021-22.

Monday	Closed all morning	Open 2.00pm to 5.00pm
Tuesday	Closed all day	
Wednesday	Open 10.00am to 1.00pm	Closed all afternoon
Thursday	Open 10.00am to 1.00pm	Open 2.00pm to 5.00pm
Friday	Open 10.00am to 1.00pm	Open 2.00pm to 5.00pm
Saturday	Open 10.00am to 1.00pm	Closed all afternoon

News from around town

Get ready for summer

Even this early in the year, the Somerton Music and Arts Festival team is busy planning a full schedule of events for the 2022 Festival which will extend to cover two weeks during July.

"We have an action packed couple of weeks in store, starting with the Art & Photography exhibition as a precursor event in May," says Festival Chairman Cliff Bassett. "We are delighted to welcome back so many local artists and provide an opportunity for them to exhibit their work as part of the Festival."



The Festival includes a full range of events, culminating on 9 July with Somerstock, Somerton's own family-friendly, one-day music festival. The team is keen to recruit volunteers to help with stewarding at Somerstock as well as new members to help promote the festival – particularly generating more social media activity. If you're interested please email hello@somerstock.co.uk.

Here are just a few key events and activities to look out for:

- **The Somerton Art & Photography exhibition** 28 May to 4 June
- **Somerton Music & Arts Festival** 1 to 14 July
- **Somerstock** Saturday 9 July
- **The Family Fun Day** Sunday 10 June

Early Bird tickets for Somerstock will only be available until the end of February. To enjoy the discount, or find out more about Somerstock and the volunteering opportunities, go to somerstock.co.uk. More Information about the whole Festival is at somertonartsfestival.co.uk.



St Michael's Church

We are currently in Vacancy and during this period contact details are shown below. We offer ministry through baptisms, weddings, funerals, and pastoral care of all in the area. During the Vacancy if you would like to avail yourself of any of these services, or for any other reason, please contact the office by emailing somerton.benefice@gmail.com or calling 01458 273499. Alternatively, you can email somerton.vicar@gmail.com or phone 07483137623. Phones and email are monitored regularly. James Turner, Chair St Michael's Parochial Church Council.

Photograph by kind permission of Jude Hurley

News from around town



across Somerset. Plans are in place for a trip on a horse-drawn canal barge in July, and looking ahead we're planning a Christmas Market visit.

It's not all about learning, it's a lot of fun too

Somerton u3a is the largest social group in the area for anyone who is no longer in full-time employment. With nearly 400 members and over 45 different interest groups, there are endless opportunities to make new friends, pursue old hobbies or even learn something new. And this is an extra special year as it is our 25th anniversary.

Apart from the various groups, we also meet on the fourth Friday of every month at the Edgar Hall for a coffee and chat before a talk from a visiting speaker.

Activities range across all genres. French, local geology, craft, table tennis, IT, Sunday lunch clubs, scrabble, aviation, local history, travel and walking are just some of what's available.

After many months of restrictions, Somerton u3a is actively planning a whole year of exciting events for 2022. Ideas for new interest groups are always warmly welcomed and support given to help set them up.

For more details on membership, groups, the monthly talks programme and contact details, please visit the Somerton u3a website at u3asites.org.uk/somerton/home.

Flock to us at ACEarts

Our schools exhibition 'All Together Now' opens on Saturday 5 February with local school pupils' work created during our latest outreach project on display. If you're coming to see it, why not ask about 'Flock Together', our year-long community sewing project and how you can get involved? No experience is necessary and we have free kits available to anyone who lives in Somerton thanks to Somerton Town Council.

Looking for something different to do?

If you're free on Tuesday 15 February come along to the Parish Rooms at 2.30pm and meet like-minded people at the WI. It's interesting and, of course, there's always a welcome cuppa and cake or biscuits. We are still adding to our programme for the rest of the year. In addition to our monthly meeting, there are pub lunches in different places, various activities locally and



News from around town



Let's talk turkey

Every year the Somerton Business and Trade Association (SBTA) run a 'Spot the Christmas Object' competition; this year's theme was Tommy the Turkey. Open for 5 to 16 year olds (and 17 to 116 but no prize!), entrants had to find 44 hand-made Tommy the Turkeys in the windows of member businesses all around the town, and complete the whole entry form to be in with a chance of winning their very own Tommy the Turkey.

