

Included in this issue:

- Free promotional material available to support tourism businesses.
- Spotlight on a Digital Tech Event and other business support.
- Details about Somerset Food Trail and Open Studios
- BBC Bargain Hunt features South Somerset!

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the first newsletter from the South Somerset tourism team, as part of the new Somerset Council.

We are now officially called Tourism Facilities, Services and Development and sit in the Cultural Services Directorate with heritage, art centres, theatres, museums, libraries, and leisure centres. As in previous years, we will continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Economy, Employment & Planning Service and generally across the council.

We are all learning who does what in the council now. Please feel free to contact me if you need a contact for anything and I will see what I can find out for you!

One of the changes is everyone's email addresses. If you haven't already, please update previous SSDC email addresses to firstname.surname@somerset.gov.uk. To contact us here in tourism please email: VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk

Best wishes, Becky

**News and Promotional Material
from the
South Somerset Tourism Teams**

New Market Town and Food & Drink Films

One of the final SSDC Market Towns Investment Group projects was a series of wonderful short films focusing on South Somerset's vibrant market towns. The films are primarily for town and parish councils to showcase what visitors might expect from visiting their towns and surrounding areas, however, they are a great resource for all tourism-focused businesses. These were filmed over a number of months towards the end of last year and are evocative of each town.

You can view them all on the Visit South Somerset website <https://www.visitsouthsomerset.com/listings/market-towns-and-villages> and on the Visit South Somerset YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@visitsouthsomerset>

Please feel free to embed them on your own website and share them on social media accounts. If you are unsure how to make the most of these opportunities, please contact us and we can help.



UPDATED 80-mile South Somerset Cycleway – a greener way to explore South Somerset

The cycling route takes in Yeovil, Sherborne, Castle Cary, Somerton, Langport, South Petherton and Ilminster and can be completed over a few days or enjoyed in short sections. There is a very inspirational piece about the trail in the May edition of **SomersetLife** written by Rachel Mead.

Having ridden the route many years ago and having double-checked it again for this project (by car this time!) I can vouch for it being a lovely circuit and a great way to explore the area - with many cafes on the route to keep up your energy levels!

Similar to the River Parrett Trail, promotional material and route descriptions complement the route, all on our website [80-mile cycling route in South Somerset](#). Please feel free to download any of the material and link to your own website.

Printed copies of the DL leaflet are available from the South Somerset Visitor Information Centre.

Quick reminder!

The River Parrett Trail is Somerset's 50-mile long-distance walking trail and quite extraordinary! You quickly become immersed in landscapes, heritage, nature and wildlife as the trail takes you from its source near Chedington, Dorset, to the sea at Stert Point on the Bristol Channel with amazing views across Bridgwater Bay.



The tourism business opportunities are varied from accommodation and food and drink provision to wildlife and special interest tours, bag transport and specialist outdoor clothing shops.

We have produced a range of materials to support businesses with these opportunities, including a promotional flier and a beautiful promotional film, with background music by the award-winning Folk artist Kitty Macfarlane. These, plus practical route descriptions can be found on the [River Parrett Trail webpage](#) or our [youtube channel](#).

Alternatively, visit the South Somerset Visitor Information Centre on the A303 Cartgate picnic site to collect copies of the DL leaflet.

Fresh 2023 publications

The South Somerset Tourism team have been busy over the winter updating their tourism publications, including adding a FREE icon. We are very aware of the importance of value for money and now highlight more than 60 free things to do and explore!

Printed copies are usually available from the South Somerset Visitor Information Centre, but be aware that due to restricted space we hold only limited stock on site - please ring the centre before making a special journey on 01935 829333.

Digital versions of these guides, plus many more can be accessed here <https://www.visitsouthsomerset.com/downloads/guides-maps-and-trails>

- **Things to do in South Somerset** - lists attractions, experiences and activities, country parks, food and drink, events and shopping, including more than 60 FREE or low cost things to do.
- **Accessibility Guide to South Somerset** - information about accessible places to visit and sources of information.
- **Dog Friendly in South Somerset** - listing places particularly welcoming to dogs.
- **Explore South Somerset Map** - a handy simple map of South Somerset and some key sites.

Digital South Somerset

The www.VisitSouthSomerset.com website continues to be the main point of contact for things to do, places to visit and accommodation options, with more than 42,000 new users so far this year. The What's On page is particularly popular, with more than 12,000 users already this year. This website has been recognised as an important resource to Somerset tourism and hospitality businesses and will continue until further notice.

All listings for tourism businesses and events are totally FREE and really easy!

- Tourism and Hospitality businesses based in South Somerset can apply for a listing via this simple [form](#). It should take less than 15 minutes. Please note this form replaces previous forms advertised.
- South Somerset events can be submitted via this [form](#).

Please note that we will require images or posters to accompany all listings, which are accepted at the Tourism team's discretion.

If you are already listed - please review your details and any changes can be made by emailing VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk

Our website is separate to the [Visit Somerset website](#), if you would like a listing on this site, you will need to be a member, please liaise directly with the Visit Somerset team. More details about membership can be found [here](#).

