

Liberal Democrat Councillor Report July 2025

Having spent the last few months discussing ways of preventing flooding we seem to be heading for a very dry period. As the temperatures soar we can see our fields of crops, woodlands and gardens in need of rain. With school holidays approaching many of us will be hoping it lasts for a few more weeks.

There are lots of events and activities taking place across our area. From South Petherton to Ilton and everywhere in between there are sporting events, fetes and theatrical productions, children's activities and holiday clubs.

Your Somerset Councillors will still be working for you so please get in touch if you need anything. We are here to help.

We hope you have an enjoyable summer.

Best wishes

Adam and Jo

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Transforming Social Care Challenges into Success: Somerset Council's 'My Life, My Future' Wins National Award

Somerset Council's adult social care transformation, 'My Life, My Future,' has received national recognition, winning a prestigious Local Government Chronicle (LGC) award. The programme has saved £10 million over the first two years, significantly improved support for residents across the county and will continue to make savings in future years.

The need for this transformation stemmed from financial pressures, including government funding reductions and an ageing population, which increased demand for social care. Somerset's decision, under the previous Conservative-led Council, to freeze Council Tax for six years from 2010 to 2016, contributed to a steep revenue shortfall of approximately £27 million annually, impacting the council's finances. Despite these challenges, the current Lib Dem leadership has focused on enabling residents to achieve independence, leading to better outcomes and fewer costly residential placements.

However, the government has avoided directly addressing these ongoing challenges, instead initiating another review that is likely to delay a clear plan until 2028. The Lib Dems at Somerset Council have been calling for immediate, urgent action to address and fix social care now.

Despite these challenges in Somerset, 'My Life, My Future' has supported more people to stay at home, saving £8.6 million for older adults through improved reablement services, which help individuals regain independence after hospital stays. It has also saved £1.4 million in support for people with learning difficulties, with over 40 actively engaged in plans for greater independence.

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Lead Member for Social Care Councillor Sarah Wakefield praised the dedication of the adult social care teams, emphasising that overcoming financial challenges required innovative and systematic change. This award recognises Somerset's leadership in transforming social care and demonstrates how resilience and strategic decision-making can deliver positive outcomes even in difficult circumstances. The council remains committed to extending this success further, continually improving lives and saving money for the future.

Update on Yeovil Maternity Unit Closure: We Are Listening and Taking Action

Somerset Lib Dems at all levels are working hard to address the ongoing concerns surrounding the closure of Yeovil Maternity Unit. We are working tirelessly to champion the needs of local families and ensure their voices are heard.

The planned closure of Yeovil Maternity for at least six months comes amid warnings from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) about the hospital's paediatric services, following a series of critical reports on Somerset's maternity care. We understand the anxiety this situation causes to expectant mothers and families across the region.

Our leadership, including Lead Member for Public Health, Councillor Graham Oaks, and Somerset Council Leader, Councillor Bill Revans, have met with senior hospital managers to explore options for reopening the unit as soon as possible. Councillor Oaks has called for the adoption of a Midwife-led unit, and we are actively pressing for a clear date for the reopening. We are closely monitoring developments and doing everything we can to advocate on behalf of residents.

MP Adam Dance has also been prominent in this effort, calling on the Secretary of State for Health, Wes Streeting MP, to ensure that Somerset's needs are not overlooked in the upcoming national review into maternity services. The review, initially focusing on ten of the most at-risk units, must include Yeovil and Somerset to prevent further gaps in vital maternity and paediatric care. Adam has launched an online petition <https://www.yeovil-libdems.org.uk/maternity-unit-campaign> calling on NHS Somerset and the Hospital trust to reopen the unit as soon as possible. Separately Adam has met with staff who have been impacted to hear their concerns directly which he has taken up with NHS leaders.

In a recent House of Commons debate, Adam raised serious concerns about the abrupt closure, warning that leaving a "dangerous gap in care" could result in avoidable harm. He highlighted the impact on expectant mothers who are forced to travel over an hour for care, and the pressure on neighbouring hospitals and staff.

We will continue to hold NHS leaders to account and push for immediate action to reopen Yeovil Maternity without delay.

We are taking ownership of trying to solve this NHS Somerset crisis (on behalf of residents) and remain committed to securing the future of safe, accessible maternity services for all families in Somerset.

Progress on Improving Somerset's Roads: Report Potholes and Learn More about What We Are Doing to Meet the Challenge!

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Did you know that every week in Somerset, we repair between 600 and 800 potholes? Thanks to our extensive preventative surface treatments program — which covered over 1 million square metres of road last summer — we've reduced the number of potholes by 4,000 compared to last year.

We've made significant progress in improving the condition of local roads, but the challenge remains ongoing. We're continually investing in targeted repairs and preventative measures to ensure safer, smoother journeys for everyone.

If you notice a pothole, you can report it quickly and easily at <https://orlo.uk/wEawl>. There's no need to email or call. Your report goes directly to a team member, who will visit and assess the issue. We aim to respond within 3 working days, and depending on the size and location, repairs will be completed within 28 days — or sooner in emergencies.

We've received some questions about this, so to clarify:

We run a comprehensive resurfacing program throughout the year. Additionally, where roads are in good condition, surface dressing can significantly extend their lifespan. Find out more at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads.../surface-dressing/>.

