

South Somerset *Tourism News*

Spring
2023



Included in this issue:

- Details and booking form for the South Somerset Tourism Showcase
- Launch of the first Somerscience Festival
- English Tourism Week dates
- Heart of the Growth Hub support packages

Dear colleagues,

Spring, is probably my favourite time of year with the occasional lovely warm days, mind you it doesn't feel warm today as I write this - working from home with a blanket on my lap!

This spring also marks the beginning of the new Somerset Council, there are more details later in this newsletter, including new email addresses.

Hopefully, I will see you at the Tourism Showcase!

Best wishes, Becky

Tourism Showcase

**28th March 2023,
(10 am - 12 noon)
Westlands Entertainment
Venue,
Westbourne Grove, Yeovil
BA20 2DD**

***Somerset Tourism Showcase is
ready to kickstart the new
season!***

The **Visit South Somerset
Tourism Showcase** is a FREE and

easy opportunity to collect and share promotional material while networking with tourism and district council colleagues and making contact with professional experts that can help your business develop and expand.

The event is open to all hospitality and tourism businesses including pubs, cafes, restaurants, attractions and accommodation providers, and event organisers across Somerset.

Network with more than 35 Somerset attractions!

More than 35 stands have already been booked, including **Fleet Air Arm Museum, Ferne Animal Sanctuary, The David Hall and Yeovil Town Guide**, plus event organisers, **Bare West Events**. A representative from the new **Somerscience Fest** will have details of the many exciting events planned. There is still time to book a FREE stand using this simple [form](#) or via our [website](#)

FREE business support and advice from tourism professionals

Members of the South Somerset tourism team will be on hand, not only with stocks of the 2023 tourism publications but help businesses make the most of the extensive collection of **FREE resources available** - such as **promotional films, route descriptions** for the **River Parrett Trail** and the **South Somerset 80-mile Cycleway**.

SSDC Economic Development team colleagues will have details of business support, grants and information about the recently produced Market Towns promotional films.

There will also be representatives **South West Growth Hub** with their bespoke support packages, **Kontrolit** to answer queries on web design and digital marketing and the **Yeovil Chamber of Commerce/Yeovil Hospitality Hub** promoting the benefits of being a member of the networking and business support group.

Also, Giles Adams from **What's on Somerset** has a stock of clear DL leaflet dispensers looking for a home, make sure you grab what you need.

If you require more information, please drop me an email at VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk.

Westlands Entertainment Venue is an ideal venue for the Tourism

**SOUTH SOMERSET
TOURISM SHOWCASE** **FREE
Event!**

**Over 35 stands
showcasing Somerset's
fantastic attractions!**

Plus...

- **FREE business advice from industry experts**
- **Collect and share promotional information**
- **Network and connect with industry colleagues**

All Event Organisers,
Attractions and
Hospitality Businesses
welcome!

Tuesday 28th March
(10am - 12 noon)



WESTLANDS ENTERTAINMENT VENUE,
WESTBOURNE CLOSE, YEOVIL, BA20 2DD



For more information;
ring 01935 829333 or email
VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk



Showcase, with easy access, free parking and a large cafe area - perfect for catching up with colleagues in a relaxed environment!

Information about the venue can be found here [Westlands Entertainment Venue](#)



Becoming Somerset Council from 1st April 2023



From 1st April, Somerset will be one unitary authority and known as Somerset Council. The SSDC logo will no longer be used and the new Somerset Council one (as above) will replace all previous district and county logos.

What does this mean for South Somerset Tourism and Visit South Somerset?

Tourism Services, Facilities and Development for the county will sit in the Community Services Directorate in the new council structure. To minimise disruption for an interim period, it will be business as usual as teams across the different districts settle into a new way of working together. The Visit South Somerset logo, branding and marketing materials will remain active until further notice.

What does this mean for businesses/ promoting events in South Somerset and Somerset?

