

# South Somerset *Tourism News*

Autumn  
2021  
edition



## Included in this issue:

- [www.VisitSouthSomerset.com](http://www.VisitSouthSomerset.com) update
- Visit Somerset conference announced
- Green business survey and support
- Skills training support
- Celebrating successes!

## Dear colleagues,

Personally, I love this time of year - misty mornings, clear sunny days and bright autumnal colours just starting to glow in sunshine. September, to me, means not only the start of a new school year and new pencils, but the opportunity to take stock and learn new skills. I have certainly found some interesting courses while researching this newsletter. See further on in the newsletter for details



Dont forget the SSDC tourism team are here to help if we can and there is the SSDC [covid specific webpage](#) with both personal and business support.

Stay safe and strong  
Becky

## NEW VISIT SOUTH SOMERSET WEBSITE UPDATE

We hope you are enjoying the new website and thank you to those who have given their feedback. We are so pleased that many of you are using it, finding it clear and like the video too. Please feel free to have a link on your pages to our website.

As expected in the first months of launch we are sorting out some glitches and will continue to update with new content and listings as we receive them from providers.

**Food & Drink Section:** We will be making considerable improvements to this section in collaboration with our colleagues from Economic Development. This means that local providers in this sector will have the opportunity for a full listing, similar to those in the **things to do** section.

We know that there are a HUGE amount of wonderful hospitality businesses in South Somerset, who we would like to feature on our site.

If you a pub, restaurant, café, tearoom, food producer, drinks producer or hospitality business and would like a FREE listing on our site? It is FREE and easy to submit details, just follow this link [HERE](#)

**Events:** One of the most popular parts of our site is What's On. If you would like to feature your event on our site, please submit as much information as you can via this [online form](#) and email any high resolution images (jpeg or png) to: [tourism@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@southsomerset.gov.uk)

Please share these links with another businesses you think will benefit from a FREE listing, thank you.

Dont forget to follow us socially and be sure to **#visitsouthsomerset** as we love to see your content and share posts, stories and promote events when we can.

Facebook - VisitSouthSomerset  
Twitter - VisitSSomerset  
Instagram - visitsouthsomerset

## Visit Somerset Tourism Conference - 29th September

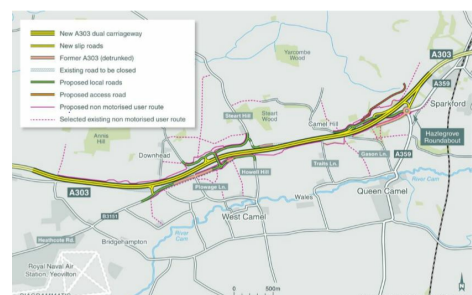
Not only is this a chance to meet and network in real time again with our tourism colleagues, but also an opportunity to hear what **Visit Somerset** have been doing recently and their exciting plans moving forward.

The full programme is to be announced, but will include sessions about making the most of YouTube, Artificial Intelligence, accommodation booking systems and some exciting new products from the Somerset Toiletry Company.

The FREE event is at **Haynes International Motor Museum** and includes lunch. For more information and to book tickets, please visit their [website](#)

## A303 Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling Scheme

Work has started with the teams taking core samples to determine the road make up and structure, also, some of the laybys are closed to protect the work force. We will continue to monitor developments around these roadworks.



Please remember if you have any concerns or questions, please let me know and I will see if I can help at all.

## **FREE business support available!**

Would you like to know the secret to attracting MORE customers? Are you looking for new ways to GROW your businesses? Well, look no further!

The **Visitor Economy Support Programme** (VESP) has helped hundreds of businesses across Somerset do just that. The programme is FREE, all you need to do is sign up [here](#) and one of the experts will be in touch to help.

The support is available to all Somerset business working within the visitor economy including hospitality, tourism, retail, attractions, activity providers, museums, entertainment, and arts.

If you have any questions about the VESP programme, please contact Max Lawrence on [honsec@visit-exmoor.co.uk](mailto:honsec@visit-exmoor.co.uk)

#VESP #VisitExmoor #VisitSomerset #GrowYourBusiness

## **Skills Support for the Workforce(SSW)**

This FREE programme has been developed to upskill employees within small and medium-sized businesses in the Heart of the South West LEP area; ie Devon, Plymouth, Somerset and Torbay

The programme will provide recognised accredited qualifications and bespoke training courses to enhance your employees' skills, increase the competitiveness of your business and boost the local economy. **Skills Support for the Workforce** is all about progress. The programme can help you progress your career, education and business.

The LEP have identified High Value Tourism as one of the areas that could benefit most but other sectors are also eligible.

