

South Somerset *Tourism News*

Spring
2022



Included in this issue:

- Somerset Leaflet Exchange - 22nd March
- www.visitsouthsomerset.com update
- Somerset Food Trail 2022
- Free Mental Health Course
- Spotlight on Ilminster Arts Centre

Dear colleagues,

Who would have thought that as Spring begins to show and the Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, we would be distracted by the dreadful news coming from Ukraine. My heart goes out to everyone affected.



On a more cheerful note, the Visit South Somerset tourism team were delighted to win Gold at the recent Bristol, Bath and Somerset tourism and are looking forward to seeing many of you at the Leaflet Exchange later this month.

Best wishes
Becky

Somerset Leaflet Exchange

22nd March 10.00 - 12 noon
Westlands Entertainment Venue, Yeovil

The popular Tourism focused Leaflet Exchange event gives Somerset businesses the opportunity to **network** with others and **exchange promotional materials** to spread awareness of their business across the

district and beyond.

The FREE event is open to all **pubs, cafes, restaurants, attractions and accommodation providers** from South Somerset and over the borders, and is open from 10:00am until 12:00pm on Tuesday 22nd March at the Westlands Entertainment Venue.

All businesses with an interest in attracting visitors are welcome to attend the free morning event to pick up their leaflet stock for the coming season and meet representatives from the attractions. If you are a small Bed and Breakfast or a large pub owner, it doesn't matter, you can pick up the exact quantities you require.

Over 30 businesses from across Somerset will be exhibiting, including **Fleet Air Arm Museum, Haynes International Motor Museum, Somerset Guild of Craftsman and Parrett Trail Bikes**. The Somerset and Dorset National Garden Scheme will be attending with their popular Yellow Books plus representatives from market towns with local walking guides.

Visit South Somerset will also be sharing some exciting news and materials about the much improved **River Parrett Trail**, a must see and do for walkers and nature and wildlife enthusiasts.

"This event always has a positive vibe with constant hum of colleagues chatting and thousands of leaflets exchanging hands!"

If you would like a FREE stand, please [email](#) for a booking form ASAP.

If you are planning to pick up leaflets, it's helpful if you can confirm attendance by [emailing](#).



SOMERSET TOURISM LEAFLET EXCHANGE **FREE Event!**

Do you own or run a tourism, accommodation or hospitality business? If yes - this FREE event is for you!

- Collect fresh promotional material for the 2022 season
- Network with SSDC and Somerset tourism colleagues
- Learn about grants and business support available
- Covid secure venue • Free car parking and easy access

See you on Tuesday 22 March 2022, 10am - 12noon

WESTLANDS ENTERTAINMENT VENUE
WESTBOURNE CLOSE, YEOVIL, BA20 2DD

Please confirm attendance or request more information by emailing visit@southsomerset.gov.uk or calling 01935 829333

Visit South Somerset logo and South Somerset District Council logo.

South Somerset Visitor Information Centre News

The South Somerset Visitor Information



Centre was delighted to scoop the GOLD award for **Visitor Information Service** of the Year for the second year running in The Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards 2021-2022 recently.

In addition to welcoming thousands of visitors through its doors every year it provides a valuable service to the Somerset area and beyond. The centre has a fantastic selection of free leaflets, guides, brochures and maps, and supports more than 20 local makers, selling arts, crafts, local produce and much more.

The centre will move to its summer hours from April 4th and will be open every day, including weekends, from 9.00-4.00pm.

If you are interested in being part of the Information Centre's success, there is an opportunity to advertise on two large **digital screens**, one facing inside and the other facing the busy onsite cafe courtyard. 2021 prices - from as low as £15 a month - are being held until April. Please [email](#) if you are interested in this great offer!



Promote your business to thousands of visitors
by showcasing your business on digital screens at the award-winning **South Somerset Visitor Information Centre and Gift shop**

- 10 Second film or still images shown every 3.5 minutes
- Coverage on **internal screen** open 7 days a week Peak Season / 5 days a week Low Season
- Coverage on **external facing screen 24/7** reaching thousands of visitors at the popular and iconic A303 services

£30 a month Peak Season (April to October)
£15 a month Low Season (November to March)

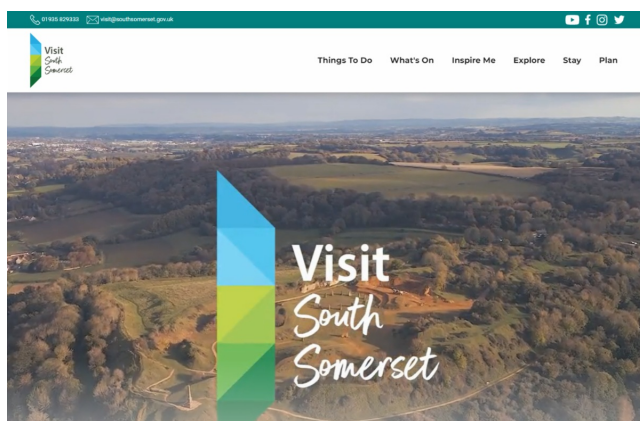
Prices held till April 2021!