South Somerset Tourism will continue to focus on supporting and promoting South Somerset and the **VisitSouthSomerset.com** website will remain active until further notice; FREE events and business listings will continue to be offered -how to do this can be found on the [Tourism Trade](#) pages on our website.

There are some large county events that we also promote including the Bath and West Show, Festivals etc at our discretion.

If your business/ event is not in South Somerset, the destination management organisation for Somerset is **Visit Somerset** and they will have several options that may be suitable for your business regarding events and website listings. Please contact them directly via info@visitsomerset.co.uk.

Our **South Somerset Visitor Information Centre & Gift Shop** at Cartgate Picnic Site is very much open and we look forward to

welcoming visitors for what we think is going to be a very busy and exciting season for Somerset!

Changes how to contact South Somerset Tourism Team.

Please note a new email address VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk which replaces both tourism@southsomerset and visit@southsomerset.

Personal email addresses need updating to remove the south and will become first.lastname@somerset.gov.uk

Please update your records! Redirections will be in place for a short period.

English Tourism Week 2023 **Friday 17 March - Sunday 26 March 2023**

The annual celebration of English tourism! We all know the importance, value and vast contribution the sector makes to the UK economy. This extended week gives an opportunity to shout and raise awareness to stakeholders including, MPs, ministers and the local community. There are more details, including an extensive new Industry Toolkit on the **Visit Britain website**

Please help spread the word on your social media channels along with the hashtag **#EnglishTourismWeek23** and tag **@VisitEnglandBiz**

Another Visit Britain initiative is a multi-million-pound campaign inspiring visitors to **'See Things Differently,'** aimed at driving bookings to Britain. The international GREAT Britain marketing campaign invites visitors to 'See Things Differently', showcasing Britain as a dynamic, diverse and exciting destination, packed full of activities to come and enjoy now, with a warm British welcome at its heart.

Details about the **'Spilling the Tea on Great Britain'** and **'Fake (Br)it Till You Make It'** campaigns and how to get involved are **here**.

DIGITAL SCREENS
seen by 100,000
visitors
for only £51/month!

We have an exciting opportunity to advertise on two large digital screens at the award-winning South Somerset Visitor Information Centre! One is situated inside the centre and the external screen faces the busy cafe.

The very popular site has 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.

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!



Please [email](mailto:Becky.Cotterill@southsomerset.gov.uk) me 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



Thrive offers a range of training and support services for self-employed and small to medium size enterprises in Devon and Somerset.

Thrive has supported over 600 Devon and Somerset businesses since its launch but the programme will be coming to an end on 31st March 2023. If you still haven't taken advantage of this free support (or you haven't completed your 12 hours of support) now is the time.

Click [here](#) for a list of all the upcoming free online workshops and how to book. Whatever your current business challenge, Thrive is there to help.

GetSet for Growth Somerset

The GetSet for Growth Somerset programme offers fully funded growth support to help local Somerset businesses grow. Eligible businesses will benefit from strategic and highly practical growth

workshops as well as hands-on 1:1 support relevant to their individual business challenges.

It also has a grant component of 30% which enables companies to access grant funding to invest in their business growth through the purchase of products or services, for example, a new or upgraded website.

Find out more here: [Somerset - GetSet for Growth](#)

Digital Link - Unlock your Digital Potential

Another new service from the Growth Hub is **Digital Link**, designed to help small business owners get the most out of digital technology. The new service can give you what you need to unlock your digital potential and help you to grow your business.

There is a series of free digital guides such as '**Guide to Social Media**' and comprehensive '**Digital Information Pack**' that includes access to free digital tools, learning and top tips and workshops and free digital courses.

Contact them [here](#) and quote 'Digital Link' in the enquiry message box.

Somerset Business Resilience Support

A series of free online webinars (with Q&A's) and 1-2-1 advice sessions led by specialist business consultants. This support will help you develop the skills to survive in challenging economic circumstances and take advantage of new opportunities. 1-2-1's will be offered to 10 businesses per session and consist of a 2-hour one-to-one session with a specialist advisor.

Webinars include...

