

# COKER DIVISION

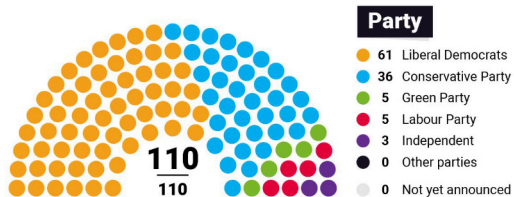
June update from  
District & County Councillors  
Mike Hewitson & Oliver Patrick



Working hard for Barwick & Stoford, Chiselborough, Closworth, East Chinnock, East Coker, Hardington, Haselbury Plucknett, Montacute, North Perrott, Norton Sub Hamdon, Odcombe, West Coker, West & Middle Chinnock

## New Administration

The new administration has been busy setting the pace of change at the County Council. We are driving forward with our plan to deliver a greener, fairer Somerset. We have established the Council's **first ever Environment Scrutiny Committee**, and are committed to delivering for communities right across the county.



Somerset's Local Elections

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New Somerset Council

## Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)



In April 2023, Somerset Council will take over all services provided by the County Council & the 4 District Councils. Cllr Liz Leyshon, Lead Member for Finance, has been poring over the Council's finances. She has serious concerns about the so-called "unitary bonus" promoted by the previous administration. This "bonus" was sold as an annual saving of £18.5m which could be invested in local services. However, this saving is looking increasingly unlikely. **The budgetary pressures as we go unitary are enormous,**

**driven by increased demand upon our services but also by inflation.** The County Council has a vital role to play in supporting people through the cost of living crisis, and whilst we are committed to supporting our communities there's no denying the fact that this comes at a cost.

## SSDC Area Committee Grants

Recently, we secured a total of £26,000 in funding for playground improvements and games pitches across the area. Remember, SSDC's Area Committees have just had their pot of grant funding topped up - and they need to spend it before the District Councils are abolished next year. If there is a project in your area that would benefit from some financial support please get in touch (**SSDC's grants cover 50% of project cost up to £12,500**)



More info here: <https://bit.ly/Communitygrant>



## Highways

We've been pursuing officers re: **Chinnock Hollow (left)** ever since we were elected. A second geotechnical report on the Hollow is due w/c 4th July, after which we should be able to start making decisions. The **A30 roadworks at Haselbury (centre)** are on track to finish at the end of July. In addition we're both busy getting minor highways issues fixed, such as this **subsidence in Hardington (right)**. If you notice a highways issue in your area which needs our attention please get in touch. And finally, it's good news for local businesses as the scheduled **A30 closure (West Coker)** has been postponed until next summer.

## Planning

There are lots of live planning applications across the Coker Division, with many still caught up in the phosphates issue. Any development which results in an increase of phosphates in local sewage works is being refused unless applicants can offset this.

**Please bear in mind that South Somerset District Council continues as the Planning Authority until April 2023.** As such, your District Councillors (below) are your first point of contact depending on your Ward:

**Coker Ward:** Cllrs Nicola Clark & Gina Seaton ([nicola.clark@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:nicola.clark@southsomerset.gov.uk))

**Hamdon Ward:** Cllr Mike Hewitson ([mike.hewitson@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:mike.hewitson@southsomerset.gov.uk))

**Parrett Ward:** Cllr Oliver Patrick ([oliver.patrick@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:oliver.patrick@southsomerset.gov.uk))

## Environment

Following on from No Mow May, some verges in South Somerset are enjoying a reduced cutting schedule. Verges at junctions will continue to be cut more frequently in the interests of road safety, but in areas where road safety isn't compromised - the increased biodiversity is clear for all to see! One volunteer sent in a picture (right) of some rare bee orchids that now inhabit what was once a barren landscape.



*Best wishes to you all,  
Mike & Oliver*

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