

Full Council Meeting – 29 September 2020

Report of Councillor Benet Allen – Deputy Leader and Communications & Culture

The Communications and Engagement team continues to support and promote the work of the Council with key messages about our services and initiatives.

The team is working closely with colleagues across the Council on the release of information through our own channels, and in printed and broadcast media, as we take steps towards recovery from the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

It is also fully engaged with work on the Stronger Somerset proposals for two new unitary Councils and a combined authority, which have now been backed by all of the four Somerset district councils.

The communications lead is working closely with neighbouring district councils and the county council on joint messaging around actions implemented by the multi-partnership groups that have been operating throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

All press releases are available to read on the SWT website and are flagged on our social media platforms where our social media specialist has been key in supporting campaigns and news with imaginative content.

The VJ Day 75 commemorations with veterans and dignitaries hosted by 40 Commando in the Memorial Garden at Norton Manor Camp was a notable success with many people watching video footage of the service on our social media feeds.

Emergency Services Day was also marked on 9 September and The Civic Officer is now making plans for Remembrance 2020.

The events team has ensured that organisers have been able to hold successful events within Covid-19 guidelines including the funfair in French Weir Park, a pop up theatre performance in Castle Green, and the Taunton Independent Market which started up again on Sunday 13 September. A variety of fitness classes, yoga classes and football lessons are still operating successfully across our parks and open spaces.

Culture

A new SWT Cultural strategy is now near completion and has been shared in draft form with the Council's Cultural Forum for any final revisions before being submitted for Full Council approval later this year. This high-level strategy will provide a framework upon which a delivery plan will subsequently be agreed and implemented.

SWT continues to support key cultural organisations through the Cultural budget, and is ensuring that the Cultural and Creative sector is reflected in the District (and County-wide) Covid Recovery and Growth plan.