Finding, recruiting & retaining top talent - Weds 15 March

How to use Marketing in an economic downturn - Thurs 30th March

Find out more and book: [Business Resilience Workshops](#)

Help with the increases in the cost of living.

The Heart of the South West Growth Hub team has pulled together a selection of cost-of-living resources including information, top tips and links to schemes and further support for managing and mitigating the impacts of rising costs. They have included information and links to tools & resources to help with improving your business energy efficiency and renewable energy options all details are [here](#)

Grant or social investment opportunities for charities, community groups or social enterprises.

If you work or volunteer for a charity, community group or social enterprise in Somerset, you can apply for:

- **grant**, which doesn't need to be paid back.
- **social investment**, which combines a grant with a loan. The loan part must be paid back.

More information on the Somerset Community Foundation [Website](#): funding needs to be **allocated by the end of March**.

The Business of Recycling!

The Business of Recycling [website](#) can help you recycle more, reduce waste, save energy and protect the environment. It's been developed by [WRAP](#) and Somerset is one of five areas piloting it.

Key content includes:

- A waste calculator tool to help businesses work out how much waste they generate and how recycling can help save money
- Guidance on why they should recycle, waste audits, Duty of Care, procurement, communicating in the workplace, managing and storing waste
- Free downloadable communications resources to help businesses engage with staff and encourage recycling in the workplace.

For more information, including about Business Support Advisors who will be available to meet with businesses in Langport, Chard and Ilminster to help them understand how regulations affect them and what resources are available to help - email [**greenbusinesssupport@somerset.gov.uk**](mailto:greenbusinesssupport@somerset.gov.uk).

Tourism Conference Feedback

I recently attended the [West Country Tourism Conference](#) at Westpoint. As always it was very informative and inspiring. Topics covered included...

Low-cost practical ways to make businesses more **accessible** based on experiences at Bosinver Farm Cottages in Cornwall resulting in good bookings for a profitable market and many return visits. More information can be found on the [Tourism For All](#) website.

Practical case study of **sustainability** initiatives at the [River Dart Country Park](#) with their renewable energy source and aims for zero to landfill.

Tourism Alliance and their policy priorities for 2023 including revising the Package Travel Regulations and reducing the VAT Rate for Hospitality and Attractions. A full list can be found [here](#) - fingers crossed they are successful.

Alistair Handyside, from the [PASC](#) on changes ahead that will affect the self-catering market including the Statutory Registration Consultation and what the organisation is doing to support the industry.

Deborah Heather, [Quality in Tourism](#) spoke about consumer buying habits including more awareness around "greenwashing" and how being a "responsible" business will help with bookings. Some of the trends she identifies include the need to be authentic in your marketing and promotions and the increase in people working away from home.

Kate Doodson from [Cosmic](#) about the **carbon impacts of going digital**. My take home from this was - Stop sending thank you emails! If each UK adult sent one less 'Thank you' email a day this would save 16,433 tonnes of carbon a year - Equivalent to 81,152 flights to Madrid!

Ben Harper, from [Watergate Bay](#), spoke about their journey towards **B Corp**, including how to balance people, planet and profit and how it is a very powerful B - B brand and highly recommended journey.

The **Staying Legal** talk from [Wollens](#) was a thought-provoking talk on employment legislation and common pitfalls - such as holiday pay, employment contract and what need to do to comply with accessibility legislation.

[Touch Stay](#) is a digital welcome book for holiday guests and Kate spoke about the 5 E's of **communication** and how this works with the customer journey. Some questions include how to use the app to help local businesses.

[Anytime Booking](#) promoted the benefits of **direct booking** and automated software services which frees up time for those that need more attention pre and post booking.

Kate Nicholls, the Chief Executive of **UK Hospitality** spoke, via Zoom, on the case for Tourism and the work they are doing with the central government.

A business development Consultant from NFU Mutual gave a terrifying talk titled "Don't lose everything from **cybercrime**" about the costs and implications of being a victim of Cybercrime. This is an interesting article - [How to protect your business from a cyber attack](#) as a starting point or visit this [website](#).