### **What's on offer?**

- A training needs analysis for your business, identifying the skills you need to support your business ambitions
- Flexible training – pick full qualifications or mix and match individual units to suit your business
- On-the-job vocational training to meet individual and business needs including taught learning, workplace assessment, distance learning and online learning
- Learning pathways for your employees enabling them to progress within your organisation onto higher level qualifications or apprenticeships
- Recognised accredited qualifications and training courses to enhance your employees' skills

## How could you benefit?

- A more efficient business with improved profitability
- A highly skilled workforce delivering quality outputs for your customers and improving business performance
- Improved staff satisfaction and motivation, reducing staff turnover
- A wider appeal to new recruits
- Competitive advantage in your marketplace and improved chance of winning new business

## Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria apply for anyone who accesses support through Skills Support for the Workforce:

- The learner has to be employed by the organisation (or self-employed).
- The learner has to be eligible to work in the UK – evidence will be required
- The learner must be aged 16+ (no upper age restriction)
- The training has to be delivered within the LEP region and by one of the contracted SSW Training Providers

## Partnership

Serco delivers the training and business support through a network of high quality local training providers. SSW is co-financed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the European Social Fund.

Please fill out the **Growth Hub Support form** to find out more about this programme.

## Green Business Survey

In an effort to understand where and how the South Somerset business community, including tourism businesses, are addressing the **climate and ecological emergency** and to help provide more targeted support going forward, SSDC will be asking local businesses to take part in a short survey on this topic.

The survey will open on the 25th September and runs through to 5th November. Look out for Social Media posts when the survey is live or visit the news page on the new **South Somerset Environment** website.



Since declaring a Climate and Ecological emergency in 2019, SSDC have been working together with stakeholder groups to identify interventions that will help to achieve a significant reduction in our carbon emissions across the district. Our South Somerset Environment Strategy aims to make SSDC a leading council in developing and adopting a Green Agenda to promote sustainable environment, economy and communities.

**GetSuSSed**, which stands for Sustainable South Somerset, is SSDC's

monthly environment newsletter that keeps you in the know on all things linked to our Environment Strategy including local news, community projects, grants, learning, green business, and more.

To subscribe and receive Get SuSSed directly every month, please visit our new [South Somerset Environment](#) website or email [SSDCEnvironment@SouthSomerset.Gov.Uk](mailto:SSDCEnvironment@SouthSomerset.Gov.Uk)

## Coronavirus Business Impact Survey – August 2021

Please help us by completing this **survey** which continues to look specifically at the impact of COVID-19 during August 2021, as well as forward bookings for September and October.

We would urge as many businesses within our area to complete the survey as soon as possible, as the data produced helps us to understand and track impacts within the region.

The survey link is [here](#) and the deadline for completions is **30<sup>th</sup> September 2021**. Thank you



### Issues with Rights of Way

Personally, I think one of the good things to have come out of the pandemic is a greater appreciation of our local environment, especially the network of **footpaths** in Somerset.

If you, or any of your contacts, has an issue with a footpath or any of the Rights of Way in the county, you can log them on the Country Councils' Interactive map - [Explore Somerset - Rights of Way, Open Spaces and Area Management](#). This will ensure that one of the Somerset Country Council team can investigate the issue and organise any works that are needed.

SCC have produced [a video](#) which shows how to log issues on the map if you are unfamiliar or experience any difficulties with the system.

## News from Fleet Air Arm Museum

*"With the summer holidays being a busy time for us, we have been able to welcome back our wonderful **volunteers** to assist around the museum.*

*Our volunteers play a vital role within the museum and their knowledge is invaluable to us. Not only do they direct people around the museum but*

*they also answer those tricky technical questions visitors ask us on a daily basis. Our volunteer presence enriches the overall visitor experience offer and also supports the operational running of the museum.*

*Looking forward to the colder months and the end of the year, we are planning the return of our annual Christmas Concert under Concorde. It is a popular evening of music, mulled wine and mince pies and always gets you into the festive mood! We will be very happy to able to deliver this event again after last year's hiatus."*

If you have news you want to share and celebrate with your tourism colleagues across South Somerset- please just drop me an [email](#).

## **Free courses and webinars....**

### ***Build Sustainability into your business (Google Digital Garage and Visit England)***

Thursday 23rd September 2021 (11am – 12 noon)

Learn how to make your business more **sustainable** and help grow your business. In this session, you will learn the importance of Sustainability not only for your business but in the context of the wider world, understanding your current carbon footprint, simple yet, impactful changes that can immediately be actioned and how to embed them within your marketing strategy.

This session is offered via YouTube, is 60 minutes long and assumes no prior knowledge or experience. There will be the opportunity to ask questions during the session. Please register for tickets [here](#).