We are committed to building on this progress and ensuring Somerset's roads continue to improve. Thanks to dedicated teams and ongoing investment, we are making tangible strides toward meeting the challenge of maintaining high-quality roads for our communities.

Potholes and road damage can be reported here:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

Have Your Say on the New Somerset Council Boundaries

Residents are invited to comment on proposed changes to Somerset Council's division boundaries as part of a 10-week consultation running until 11 August 2025.

The independent Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has proposed that Somerset Council should have 96 single-councillor divisions, with all boundaries changing to better reflect communities and balance representation.

You can view the proposals and give feedback via the [LGBCE Somerset page](#), or by email at reviews@lgbce.org.uk, or by post. Your input will help make the new divisions clear, understandable, and effective for local communities.

Youth Parliament 2025: Nominations Now Open

Nominations are now open for Somerset's 2025 Youth Parliament elections. Young people aged 11–17 who live and study in the county are encouraged to apply.

Three Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) will be elected to represent their peers, run campaigns on issues that matter, and work with local services and organisations. A support group of young people aged 10–25 will help develop campaigns and organise activities.

The Youth Parliament is a great space to learn new skills, share views, and make a difference.

The deadline for nominations is 3 November 2025, with elections in December. Full details and voting links will be available in September.

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Young people aged 11–17 can register to nominate themselves at

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/your-council/youth-parliament>.

The Somerset Youth Parliament Advisory Group is free to join and open to anyone aged 10–25 who lives, works, or studies in Somerset. More information is at the same link.

Lib Dem Leader Cllr Bill Revans Argues for Mandatory Solar Power on All New Homes

Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of Somerset Council, advocates in his weekly local media article for making solar panels compulsory on all new homes. He highlights that advances in technology have made solar more efficient and affordable, helping to lower bills and reduce emissions. Currently, laws prevent councils from requiring this due to industry lobbying.

Cllr Revans recalls that in the 1990s, he taught at Broadoak School, where MP Max Wilkinson, now in Cheltenham, introduced the ‘Sunshine Bill’ to mandate solar energy on new builds. The government declined support at the time, citing housing supply concerns, but recent changes represent a step forward.

Following Wilkinson's campaign, the government announced that all future new homes will include renewable energy technology as part of the updated Future Homes Standard. With renewables now supplying nearly 25% of UK energy—while gas accounts for just 6.85% and prices remain volatile—this move is a major step towards tackling climate change and cutting costs. Cllr Revans urges councils and the government to adopt this common-sense approach without delay

2025 SEND Satisfaction Surveys Now Open

Parent carers and professionals are invited to share their views on education, health, and care support for children and young people with SEND. Developed in partnership with Somerset Parent Carer Forum CIC, Somerset Council, and NHS Somerset ICB, your feedback will help shape future improvements. Complete the parent carer survey at <https://orlo.uk/TexDH>.

Unpaid Carers’ Week

Somerset Council will promote free support resources and community events for around 50,000 unpaid carers during Carers Week 2025. A poem by former unpaid carer Alison Birket will highlight the emotional toll of caring, raising awareness of the support available. Full details are at <https://orlo.uk/OBk87>.

Devolution & Regional Growth

Baroness Taylor visited Wessex to discuss progress on devolution plans, aiming to establish a Mayoral Strategic Authority in the area by 2027. The region continues to work collaboratively to secure regional growth. More information is available at <https://orlo.uk/tA79R>.

Dino Day at Ham Hill

Families can enjoy ‘Iggy the Iguanodon’ street theatre on July 26 at Ham Hill. The event explores fossils and dinosaurs, celebrating 50 years of Ham Hill Country Park, with activities suitable for all ages. Details can be found at <https://orlo.uk/Unc8>.

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Flood Prevention & Water Management

The Somerset Rivers Authority has published its tenth annual report covering flood prevention activities for 2024-25. The scheme has been vital for reducing flood risks, despite tight budgets. The report highlights ongoing efforts in dredging, flood defence, and climate adaptation. You can view it and provide feedback at <https://somersetivers.org>.

Report it first: useful Links to share with your communities

Visit Report a problem on the road: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-on-the-road/>

Potholes and road damage

Somerset Council repair potholes and other road defects, and maintain our roads, for the safe access of all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/potholes-and-road-damage/>

For traffic updates and roadworks follow @travelsomerset on X and Facebook.

Live travel information

<https://www.travelsomerset.co.uk/>

Report a problem with a street light

We maintain and repair street lights to national standards to provide safe access to all road users:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/report-a-problem-with-a-street-light/>

Roads, travel and parking, road signs, markings and lighting

Includes information about non-illuminated bollards, pedestrian crossings, requesting a village nameplate and how to apply for a new road sign Speed limits: <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/road-signs-bollards-and-road-markings/>

Speed limits

Request information about new or existing traffic calming measures:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/speed-limits/>

Traffic lights

We maintain over 200 traffic light locations throughout the county

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/traffic-lights/>

Street and roadworks

We maintain the roads and pavements that are managed at public expense in Somerset

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/roads-travel-and-parking/street-and-roadworks/>

Sign-up for the latest climate news:

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/environment-and-food-safety/climate-and-ecological->

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[emergency/newsletter-sign-up/](#).