Social media: Keep up to date with what's going on in South Somerset on our social channels.

- [Facebook](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Twitter](#)

Remember to tag us and be in with a chance of being featured.



Call out for “green tourism businesses” for itineraries

We are developing a selection of county-wide green/eco/sustainable itineraries. If you would like to be featured for one of these, please drop me an [email](#) in the first instance.

We are looking to include attractions, accommodation and things to do in terms of activities and experiences.

South Somerset Visitor Information Centre and Gift shop

Exciting opportunity to connect to thousands of visitors and holidaymakers.



Two large digital screens

Screen one - Viewable 24/7 by cafe and facilities users

Screen two - Operating during opening times

Currently 6 or 7 days/week peak season (April to Oct) and 5 days/week low season (Nov to March)

Amazing reach!

£87.50 / month Peak Season (£105.00 inc Vat)

£54.17 / month Low Season (£65.00 inc Vat)

Great Value!

Get in touch now to discuss flexible options and make the most of this exciting offer!
Email; VisitSS@Somerset.gov.uk



www.VisitSouthSomerset.com

**TWO DIGITAL
SCREENS -
seen by 100,000
visitors for less
than £90/month
peak season!**

We have a UNIQUE and EXCITING opportunity to advertise on large digital screens at the award-winning South Somerset Visitor Information Centre!

The very popular site has approximately 100,000 visitors a year using the picnic area, public toilets and cafe as well as the well-stocked information centre.

Please [email](#) if you are interested in this unique advertising opportunity or would like to arrange a site visit.

BRISTOL BATH AND SOMERSET TOURISM AWARDS OPEN FOR ENTRY

The 2023/24 Bristol Bath and Somerset Tourism Awards are open for Somerset tourism and hospitality businesses to enter. The awards offer businesses the chance to win not only locally but the regional Southwest awards and – for matching categories – the national VisitEngland awards. The awards are FREE to enter due to being supported by sponsors and partners.

The categories include pubs, cafes and restaurants as well as

accommodation, spas, wedding and business venues, attractions, events and experiences. There are also awards for unsung heroes, new businesses, dog-friendly, accessible and age-friendly businesses.

Two new categories for this year are the Better Environment Award and Water Efficiency Award.

Feedback from last year's entrants listed the benefits of entering as increasing bookings, generating PR, free feedback, making great contacts, boosting staff morale and helping with recruitment. Having entered for the last few years we can vouch for the benefits, please get in touch if you have any queries.

Entries must be submitted by midnight on Sunday 18 June, more information can be found [here](#)

Business training and support

Spotlight on Digital Tech - Free Event

Are you a small business owner looking to seize the opportunities offered by digital technology?

There is a free 'Spotlight on Digital Tech' event on Tues 13th June (9.15am – 12.15pm) at The Canalside Conference Centre, Bridgwater, which might be perfect for you!

Explore digital trends, opportunities, and support with expert speakers like Cosmic, Teapot Creative, Digital Somerset & more. As AI reshapes the business landscape in 2023, it's crucial to adapt and thrive in the digital world. Spaces are limited and booked [here](#).

Somerset Innovation Exchange – Summer of Innovation

This online event on 14th June will provide practical guidance on how to develop and implement a cohesive digital marketing strategy and will outline some of the support tools available.

- You will learn how to target specific audience segments with tailored messages and refine your campaigns through detailed monitoring, tracking and benchmarking.
- Delivered virtually by Business West's Digital Marketing and Digital Adoption Specialists, this three-hour event will include break-out groups to discuss the merits and challenges of different digital adoption and digital marketing strategies.

Open to businesses from Somerset at all stages of growth including entrepreneurs, designers, rising stars, inspirational founders and civic innovators.

More Information, including how to book can be found here [HERE](#)

Additional Courses.

The Heart of the South West Growth Hub details other courses on offer – many FREE - such as breakfast sessions about cypher security to courses around mental health and digital marketing - information here <https://www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk/events/>

Excellent news about the Thrive Business Support Programme!

Thrive, the popular business support programme for small business owners has announced the extension of its services until the end of July 2023.

The programme's one-to-one business support ensures that each participant receives fully-funded advice and personalized guidance to address their unique challenges and opportunities. From refining marketing strategies to bolstering resilience, growth, recruitment, and more, Thrive's dedicated business advisors are ready to assist SME's at every stage.

Since its inception, Thrive has been instrumental in empowering over 600 local businesses and feedback from past Thrive participants has been overwhelmingly positive: *"The support I received was first-rate. The expertise provided has made a tangible difference to our business."*

Small business owners in Devon, Somerset, Plymouth and Torbay are encouraged to seize this opportunity by visiting: [THRIVE](#) and completing the short registration form. Once registered, an experienced business advisor will reach out to schedule a one-to-one session.

Interested businesses are urged to act now to secure their place, as the extension of the Thrive support ends in July 2023.

