

# South Somerset *Tourism News*

February  
update  
2022



## Included in this update issue:

- *SSDC* Discretionary Omicron Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation Grant Scheme
- English Tourism Week and South Somerset Leaflet Exchange
- FREE VESP support

February seems too late to be wishing anyone a Happy New Year, unless of course its the Chinese New Year and welcome to the year of the Tiger!



This is a short newsletter with details about the recently released **Additional Restrictions Grant**, the South Somerset **Leaflet Exchange** and some other time sensitive information. There will be a Spring Newsletter available in March featuring exciting details about the River Parrett Trail and FREE YouTube films for general use. Please email any news stories you want to share.

The South Somerset Visitor Information Centre has had a good start to the year, being announced as a finalist in the **Bristol, Bath and Somerset Tourism awards**. Good luck to South Somerset businesses; [Long Hazel Park](#) and [The Cotley Inn](#) and all the other finalists. Fingers crossed for 17th February!

## New Discretionary Omicron Grant

As part of the Covid-19 Additional Restrictions Grant support provided to our Council, South Somerset District Council is able to offer businesses in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors additional grant funding.

The **Discretionary Omicron Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation Grant Scheme** will be available to businesses in the specified sectors that are not eligible for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant, as well as businesses whose main trade is to supply the accommodation, leisure and hospitality sectors.

Grant sizes will be between £1,000 and £4,500 and will depend on a

businesses fixed costs, number of employees and business size.

Applications open on 10am on Wednesday 2 February 2022 and close at 5pm on **Wednesday 9 February 2022**.

To be eligible to apply, applicants must:

- Be located within South Somerset.
- Have been adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the rise in cases associated with the Omicron variant.
- Have been trading as of the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2021 (please see trading definition in the [guidance document here](#)).
- Have a minimum of £1,200 per annum fixed business costs.
- Operate within, or supply the below sectors:
  - **Hospitality**- For the purposes of this scheme, a hospitality business can be defined as a business whose main function is to provide a venue for the consumption and sale of food and drink.
  - **Leisure**- For the purposes of this scheme, a leisure business can be defined as a business that provides opportunities, experiences and facilities, in particular for culture, recreation, entertainment, celebratory events and days and nights out. Gyms in occupation of business rateable premises and are the current liable party for business rates
  - **Accommodation**- For the purposes of this scheme, an accommodation business can be defined as a business whose main lodging provision is used for holiday, travel or other purposes
  - **Personal Care businesses** in occupation of business rateable premises and are the current liable party for business rates

Before applying for the discretionary grant scheme, we request that business owners check their eligibility against the Government's Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant. This includes businesses operating within Leisure, Hospitality and Accommodation who pay business rates.

Find more information on this grant scheme here:

[www.southsomerset.gov.uk/omicronbusinessgrant](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/omicronbusinessgrant)

The online application form can be found here:

[www.southsomerset.gov.uk/omicronarg](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/omicronarg).

We encourage businesses to read the Omicron Discretionary Grant guidance before applying. This guidance can be viewed here:

[www.southsomerset.gov.uk/omicronarg](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/omicronarg)

Our Customer Connect team are experiencing an incredibly high number of calls. If you need any assistance in completing the form, contact the grants team on: [restart@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:restart@southsomerset.gov.uk) and title the email South Somerset District Council's Hospitality Support Scheme application support.

# English Tourism Week and South Somerset Leaflet Exchange 2022

English Tourism Week is set to return on 18th -27th March 2022 to celebrate the sector and champion its significant contribution to the UK economy. The event is an ideal opportunity to promote and support the industry's recovery. It will also kickstart the 2022 season and inspire visitors to continue experiencing the delights of staycations.

A toolkit will be available from **Visit England** soon to help share the message on social channels, using the hashtag *#EnglishTourismWeek22*.

As part of Tourism week, we are hosting the **South Somerset Leaflet Exchange** on Tuesday March 22nd (10am - 12 noon) at Westlands Entertainment Venue. If you are a tourism business in South Somerset, this is an ideal opportunity to network with colleagues and exchange your promotional materials to business across the district and beyond.

The event is open to all food outlets, attractions and accommodation providers however priority will be give to South Somerset businesses if we need to reduce numbers. If your business has promotional material and you would like a stand, please get in touch by **email**. Businesses looking to collect material are very welcome to call in between 10 and 12 noon.