One off promotions and 3, 6 or 12 months packages available.

Incredible value, amazing reach

Get in touch now for this fantastic opportunity!

Email; Becky.Cotterill@southsomerset.gov.uk or ring 01935 462501



SOUTH SOMERSET tourism website update

We're pleased to share that the new **Food & Drink** section is now live. Businesses include cafes, pubs, restaurants, food producers, drinks producers and food experiences/venues. Each listing also benefits from featuring on the interactive map, alongside **Things to Do** and **Accommodation**, which is a really useful tool for visitors when planning their time here.

To benefit from your **FREE** Food & Drink listing, please complete the simple form [here](#). Please note that the SSDC Economic Development

Team are overseeing this section of the website by making sure that each business has the appropriate regulations in place, such as Environmental Health.

We are continually adding **things to do/ attractions** and **accommodation** to the website - if you would like a FREE listing please complete this form [here](#) or get in touch if you have any corrections to your current listing

What's On pages; please tell us about your events! This continues to be one of the most popular sections of the site, so make sure that you tell us about events in South Somerset that you wish to share with visitors and residents.

Event details can be uploaded [here](#), and please [email](#) a suitable image (preferably landscape format) to go with your listing.

Don't forget to follow our channels and be sure to **#visitsouthsomerset**. We love to see your content and share posts, stories and promote events when we can. Thank you!

- Facebook - VisitSouthSomerset
- Twitter - VisitSSomerset
- Instagram - visitsouthsomerset

Somerset VESP Skills Sessions for 2022

There is still time to attend the FREE VESP (Visitor Economy Support Programme) courses, on offer are....

Good Images for Online Marketing

Tuesday, 8th March. 11.00am - 12noon

During this bite-size, one hour session we will cover:

- why bad images hurt your business
- how good images create emotional connections
- tips for resizing to meet different platform requirements

Testimonial: "Really useful to refresh my knowledge."

Direct Marketing

Thursday, 10th March. 11.00am - 12noon

Building a direct relationship with your customers can reap rewards in terms of repeat business, high referral rates and word of mouth marketing.

This session will look at the ways you can market directly to consumers, the essential tools for the job plus how to stay on the right side of data protection laws.

Testimonial: "Excellent. Thank you!"

For more information, contact Karen at

karen@karendonnellyassociates.com. Courses run by Tomorrow's Tourism on behalf of Somerset VESP

Other FREE courses on offer are...

Make it Net Zero - going beyond your Carbon Footprint

Thursday, 10th March - 10.00am - 11.00am

Once your business has calculated its carbon footprint, learn how to build on this information for further net zero improvements! Specialists will equip you with vital knowledge to help you build a strategic business plan that's aligned to your net zero goals.

This interactive workshop will explore:

- Supply chain issues and how to overcome them
- Points of consideration around 'scope 3' emissions
- How to place net zero firmly at the core of your strategic thinking
- How to influence other businesses, and encourage them to progress their own net zero journey

Book here for a FREE fully funded place

Google Digital Garage - Get your business visible on google

Wednesday 16th March 11.00am - 12 noon

A FREE webinar to learn how to boost your business's online visibility and how to create online listings on Google Maps.

Register to join here

Visitor Economy Support Programme – Grant Scheme

Somerset County Council are seeking applications for their new grant scheme from businesses operating within the Somerset Visitor Economy. Grants of between £25,000 and £40,000 are available for Somerset SME businesses (Small and Medium Size Businesses of up to 250 employees), partnership of businesses, or community organisations wishing to **introduce and implement a project that delivers genuinely new provision for visitors to the County**. Projects will need to be completed in 2022, but also demonstrate sustainable impact into future years.

Grants will be match funded, with the applicant expected to meet 35% of the project costs and the grant meeting the remaining 65% of the project costs.

This call for applications will close on Monday 14 March 2022.

FREE Mental Health Awareness Course

24th March 2022 - 10am - 2pm

This FREE Mental Health Awareness four hour course is ONLINE and offered to sole traders, micro-providers and SMEs in Somerset.

Places are fully funded for those working in, among others, the Arts and Entertainment and the Visitor Economy / Hospitality sectors.

New Leaf is working with the Somerset Public Health Team to deliver workplace **emotional wellbeing training** to small and medium sized (SME) businesses across Somerset.

The focus is on supporting those who have been impacted by Covid through the virus itself, experience of lockdown or the impact of the recession.

Everyone who completes the course gets:

- A manual to refer to whenever you need it
- A workbook including a helpful toolkit to support your own mental health
- A certificate of attendance to say you are Mental Health Aware

Book a place [here](#)

Great South West Tourism Partnership and Coronavirus (COVID-19) Business Impact Survey

This survey aims to gather further evidence and continue to evaluate the effects of COVID-19 on tourism and hospitality businesses across the Great South West area of Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay, Somerset and Dorset.

The survey will also help identify your business priorities and issues to allow the GSWTP to support you to recover and grow. The results will also be used to continue to lobby the Government for support for our sector.