Colin Powell, Chair of the SBTA said, "It was a fantastic response. Thank you to everyone who took part in this year's competition. We are delighted that it

was so well received, especially after all the hard work from the Association's members and non-members who pitched in to make these festive masterpieces. Particular thanks to Mrs McGregor's Craft Emporium, Bespoke, Sherry Briggs, Somerton Printery, and the Charltons' Foxy Stitchers. It's been a difficult year for local businesses, so we're very grateful to everyone that took the time to come in and search for the elusive Tommy."

Thank you also to Nina Gronw-Lewis from Acearts for providing room for the presentation at short notice.

This year's winners, selected at random from all the correct entries, were Eboine (11) and Harry (9) both of whom are pictured here being awarded their Tommy the Turkey prizes by Colin Powell at ACEarts Gallery on Christmas Eve. Here's to next year's competition!

From red door to green door to Tudor door

Last month, Peter challenged us with a couple of red doors which since then have become mysteriously green. Did you spot them before the colour change? This month's mystery picture is of an ancient gateway which you might see when walking around Somerton.



Have your say

Notes from Buttercross Health Centre

There is no doubting the recent alarming rise in confirmed cases of Covid. It is of particular concern that parts of the south-west of England have suffered some of the most dramatic increases. While there is some comfort in the news that those affected by the Omicron variant do not appear to present with such severe symptoms, the numbers requiring treatment (often due to a pre-existing underlying condition or non-vaccination) have continued to put considerable pressure upon NHS resources. This has impacted both primary care and our local hospitals and, given that healthcare staff are exposed to the risk of infection more than most, it is no surprise that absences are high, putting still more pressure on those left to deliver the services we need and have come to expect.

131,393

67,630

Yet, there is evidence that patient expectations have adjusted over time. Many people have taken on board the encouragement to us all to take more responsibility for our own health and wellbeing. But demand remains high and a glance at some of the statistics collected over the past year for BHC put into perspective the pressure on local provision. Here are some of the numbers for 2021:

Number of phone calls answered	67,630
Number of phone calls made	50,860
Number of 'AskmyGP' requests	26,306
Number of medications issued	131,393

50,860

26,306

The BHC website remains an important point of reference for all patients as it carries the latest information about the provision of services. It also has a direct link to 'AskmyGP', though patients' requests may also be entered into this system by a BHC receptionist. This remains completely confidential and administrative staff never make clinical assessments; these will always be made by a clinician irrespective of how information is entered into the system.

Would you like a helping hand?

Somerton Good Neighbour Volunteers are ready and able to help with the following tasks:

- Weekly shopping
- Collection of prescriptions
- Weekly telephone chat
- Weekly meet for a friendly chat or to go out for a coffee
- Transportation to medical appointments for if you are housebound without family nearby

If you or someone you know would like help, please call
Lead Coordinator Annette Sparks on 01458 258947.



Have your say

You don't have to be sporty to be one of us

Despite the name, the Sports Club is not just for sporty people. We pride ourselves on a welcoming atmosphere for people of all ages, including children. With our main bar, you can sit and have a social drink at cheaper rates or you can sit outside on our patio area built by members of our committee. We have a separate lounge bar for those who want a quieter spot to chat or play some table top games like Cribbage.



We do show sporting events on our screens during highlighted events such as the Euros last summer, and the the World Cup next year.

If you enjoy other activities, we have Darts teams, Skittles leagues as well as Quiz nights and Bingo – and for an additional membership you can use our adjoining Snooker Club. The Club is also available to rent for private functions at a competitive rate.

Opening Hours

Monday - 19:00 - 23:00
Tuesday - CLOSED
Wednesday - 19:00 - 23:00
Thursday - 19:00 - 23:00
Friday - 19:00 - 23:00
Saturday - 15:00 - 23:00
Sunday - CLOSED

Contact Information

Telephone Number: 01458273808
Email: somertonclub911@gmail.com
Facebook: Somerton Sports Club

Memberships

Memberships are now due with us – the rate is £2 a year and a form for renewal can be obtained by popping into the club.

