

South Somerset *Tourism News*

Winter 2022



Included in this issue:

- Seasonal greetings from the tourism team!
- Booking form for the South Somerset Tourism Showcase
- Tourism Award celebrations
- River Parrett Trail evaluation

Dear colleagues,

It seems like only a few months since I wrote the last winter newsletter, how the time flies! The end of the year is always an opportunity to look back at what we have achieved both personally and as a team.

It has been a year of venturing back to social and large events and appreciating what we have locally as well the opportunity to travel further afield. Travel broadens the mind, but it also makes me appreciate what we have in South Somerset - on my doorstep! I have enjoyed visiting small cafes with strong emphasis on locally produced products and large attractions with international fame. I don't think I am alone in loving exploring the high streets of our market towns and discovering the various independent shops. It was lovely to be able to celebrate with some of the businesses at the recent awards ceremony.

Even with all this local success, many individuals and businesses are struggling with fuel, food and general living costs. The [SSDC website](#) has resources that might be able to help, including a map of warm places locally.

Wishing you a very good Christmas and New Year.

Best wishes, Becky



South Somerset Visitor Information Centre and Tourism Team News

GOLD's galore for South Somerset at the region's prestigious Tourism Awards!

South Somerset Visitor Information Centre is delighted to have won the prestigious **Gold** award for Visitor Information Service of the Year, presented recently at this year's 2022 glittering **Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards** ceremony. The judging takes place over a number of months and assesses different factors including the quality of customer service, marketing activity and even a mystery shopper.

Gold awards kept coming for South Somerset; other winners included Gold for **The Bridge Bakery and Canteen**, Langport in the Café/Tearoom category, and an impressive two Golds for **Long Hazel Park**, Sparkford for the Camping and Caravanning Park of the Year, and in the Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable Tourism category. Celebrations too for Crewkerne's **Wytch Wood Camping** who won Silver in the Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable Tourism category.

Among the excellent South Somerset dining venues, Corton Denham based **The Queen's Arms** won Bronze in the Pub and Casual Dining Awards, and **The Clockspire Restaurant** in Milborne Port won Silver in Restaurant of the Year.

Long Hazel Park were also awarded the prestigious Winner of Winners award in recognition of their incredible achievements and dedication to the industry for more than 25 years. Long Hazel Park is overjoyed with their awards, which builds on the 5* VisitEngland award in 2021 and four David Bellamy Blooming Marvellous Pledges for Nature this year. "This really has topped off a fantastic season!"

South Somerset Tourism was also proud to sponsor the Accessible

and Inclusive Award, won by Wraxall based **Noah's Ark Zoo Farm**. Nell Barrington was awarded and recognised for her **Outstanding Contribution** to Somerset Tourism and very well deserved! I know the South Somerset tourism team are still benefiting from the excellent work she did when working for SSDC.

Applications for the 2023-2024 awards will be open in Spring and details for applying and categories will be on this [website](#). The application process may sound painful, but it's a simple form and the feedback and other benefits make it a very worthwhile process - honest!

The award-winning **South Somerset Visitor Information Centre** is now on winter hours and is open every day, except Sunday and Wednesdays, from 9am to 4pm. It's well stocked with great Christmas presents as well as visitor information! Why not pop out to check the stock they hold for your attraction and buy some last-minute presents - many with a Somerset theme.



The **Yeovil Tourist Information Centre** is now operating as an unmanned, self-serve information point. It is located in the Connect area in Petters House, Yeovil, and the leaflets displayed are managed by our Cartgate site. Please do not leave leaflets there - this must be arranged with Bev at Cartgate as we have very limited space. Please email her on visit@southsomerset.gov.uk

The [VisitSouthSomerset](#) website continues to grow and become the go-to point of reference for all things South Somerset! As well as the FREE listings, it contains lots of **free resources** you can use and share on your websites and social media channels, including short films on our [YouTube channel](#).

Why not grab a coffee and have a look around the [site](#)? Please check your listing carefully to make sure that all details are correct. If you are not listed and you are a **tourism** and **hospitality** business based in South Somerset you can be listed for FREE in the relevant section, such as Tearoom/Cafe, Attraction, Experience or Places to Stay. We have made it easier to submit details by using this redesigned simple [form](#).

The [Whats on/Events](#) section is also a very popular page with both holidaymakers and residents. Details of events can be submitted using this [link](#) and please remember to send a poster.