Please help! - It should only take a few minutes for you to answer the questions. The survey can be found [here](#) and commissioned by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

27 March

The week is an annual **celebration** of English tourism, raising awareness of the sector. This year's theme focuses on staffing and recruitment, to highlight the wealth of job opportunities currently available in tourism and hospitality.



Visit Britain/Visit England have produced a **toolkit**, which includes branded digital assets featuring the slogan **"You're Welcome"** to encourage bookings for the new season, plus editable templates for you to add your own imagery and share on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Download your toolkit [here](#)

Visit Britain/Visit England'S most recent newsletter is full of useful content such as the **Escape the Everyday** campaign and how to welcome international visitors. You can sign up for the newsletter [here](#) or visit the website [here](#)

Update on the 2022 SOMERSET FOOD TRAIL!



The **Somerset Food Trail Festival** from 15 - 24 July, is an 'open farm' and farm-to-fork showcase that puts the spotlight on Somerset's smaller-scale, nature-friendly farmers and artisan producers in all their fascinating diversity, giving visitors a better understanding of where food comes from and the many benefits of buying local.

From biodynamic vineyards to community-funded food forests; small batch, organic cheesemaking to rare breed pigs, apple orchards, aquaponics and cider making; buffalo mozzarella to milk-based vodka; the 10-day event offers a wealth of foodie experiences – and some cultural ones as well.

Live performance and art will complement talks, tastings and tours in multiple destinations across the county. The festival offers visitors a rare 'behind-the-scenes' access to the farms, landscapes, people and places that produce Somerset's best, most flavourful food.

If you, or any of your colleagues are interested in taking part - please email [Susie](#) or visit somersefoodtrail.uk



HELP US CELEBRATE The best of local sustainable food!

Somerset is home to some amazing regenerative and organic farms, producing food in a way that's better for wildlife, better for climate and better for health. It's time to celebrate them!

We're organising the Somerset Food Trail Festival this July 15-24 to do just that. It's a 10-day farm-to-fork showcase designed to put the spotlight on Somerset's smaller-scale, more nature-friendly farmers and artisan producers and the chefs, bakers, cafes and independent food shops that support them.

If you are a farmer/food producer/shop, pub or cafe owner who shares our enthusiasm for sustainably grown, locally produced food and drink, and would like to take part in the Trail, please contact us to find out more. Email: susie.weldon@icloud.com

Deadline: March 15th

somersetfoodtrail.uk



Spotlight on ... Ilminster Arts Centre at the Meeting House



Set in a 300-year-old Unitarian Chapel in the heart of Ilminster, the Arts Centre has been bringing high quality art, music and workshops to the South West for over 25 years.

The main hall is a wonderful space that accommodates daily and evening **workshops, meetings** and **concerts**. With exceptional acoustics and its large and beautiful stained glass windows, it is a versatile and impressive space. The craft shop, specialising in beautiful hand made goods, offers an impressive selection of unique craft pieces and interesting gifts. The gallery, is a beautiful space for displaying all forms of art, has a full annual diary of ever-changing exhibitions.

Annie's Cakery Bakery, situated at the end of the gallery, is popular with coffee lovers, and many visit us for our famous cheese scones, delicious cakes and light lunches. A delightful garden area is available when the weather is fine.

They have a reputation for delivering outstanding live music. Jazz (traditional and mainstream, modern and contemporary) is the mainstay of the concert programme, together with exceptional classical concerts staged by **Concerts in the West**. There are also small theatrical groups, popular music and folk nights and regular jazz jam sessions at which anybody can participate.

There really is something for everyone at the Ilminster Arts Centre!

If you would like to be Spotlighted in future editions of the newsletter - please get in touch.



In the news.....

Congratulations to the Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards winners - Long Hazel Park and The Cotley Inn, Wambrook

Long Hazel Park has won Silver in the **Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable** category for their commitment to the environment, accessibility and local community and Commended in the **Resilience and Innovation tourism award** category for their contribution during the pandemic.

The Cotley Inn in Wambrook advertise themselves as The Blackdown Hills best-kept secret, but not for much longer, now they have won gold in the **Pub of the year** category, adding to their Taste of the West, Gold in the Dining pub category 2020/2021.

Anything to contribute?

The tourism newsletter is generally distributed quarterly (March, June, September and December) with additional editions if there is important and relevant information to share.

It is emailed to South Somerset businesses on the tourism database and appears on the trade pages of www.visitsouthsomerset.com

We love to hear and share your news and success stories, so please email items for the next issue to toursim@southsomerset.gov.uk

Unsubscribing and your privacy

If at any time you wish to unsubscribe to the newsletter and have your details removed from the database, please email tourism@southsomerset.gov.uk or click the button below.

Very occasional we feel it is appropriate and beneficial to forward emails and

newsletters from our partners, can you please let me know if you would rather not receive this information.

For more information about how South Somerset District Council uses and keep your information secure, please see the Privacy page on our website -

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/about-our-website/privacy-and-data-protection>.

www.visitsouthsomerset.com

Keep in touch