The second day had a strong emphasis on marketing with talks about meta advertising, google trends, LinkedIn and 7 steps to a successful 2023.

As you can see, it was a very intense couple of mornings! I do have presentations from some sessions – please let me know if you would like a copy or more information about any of the topics.

Southwest - "how is business" survey

This is the only survey that provides a real-time indication of business levels in our region and with limited national data and hardly any regional data available since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is now more important than ever that we try to collect robust, local data regarding business performance in the South West.

The importance is underlined by the feedback received so far this year which suggests that for many businesses it has continued to be

another very challenging year to date for our industry.

Please complete this quick survey covering January and February 2023 by **Sunday 2nd April**. The more that take part the better and more useful the information becomes!

The survey can be found [here](#).

Tourism Awards – advanced warning!

The Bristol Bath and Somerset Tourism awards will be open for entries on 17 April 2023. Applying will not only give you a chance to compete locally but if you win you may go through to the South West Awards and even the VisitEngland Awards just like the Cotley Inn in Wambrook.

Awards are great for PR, staff morale, networking and raising your profile to attract more customers. They also give visitors the reassurance that you are award-winning. All entrants get feedback on their entries. Two free workshops will be taking place in May to help businesses with their entry forms - find out more at www.somersettourismawards.org.uk.

Business events in Somerset...

Spotlight on Digital Tech 23 April 2023 (10am -1 pm)

Free Event for Devon and Somerset Businesses at Cullompton Community Centre.

Whether you're new to all things digital, would like to know more, or are confident with digital technology in your business, this free event will give you the insight you need to harness digital technologies to grow your business as well as connect you to the right support to get you one step further. More information and the booking form can be found [here](#)

Great South West Regional Launch: Somerset 29 March 2023

Somerset launch event of The Great South West - a pan-regional partnership covering the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset. It is led by business and focused on delivering a larger and more productive economy, unlocking the potential of the region's green and blue economies, and driving investment into the region.

For more information and to reserve a space, visit this [website](#)

Somerset Food Trail call out for venues!

After a very successful Somerset Food Trail in 2022, the festival is back again from Friday July 14 to Sunday 30. Venues interested in taking part should register on the [Foodtrail](#) website by **March 15**.

The Food Trail celebrates the farms, landscapes, people and places behind Somerset's most flavourful and nature-friendly food. Last year's event was declared a roaring success after around 8,500 people took part, and 85% said they would participate again.

Participating venues ranged from biodynamic vineyards to community food forests, aquaponic market gardens to fermenters, foragers, distillers and smokeries to goat herders, cider makers and artisan bakeries.

This year's festival has a theme of '**feasts and tastings**' – with the organisers wanting to get everyone sampling fantastic Somerset produce. Feasts and tastings could be anything from a picnic in a field to a four-course dinner or cheese, cider or wine tastings after a farm or vineyard walk.

Stewart Crocker, chair of Sustainable Food Somerset which organises the Trail, says, 'If more of us choose to buy locally produced, sustainably grown food, we'll be driving down carbon emissions, protecting biodiversity, helping the local economy and improving our health.'

Spotlight on.....



A New Arts and Crafts Workshop for South Somerset

Michelle Hickman is proud to announce a new era for Furzie, with the opening of her Workshop at Bowdens Farm, near Langport. As Furzie, Michelle has taught the craft of needle felting for eight years, teaching over two thousand people.