NB - we can only upload businesses and events if they have an accompanying image or poster, which needs to be emailed to tourism@southsomerset.gov.uk.

Tourism publications - the team is busy reviewing their range of printed material - current editions can be found [here](#), please get in touch ASAP if you want to be included or amended in any way.

Social media shout out! We love spreading the word about fabulous South Somerset and you can do this too by following us at:

- Facebook - VisitSouthSomerset
- Twitter - VisitSSomerset
- Instagram - visitsouthsomerset
- YouTube: Visit South Somerset

Date for your Diary!

**Tourism Showcase
28th March 2023,
Westlands
Entertainment
Venue, Yeovil**



Our popular annual 'leaflet exchange' has moved with the times to become more of a **showcase event** for tourism in the area. The event will provide an important meeting point for local businesses to come together and exchange printed materials at the same time as networking and showcasing their businesses to fellow tourism colleagues. Once again, we will be using the **Westlands Entertainment Venue** which offers easy access, free parking and large cafe area, perfect for catching up with colleagues in a relaxed environment!

Accommodation, attractions, activities, food and drink are welcome to attend and have a **FREE** stand. Booking could not be easier, simply complete this online [form](#) and a member of the tourism team will be in touch. Closing date for stands is 24th February or when all stands are booked, so prompt bookings are recommended. Please share with other local businesses or colleagues you think might be interested.

We will be inviting some of our SSDC colleagues and support providers, such as the Southwest Growth Hub, please let me know if there is anyone or any particular business you think should be present. If you have any questions, please drop me an [email](#).

The River Parrett Trails feedback surveys

The tourism team has commissioned a specialist company to evaluate The River Parrett Trail project.



We are interested in feedback on the improvements and promotion of the trail and what impact people feel this has had on users, local businesses and communities.

There are two short surveys, one business focused - **RPTbusinesses2022** and another for walkers (or nonusers!) of the trail - **RPT2022**. We would really appreciate your time if you could complete either or both surveys. Many thanks!

Don't forget - all the FREE resources, including films and route descriptions for trail, can be found and downloaded from our website **River Parrett Trail**

If you are planning your 2023 marketing campaign, don't forget you can include the **DIGITAL SCREENS** at the award-winning **VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE** from only **£51/month**.

South Somerset Visitor Information Centre and Gift shop

offer an exciting opportunity to showcase your business to thousands of visitors and holidaymakers.



- Your film/images shown every 3.5 minutes on 2 large digital screens
- 24/7 coverage on large external facing screen - seen by thousands!
- Internal exposure on large digital screen
7 days/week peak season (April to October)
5 days/week low season (November to March)

£85.00 / month Peak Season (£102.00 inc Vat)

£51.00 / month Low Season (£61.20 inc Vat)

Get in touch now to discuss the flexible options and make the most of this exciting offer!

Contact; Becky.Cotterill@southsomerset.gov.uk

Amazing reach!
Great value!



We have an exciting opportunity to advertise on two large digital screens - one inside the award-winning South Somerset Visitor Information Centre and the other external facing directed to customers of the busy cafe. The very popular site sees approximately 100,000 visitors a year using the picnic area, carpark, toilets and cafe as well as visiting the information centre for ideas about what to do locally.

Please [email](#) if you are interested in this unique advertising opportunity. If you haven't visited the site, it is hard to imagine how busy it can be, I am very happy to meet on-site for a coffee and guided tour!

Business training and support

Help to Grow: Digital – UK offer support and discounts to help small and medium-sized businesses find, buy and adopt digital technologies to improve productivity. The digital website provides businesses with free, impartial information and support to help them adopt new software.

In addition, eligible businesses can get a 50% discount on approved software solutions up to a maximum of £5,000. Certain conditions apply, such as between 1 and 249 employees and you must be a UK company registered with Companies House or on the Financial Conduct Authority's Mutuals Register. Full information about the scheme at [learn-to-grow-your-business](#)

Workplace Charging Scheme (WCS) is a voucher-based scheme that provides eligible applicants with support towards the upfront costs of the purchase and installation of electric vehicle (EV) charge points.

The scheme is run by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), administered by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) and is open to businesses, charities and public sector organisations that meet the applicant and site eligibility criteria.

The grant covers up to 75% of the total costs of the purchase and installation of EV chargepoints (inclusive of VAT), capped at a maximum of £350 per socket and 40 sockets across all sites per applicant – for instance, if you would like to install them in 40 sites, you will have 1 socket available per site.