Rain, rain but not every day

Ken Edmunds, a long-term Somerton resident has kept weather records for Somerton for over 40 years, and for 2021 recorded that we had a total of 741mm of rain, or for the imperialists, 30.5 inches. And out of a total of 365 days, there was rain on 146 days.

Have your say

In fond memory of Donald 1930-2021

Donald Short died peacefully at home on 28 December. He retired to the family home in Somerton in 1993, after a life of Public Service in the NHS as a Consultant Anaesthetist, Chairman of Standards Committees, and 30 years in the Royal Naval Reserves.

In retirement he was active with many local groups, including the Architectural Research Trust, Treasurer of the Somerton Education Trust and Church Lands Estate.



From the many kind messages that the family have received it is clear that his kind and generous character and gentle humour touched the lives of many within our community. A Service of Thanksgiving for his life and work will be held at St Michael's Parish Church on Friday 18th March at 2.30pm (subject to Covid restrictions).



Laburnum Drive Residents' Committee

All are welcome to our A.G.M on 7 February at 2.00pm. There will also be a warm welcome at our coffee mornings on Tuesday's, Bingo on Thursday's at 2.00pm, Bacon Butties first Tuesday of month (unless Coach Outing) – £2 including a cuppa. Plus lots more planned. First Coach Outing is Wednesday 16 February, £8. Depart 11.15am, home by 4.00pm. Fish 'n' chips lunch, then Dobbies Garden Centre. Off to Salisbury 15 March, £11. Names needed Tuesday's or Thursday's, lists are in the Hall. Fares to be paid two weeks before. Let's make it a Happy New Year together.

It's your field, so have your say

Kirkham Street Field Community Trust is pleased to announce a public meeting on Thursday 17 February at St Michaels Church. There are two sessions, one at 3.30pm to 5.00pm and the other at 7.00pm to 9.00pm.



This is an opportunity for you to meet the not-for-profit organisation with whom we have been exploring the best way to achieve the community's wishes. There will be a presentation of their ideas and afterwards a chance to speak freely and informally with their team of experts. Tea and coffee will be provided after the presentation.

Please come along, everyone is welcome. Your views matter and will be taken into consideration as part of the consultation process. Information leaflets will be available with contact details to take away afterwards.

Spotlight on In Line We Dance



For this month's 'Somerton Spotlight' we feature In Line We Dance run by internationally acclaimed choreographer and modern line dance instructor Mathew Sinyard. Classes are held at the Edgar Hall, Somerton every Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 10:00am until 12:00 noon.

Mathew started line dancing at an early age being taken to Country and Western events by his parents. He has been line dancing for 29 years; he was only 9 years old when he learnt his first dance.

Mathew believes modern line dancing should be fun and enjoyable. He has been working as a professional dance instructor since 2003. In Line We Dance was founded in 2013 when Mat realised that there was a lack of classes in the wider Somerset area.

Mathew loves working with people of all ages and abilities and gets so much satisfaction from seeing how they grow and develop in their skills and performance. He now runs seven

classes, catering for everyone from absolute beginner through to seasoned advanced dancers and has two more classes starting in the next couple of months.

Mathew has had the privilege of being nominated for a coveted Crystal Boot Award for his improver dance 'Kacey's Moon'. He also has dances in the Line Dance Charts and his dances are taught worldwide.

In Line We Dance also hold regular afternoon and evening parties where all the class members get together and dance, as well as workshop days every few months where we invite internationally acclaimed choreographers to join us for a day to teach our classes. We also hold weekend events at hotels around the country and live artist nights.

Modern line dancing is great for keeping the body and mind fit, you don't need a partner so it's great for meeting new people. It's easy for beginners to learn and offers more energetic and complex routines for the more experienced. Anybody can do it as the steps are easy to learn. From the first lesson beginners will be enjoying dancing to a whole range of line dance routines and the more you attend, the more skills you will develop, the more you can progress. Modern



Spotlight on In Line We Dance

line dancing is a dance in which a group of people dance in one or more lines to a choreographed set of steps in a sequence.