Free digital guides

The South West Growth Hub has published a series of free digital guides, which looks set to become a valuable resource for small business owners seeking to improve their online digital presence and business marketing.

They include...

- **Small Business Guide to Instagram.** Social media platforms like Instagram can be vital tools for your brand's growth and marketing. This guide offers concise help so you can make the most of Instagram, featuring tips on sizing, reels, stories, and more.

- **Small Business Guide to Facebook.** Facebook is a powerful platform to engage with customers, promote products, and build a strong online presence. This guide offers top tips and best practices, including image sizes, tagging people, and other tips for success.

You can also get our 'Business Guide to Social Media', 'Small Business Owners Guide to using Chat GPT for your Marketing' and 'Digital Information Pack'.

I have seen them and would highly recommend getting in touch for your own copies by emailing **Get in Touch** stating which guides you'd like to receive.

Spotlight on..... Harrys Cider



Harrys Cider are craft cidemakers from South Somerset, producing a delicious range of traditional, sparkling, and fruit ciders from apples grown in their own orchards.

The family business and cider farm is based in Long Sutton, near Langport and the shop is open from Monday through to Saturday from 10 am until 4 pm (except National Holidays). Visitors can enjoy sampling a full range of ciders on one of the pre-booked group cider tours, which last approx. 1 ½ hours and include a tour of the cider house, the adjacent orchard and learning about the process of cidemaking. Tours cost £15.00 per person including a free Harry's cider glass to take away. Please visit their website for more information - www.harryscidercompany.co.uk/cider-tours

During the summer months, there are regular Saturday events at the farm from 12 noon to 5 pm with live music and no charge for admission.

- Saturday 1st July, with some fabulous paella from Alimentos and indulgent doughnuts from Dough Bros
- Saturday 5th August with King Fin serving up some tasty fresh

sustainable fish wraps and chips

- Saturday 2nd September with Soul Fries, delicious home-cooked chips with fabulous toppings

There are also Pizza and Cider Friday Nights, from 5 pm until 10 pm with Ethic Street Pizza, please check their website for details.

In the news.....



A 'gloving donkey' from the South Somerset Heritage Collection (SSHC) took centre stage in a recent episode of the BBC's Bargain Hunt as the programme's 'mystery item'.

Bargain Hunt filmed the episode at the Bath & West Showground Antiques and Collectors Fair in November 2022, and Joseph Lewis, Heritage Coordinator at South Somerset Heritage Collection brought along the item to discuss it with BBC presenter, Charlie Ross. The object was selected as the episode's 'mystery item' where it was shown to visitors and asked if they could guess what it was and its purpose.

The 'gloving donkey' was invented in 1807 and is a device that has clamps and brass teeth to hold the fabric of a glove together for sewers to sew more evenly and quickly.

South Somerset Heritage Collection, now part of Somerset Council, is an archive collection based in Yeovil – a town which has been home to the glove-making industry since the 14th Century and in the 1950s, the town produced 50% of England's leather gloves. The collection has more than 30,000 objects and 6,000 photographs reflecting the heritage of Yeovil and South Somerset. It includes costumes and textiles, gloves and gloving, fine art, industrial items, archaeology, ceramics and glassware, and coins and medals.

The public is welcome to view the 'gloving donkey' and the rest of SSHC's archive by appointment only, by emailing heritage.services@somerset.gov.uk or visiting the [SSHC website](https://www.sshc.gov.uk).

Interested viewers can rewatch the episode which was aired on Monday, 1 May 2023, on BBC iPlayer here:

What's on...

SOMERSET FOOD TRAIL FESTIVAL 14-30 JULY 2023

The Somerset Food Trail Festival celebrates the best, most sustainably produced local food. It's the first of its kind: a countywide event focused specifically on nature-friendly farmers and artisan producers.

The 2022 Festival featured 247 events organised by farmers, growers, food producers, farm shops, delis, cafés, pubs and eateries, and attracted nearly 9,000 visitors over the ten-day event. This year, the event has an extra week, spreading it out across the calendar and the whole of Somerset.

The 2023 event programme is now live, with full information on their website [here](#).

SOMERSET OPEN STUDIOS 16 September - 1 October 2023

This year's Somerset Art Weeks, the first full Open Studios event since 2018, provides an opportunity for Somerset Art Works Members to open the door to their creative spaces and for eager art lovers and visitors to experience the intrigue and magic of the creative source.

The event is a fantastic way to explore the county, providing the opportunity to experience a wealth of creativity in often little-known places and to make a day of it alongside the best of what Somerset has to offer in hospitality amid stunning locations.

The Somerset Open Studios 2023 guide will feature the programme of artist studios, demonstrations and activities for all to enjoy, including Family Friendly Weekends and an Education Pack for schools. Copies will be available from August and information about the event will be available on the [SAW website](#) from July, so you can start planning your visits!

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

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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 how Somerset Council uses and keeps your information secure, please visit [Somerset Council Privacy Notices](#).

www.visitsouthsomerset.com

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