Full details, including how to use the voucher at to be found here www.gov.uk/guidance/workplace-charging-scheme

Skills Bootcamps are 12 to 16-week funded skills training programme introduced as part of the Government **Skills for Life** scheme. The programme is designed to meet business or industry needs, by helping existing employees gain new skills or provide new recruits with relevant skills to fulfil a job role vacancy.

The Bootcamp training programme content and delivery model is not driven by qualifications, but by the business need. Somerset & Dorset are planning the 2023 Bootcamps and looking for feedback from business on their requirements to inform the Bootcamp

planning process. There is a short online survey to enable you to provide your feedback [here](#) or contact the [Dorset & Somerset Training Provider Network](#) via hello@dstpn.co.uk

Positive People - Everyone should have the chance to succeed in life, to develop skills and build a career. Positive People is a flexible community programme designed to help people overcome whatever challenges they face. Run by **Seetec** and community partners, such as **Cosmic**, the programme will help individuals manage the tough times, get qualified and find work. The first programme of its kind in Somerset, 'Positive People' will help over 1,000 individuals who are out of work to build their confidence and develop their skills.

The programme will be personally tailored to individual needs and will include help with personal development, health and wellbeing, and to develop life-skills including digital technology. More information can be found here [Positive People Somerset](#) - please share with anyone that you think would benefit.

Somerset-wide shopping initiative

Do you have a passion for shopping local and supporting small businesses? The campaign '**Love Local ? Shop Somerset**' from [Shop Somerset](#) is shining the spotlight on local people and businesses, promoting Somerset for its produce and showcasing how shopping locally is more sustainable.

As a Community Interest Company, **Passion for Somerset**, is the not-for-profit organisation behind [Shop Somerset](#), who works with hundreds of independent high street shops and online businesses selling thousands of products throughout the County when they cannot visit in person.

Striving to be the go-to place to 'Shop Somerset' the website is stocked with a wide range of businesses, services and products, including: food, drink, arts and crafts, and a range of services, such as events, marketing and business support. The campaign showcases the best the County has to offer and demonstrates that you can get all of your gifts, decorations, food and more by shopping at some of Somerset's best independent businesses from one simple location - the Shop Somerset website.

Southwest - how is business survey

To help us receive up-to-date feedback on how the tourism industry in the Southwest is performing, we would be grateful if you could please complete this short survey for November 2022.

This survey provides a real-time indication of **business levels** in our region and with limited national data, especially since the outbreak

of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is really important that we try to collect robust, local data regarding business performance in the Southwest.

This is the [survey link](#) and the deadline for submissions is Monday 2nd January 2023. Thank you - it is really helpful when businesses complete this survey!

One of the headline stats from the most recent **2021 Visitor Economic Impact Survey** highlights on aspect of the financial impact of Covid in Somerset, with a total visitor related spend in 2021 of £120,810,000 down from £167,434,000 in 2019.

Business events in Somerset...

Business Health Check Workshop ***11 January 2023 (10am -1 pm)***

This workshop will give you the opportunity to look at your business with fresh eyes and will work equally well whether you sell products or offer a service. Offered as part of **The Thrive** service, which has been fully funded by the European Development Fund to allow **12 hours of free** business support through a range of one-to-one advice and workshops with expert advisors and speakers. For more information about this workshop and the support available please [visit the Thrive page](#) for the full details.

Virtual Event - A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling scheme

An online exhibition about the A303 scheme including information about the final design and the programme of construction activity using information boards, documents, videos and maps of the entire route. **You can also give feedback** on the communication process around the scheme.

The "exhibition" can be found here - [A303 Sparkford Virtual Event](#). On the same website is the latest details about the proposed upgrading of the A358 Taunton to Southfields - [A358 Taunton to Southfields](#).

Stop Press...West Country Tourism Conference 2023

After a gap of two year, the West Country Tourism Conference is set to return alongside the Source Trade Show at Westpoint in 8-9 February 2023.

More details about the event will be available on their website nearer the time. [West Country Tourism Conference](#)

Somerset Food Trail 2022 feedback

I thought it might be interesting to share feedback from the 2022 Somerset Food Trail and memories of a very hot summer!

Some of the stats include...

- 198 participating enterprises took part
- 247 events held
- Organised and publicised by 25 volunteers
- 8,500 to 10,000 visitors over the festival
- 65,726 people reached via social media

The organisers have produced a short film about the event, which can be viewed [here](#).