Whatever you have heard previously about line dancing put those thoughts aside and embrace the new culture of modern line dancing. It is becoming increasingly popular and you should expect to hear music ranging from the 1960s right through to the current chart hits.

Contrary to popular opinion line dancing was not invented by cowboys. Line dancing has its origins initially in the 1960s soul music scene in America, followed in the 70s by the trend of dancing in lines in the discos. In the 80s along came Billy Ray Cyrus and his video to Achy Breaky Heart and it was only really then that line dancing took off in the UK.

Modern line dance clubs use music from all genres, including soul, rock or pop, Latin music, Irish, salsa, big band music and country and western.

If this article has given you the dance bug, you can contact Mathew at info@inlinewedance.co.uk or you can call him on 07548 601518. He also has a website at inlinewedance.co.uk.

At the age of 72, I was inspired by seeing Mat's Thursday class perform several line dances at Woolavington Village Show and thought it looked fun and something I would like to try. The classes were fun but I found it frustrating at first as my brain wouldn't tell my feet fast enough what to do, and I often found I was facing a different way to everyone else! Luckily Mat and everyone else were encouraging and gradually I began to improve.

Line dancing doesn't only provide physical exercise and mental stimulation but the social aspect which is very important too. Now I can't imagine not line dancing and look forward to our weekly classes, socials, I have even tried workshops. Much of that is due to Mat's commitment to line dancing and the way he makes the classes so enjoyable.

Cynthia Galloway



Local clubs and activities

If any of the details for the current list are incorrect or you would like to be added to the list, please email clerk.assistant@somertontowncouncil.gov.uk.

GROUP	CONTACT NAME	MEETING PLACE	MEETING TIME	EMAIL/WEBSITE	TELEPHONE
AceArts Life Drawing	Book on website or in Old Town Hall	The Courthouse, West Street, Somerton	Wednesday 10.30-12.30	www.acearts.co.uk	
Ageing Well	Age UK somerset	Parish Rooms £4.50 pay as you go	Monday 10.15am Friday 11.30am	ageingwell@ageuksomerset.org.uk	01823 345626
Archies Extra	Alex Judith	Sports Ground, Gassons Lane by MUGA	Thurs 7.30-9.30pm 11 to 18 year olds		01458 272047 01458 273079
Flexercise		Buttercross Surgery	Fridays 2.30-3.30pm		
Health Walks	Mo Fletcher	Somerton Library	First and third Thursday of the month 11.30am	fletcher080@btinternet.com	01458 274631
Marital Arts Self Defence	Dan Palmer	Village Hall, High Ham, Langport TA10 9DA	Weds 7.00-8.00pm Kids and Adults Thurs 5.00-6.00pm and 6.00-7.00pm Kids	info@realitymasd.co.uk	07484 849157
Mid Wessex Singers	Rowena	West Street Church Hall	Tuesday 7.15-9.00pm	info@midwessexsingers.co.uk www.midwessexsingers.co.uk	07829 803097
Rugby Club	Gary Saunders & Steve Benn under 18s & 15s	Eirian Williams Memorial Pitch	Tues and Thurs 7.00pm		07870 861731 07919 153205
Scottish Country Dancing	Anita Wilson	Long Sutton Village Hall	Thursday 7.30-9.30pm	anitaandjim22@gmail.com	01460 929383
Somerton Bridge Club	Joan Davies, Jim Dawson	West Street Church	Thursday 7.00pm	joandavies15@rockethmail.com	01458 272418 01458 251228
Somerton Carers		West Street Church Hall	Second Friday of the month 10.30am		01458 250603
Somerton and District Bowls Club		Sports Ground, Gassons Lane	Tuesday 5.45pm Friday 2.00pm		
Somerton Gardeners' Club	Pauline Saunders	Edgar Hall £2 for visitors	Second Wednesday of the month 7.30pm		01458 272769

Local clubs and activities

If any of the details for the current list are incorrect or you would like to be added to the list, please email clerk-assistant@somertontowncouncil.gov.uk.

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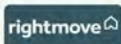
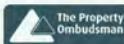


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