### ***Google courses from the Digital Garage***

The [Google Digital Garage](#) has many more courses, not only around digital marketing but also career and data and technology - many are FREE. Some are only one hour - such as **Understanding customer needs and online behaviours** and **How to increase productivity at work**, while others are much more in-depth, such as **Socials Psychology** which is 7 modules over 40 hours.

All the current courses available are listed [here](#)

### ***Website & Search Engine Optimisation Workshops with Cosmic***

21st September 2021 (9:30 am) or 23rd September 2021 (1pm)

During this workshop specialist **Digital Trainers** from Cosmic will show you the tools you can use to review your own website, establishing how it is performing and where you can improve.  
On completion of this workshop you will:

- Understand the goal of Search Engine Optimisation
- Master keyword research
- Learn the differences between on-page and off-page SEO
- Discover the importance of User Experience signals in SEO
- Embrace SEO-friendly content creation
- Appreciate the importance of link building and how to go about it
- Appreciate the benefit of combining Search Engine Marketing (Paid Ads) and SEO

Places are limited, **so please register your interest ASAP.**

## Feedback on the 2021 successes for Long Hazel Park Caravan and Camping Park

*"We would say that by entering for these awards it has brought in more business particularly with the staycation market being huge this year, we've managed to encourage lots of people from Somerset and Dorset to venture out again and we've even had guests stay who live a mile down the road from us. It's also highlighted our whereabouts to locals who want their friends and family to visit after such a long time apart. We've managed to get ourselves in local press and trade press which is normally reserved for the "big boy" in the industry and this has given us great content to share across social media.*

*It's really nice to see other people celebrating our success too whether that's journalists, old customers or locals who just pop in and say well done. We often forget that there is a whole world going on outside our gates as we are so busy here working away to make everyone's holiday memorable. It's amazing to think that our news reaches so far." **Long Hazel Park***

Well done, Long Hazel Park for another success - runner up in Gumtree Small Business Blast Off competition, were the only accommodation business recognised for successes during the pandemic. As part of their prize they will have an ad campaign, this really highlights the positive results of entering awards can have.

## *Happening near you...*

### **Somerset Open Studios - 18th September - 3rd October**

Somerset Open Studios 2021 presents work from more than 300 Somerset Art Works Members in over 200 event across the county, with South Somerset having a very strong representation.



Visitors have the opportunity to go **behind the scenes** and **meet the artist**, find out what inspires them and experience the working process-engaging with creativity at the source. Studios occur in a variety of

unique situations and the event is the perfect opportunity to discover hidden locations and workspaces - in person and also online.

For 2021, visitors will be able to experience and explore artists' workspaces in new and different ways.

- A fold-out venue map and listings to help visitors plan their journeys and navigate the 16 days of Open Studios.
- Also new for this year is an Open Studios App, providing full venue details including art forms, accessibility information and opening times. The App works offline and links to Google Maps to take you straight to the studio door!
- A map and venue listings in the September/October edition of Evolver magazine, the arts and culture guide distributed across the Wessex region.
- All venue details will also be listed on the Visit Somerset website, enabling visitors from further afield to make the most of their stay in Somerset.
- QR codes will help visitors locate information easily- just scan the codes where you see them to take you to the App.

The Open Studios page on the **[SAW website](#)** will contain all venue details, as well as information on the event programme with workshops, talks, films and have-a-go activities listed.

Also look out for the Family Friendly Weekends with a range of activities suitable for families of all shapes and sizes!

Artists have made preparations to ensure that venues are Covid-safe including waiting areas and some venues may be open by appointment only, please follow the latest guidance.

Please also check venue details before making a special journey or phone ahead. Many venues will be happy for you to make an appointment.

## ***In the news.....***

### **Congratulations to local winners at the Taste of the West Awards**

One of the reasons I love living and working in South Somerset is the local food and drink offering. It was highlighted to me recently when on holiday just how well service with quality farmshop and food outlets we are compared to other parts of the country.

Congratulations to local cheese producers, **Godminster** and **Keens** for recognition on their excellent cheeses and Coombe Farm Organic for their meat range.

**Cedrics Cakes** won Gold for quite a few of their preserves - including Orange and Spiced Rum Marmalade and Gooseberry & Lemon Thyme Jam, well done to them. Also doing well with their preserves, was **The Old School House** based in Chilton Cantelo.



**Haselbury Spirit** range of gins and rums picked up some awards including Gold for their delicious sounding Strawberry and Tarragon Gin.

**Harrys Cider, Perrys Cider** and **The Newt** also picked up awards for various traditional and fruit ciders.

In the ready meal category, **Eat West Country** won Silver for their delicious sounding Aubergine Parmiians and Angela's Free Range Chicken and Vegetable Broth.

## Anything to contribute?

The tourism newsletter is generally distributed quarterly (March, June, September and December) with additional editions produced 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