The 2023 Food Trail will be focused on Somerset feasts - if you are interested in taking part, the event will run from 14 -30 July and the organisers can be contacted via their [website](#).

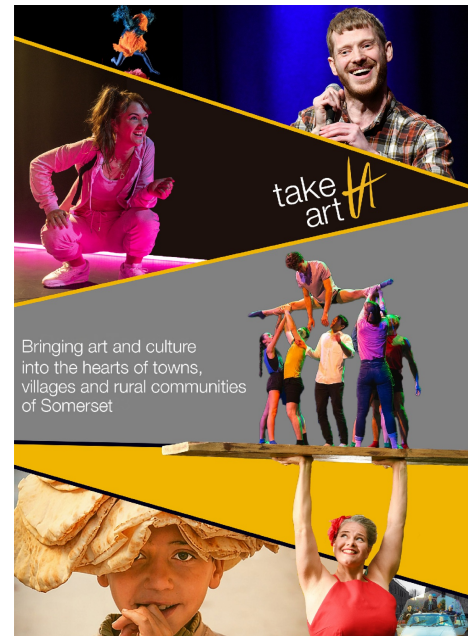
Spotlight on ... Take Art

Take Art is a unique, life-changing organisation that doesn't live in a venue, studio or theatre but in the heart of villages, towns and rural communities of Somerset.

Their work is interdisciplinary and incorporates a wide variety of art forms, settings and age groups. From their hub in South Petherton, they run one of the UK's most celebrated rural touring schemes, along with county-wide projects that focus on supporting communities, children, young people, the elderly, and artists.

Through specialisms - Rural Touring, Early Years, Dance, Theatre and Music - they deliver a diverse range of projects that delight audiences young and old, increase well-being, strengthen the sense of community, facilitate learning and spark inspiration.

Give the gift of extraordinary and meaningful experiences! Sign up for the bimonthly newsletter [here](#) and follow on [Facebook](#) to see all events and opportunities.



Plus a Spotlight on ... Carymoor Environmental Trust

Have you ever been to Carymoor Environmental Trust? They are tucked away on a capped landfill site near



Castle Cary and have been converting the industrial site into a vibrant nature reserve over the last 25 years.

Perhaps your children have visited on one of the environmental education days? They also visit primary schools to promote their excellent local recycling scheme in conjunction with Somerset Waste Partnership and have reached over 50,000 children so far with the reduce, reuse, recycle message.

However, they aren't just about school visits and education. Each week sees a number of volunteers arriving on site to help with maintenance and wildlife conservation tasks, there is a regular gardening group, a monthly Saturday conservation group and they work with local special further education and community groups to provide activities for learners.

They also welcome local businesses and corporate groups for teambuilding days. There are always plenty of physical tasks to be completed on the reserve, and the beautiful eco buildings can be used for hosting meetings and visitors go away inspired to make changes in their own environments.

As well as regular courses and events, they have just launched 'Experience Carymoor' packages designed to be enjoyed with family and friends. Challenge your family to a pottery throw down, explore the reserve at night with a birthday party with a difference, or spend a relaxing day with friends creating willow flowers or willow baskets. These experiences are also available as a Gift Voucher and would make wonderful environmentally friendly gifts for Christmas or special occasions as well as helping protect the site for nature.

More information about Carymoor Environmental Trust can be found on their [website](#) or Social Media channels - [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

Whats on...

The Pantomime season is at The **Octagon Theatre** with what promises to be one of the most fun-filled pantomimes seen at the theatre in recent years – 'Dick Whittington'.

Dick Whittington runs from 9th December with the last show on 1st January 2023. Once again, this fabulous production will be



written by Paul Hendy, and produced by Evolution Productions.

Tickets start from £16.00 with some brilliant family saver offers for some performances. Shows are selling out fast, with some already sold out, so grab your tickets whilst you still can. Tickets can be purchased online at www.octagon-theatre.co.uk, by calling the Box Office on 01935 422884 or in person by visiting the Box Office during opening hours.

Another local panto is the annual CUDOS Panto - **All Over The World**, at the Victoria Hall in Crewkerne from 25th to 28th January which promises to be a fun run around the world with the usual mix of dames, bad guys, heroes and a fairy with multiple personalities! Tickets and more information [here](#).

Both these events are listed on our website - if you want an event listed, please let us know via this [form](#).

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 tourism@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

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