This is needlefelting for grown-ups - who don't want to grow up - great fun and easy to do. Furzie creations are not just fluffy bunnies and cute creatures - but something different, something personal,

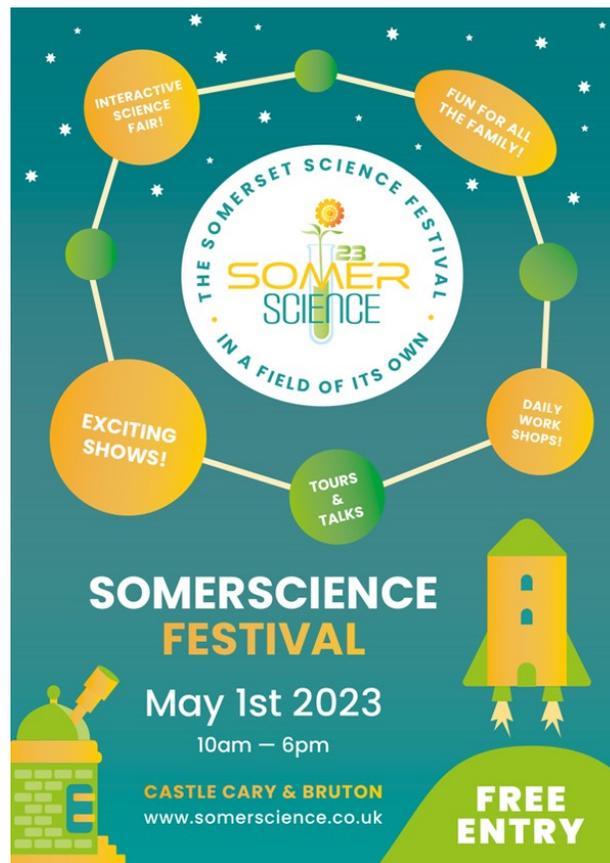
something with humour and character.

Furzie's experience in hosting courses ensures everyone has a great day out, be they confident crafters or complete beginners. Her forte is needlefelting but she will also be hosting courses in other textile-based crafts including wet felting and nuno felting. Plans are also afoot to add jewellery making, willow weaving and enamelling, amongst others, to the workshop's repertoire.

Visit for an open day on Saturday 25 March, to see the workshop and a display of Furzies at 6 Bowdens Farm, near Hambridge on the B3168 Langport to Ilminster road. Postcode TA10 0BP. The wonderfully apt What3words are prongs.unleashed.endlessly.

More information at www.furzie.co.uk

Whats on...



SOMERSCIENCE FESTIVAL - 1st May 2023

A 1-day **extravaganza** of STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) activities for all the family, including shows, workshops, interactive demonstrations, stands and talks. Across 12 venues in Castle Cary and Bruton, there will be 75 activities provided by 65 different organisations, all completely FREE!

The Festival is much needed, bringing access to science engagement opportunities for the young people of South Somerset who have hitherto had to journey to cities out of the county, or simply remain unreached. And yet Somerset has a thriving Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics scene and is at the forefront of many technologies in e.g. the aerospace sector, nuclear energy, agri-tech and more. Somerscience brings the people of South Somerset face to face with those exciting developments and career opportunities.

The programme includes Science Circus, shows, robot wars, workshops, a health science hub with the chance to try out and understand many medical technologies, a whole series of talks, including I'm a Scientist Get Me Out of Here hosted by digital guru and Discovery TV presenter Suze Kundu and a Deep Time Walk between the two towns, learning about the story of the Earth along the way.

Contributors include the Met Office, Hinkley Point C, Leonardo, Bristol Airport, Dyson, RSPCA, Incredible Oceans and Bath, Bristol, Plymouth, Exeter, UWE, Bath Spa and Royal Agricultural Universities as well as the show providers from Circus 250 – an all-woman science circus team, Braintastic Science and Exeter Science Centre.

For further information: <https://somerscience.co.uk>

The [Whats on/Events](#) section of our website is very popular with both holidaymakers and residents. Details of events can be submitted using this [link](#) and please remember to send a poster. *Note - we can only upload businesses and events if we have an accompanying image or poster, which needs to be emailed to VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk.*

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 VisitSS@Somerset.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 VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk or click the button below.

Very occasionally we feel it is appropriate and beneficial to forward emails and newsletters from our partners, please let me know if you would rather not receive this information.

For more information about how South Somerset District Council uses and

keeps 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



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