We would appreciate your help with promoting this event, and have produced a poster for you to share. Click **here** to download the poster. Thank you. Please get in touch if you have any questions.

## Visitor Economy Support Programme (VESP) News



### ***Somerset Visitor Economy Innovation Grant Scheme***

Somerset Country Council are seeking applications to our 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.

A qualifying project or scheme will fall into one or more of these four priority categories.

1. Enhancing the higher spend customer markets

2. Genuinely new service provision for Somerset
3. 'Shoulder' season visitor opportunities. That is extending the main tourism season. Additionally they will consider out of season opportunities that are likely to have significant impact on the visitor economy
4. New networks/partnerships that consolidate activity into a package that enhances the visitor experience

It is recommended that applicants carefully read **the guidelines** before making an application. The guidelines explain what SCC are looking for, the scoring and the application process.

Applications need to be via **this form** and will close on Monday 14 March 2022 after which point the applications will be assessed. The number of grants available under this scheme is limited, so the grant assessment process is competitive.

## ***Somerset VESP Skills Sessions for 2022***

The VESP programme is offering a series of short but very focused sessions on topics such as **Understanding Web Analytics** and **Google My Business**. The sessions are FREE, delivered online and only take one hour.

- Search Engine Optimisation - 9th February 11.30am -12.30pm
- Google My Business - 10th February 4.30pm - 5.30pm
- What Makes a Good Website? - 15th February 4.30pm - 5.30pm
- Understanding Web Analytics - 24th February 11.30am - 12.30pm
- Defining a USP for your business and telling your story - 25th February 11.00am - 12noon
- Creating Content for Online Marketing - 2nd March 2.00pm - 3.00pm
- Good Images for Online Marketing - 8th March 11.00am - 12noon
- Direct Marketing - 10th March 11.00am - 12noon

To book or for more information email:  
[karen@karendonnellyassociates.com](mailto:karen@karendonnellyassociates.com)

## ***FREE business and digital support***

Only a few weeks remain for leisure and hospitality sector businesses to take advantage of the FREE Visitor Economy Support Programme. This scheme provides **1-2-1 unique diagnostic consultancy** from sector specialists, tailored to your business.

The scheme closes at the end of February, over 250 businesses have benefited so far from this unique initiative that has delivered strong benefits and vastly improved business performance.

It is open to many parts of the visitor economy, whether that is hospitality, retailers, creatives, food and drink producers and more.

Take advantage of this now by registering here - <https://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/business-hub/vesp>

## Visit South Somerset Website Update

Some stats since launch, end July 2021...

- 18,000 + Users have visited the site
- 72,500 + page views across the site
- The home page is the most visited page resulting in more than 142,000 impressions so far. From here the average number of pages a person then visits is 4 to 5.
- The most popular pages consistently rank as our Country Parks, Things to Do section, Stay and What's On
- The new Things to Do Guide has had more than 8,000 impressions and we have already had to reprint Dog Friendly Days Out for the information centre due to ongoing demand. A reprint and update will also be done for Things to Do for the new season as these have proved extremely popular with both residents and visitors.
- 80% of users are UK based, 12% are USA based and the rest are worldwide
- More than 50% of users are viewing the site on a mobile device. Do make sure that your websites are in a responsive design – so that they can be viewed properly across all devices.

Just a reminder that if you are not listed or know of any fellow tourism business that should be on here (accommodation, places to eat/drink, attractions), please do complete the submission form.

Given the amount of traffic and visitors that continues to grow and return, it really makes sense to be on it.

Things to Do/ Accommodation Listings, please complete [here](#):

If you are a food and drink businesses and want a listing - please drop the team an [email](#) for more information.

## South West How's Business Survey – December and the year overall 2021

To help us receive up-to-date feedback on how the tourism industry in the South West is performing, we would be grateful if you could please complete the attached South West How's Business Survey link below for December & 2021.

The survey not only looks at December 2021 performance but also contains some key indicators for the year overall so it would be really beneficial for future funding and tourism support.

The survey link is: <https://survey.sogosurvey.com/r/Dk31bw>

Thank you for helping with this important data collection programme.

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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.visitsouthsomerset.com)

Keep in touch

