

# Information sheet

## For Parishes



<b>From:</b>	<b>Mike O'Dowd-Jones Service Director Infrastructure and Transport – Somerset Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>3 July 2025</b>
<b>To:</b>	<b>All Members</b>

## Volunteer highway maintenance for parish, town and city councils – how does it work?

### Introduction

Somerset Council has introduced a scheme to allow local councils to carry out some basic routine highways maintenance tasks over and above the statutory level of service provided by the Council.

The Council will continue to provide all the same statutory highway maintenance services to ensure the highway network is safe and in appropriate condition. However, local parish, town and city councils may wish to achieve an enhanced level of service in their area through buying additional services through our contracts, or undertaking works themselves through a volunteer network.

These volunteer works are low-level, low risk activities that would be carried out by people who have been trained in basic highway safety awareness.

The non-key decision to start the scheme was taken by the Lead Member for Transport and Waste on 25 June 2025. You can read this here: [Decision - Enabling City, Town and Parish Councils to undertake volunteer Highway Maintenance activities - Modern Council.](#)

The scheme will officially launch later this month – there is briefing for parish representatives at the next City, Town and Parish Council Working Group on 16 July. However, links to the licence and training applications are open now (see details below).

## What kinds of maintenance can volunteers do?

- Minor sign maintenance
- Clearing weeds
- Grass cutting
- Hedge cutting
- Cleaning gullies of detritus
- General cleaning and sweeping
- Litter picking

## How do people get trained as volunteers?

- In the first instance contact your local Council to express an interest in volunteering, for example, this can be the Clerk, or a nominated person
- You need to register for the online Highway Safety Awareness course
- E-mail [tlc@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:tlc@somerset.gov.uk) and be sure to add highway volunteering or volunteer course or something similar in the subject line, as it's a shared mailbox
- You will receive an e-mail with a link to the course, a username, and a Password which you will need to change
- On successful completion of the course you will obtain a certificate of completion.
- You must read the volunteer training handbook  
<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/city-town-and-parish-councils/>

## What do I need to do as a Parish, Town or City Council?

- You need to apply for a licence for city town and parish councils to undertake highway works on or near the road.
- On the Somerset Council website, navigate to [Apply for a licence to do minor works on or near the road – Section 171](#) find and click on the link [Application for City, Town and Parish Councils to undertake highway works on or near the road - Somerset Council](#)
- Complete the online application which will be automatically sent to Highways officers for consideration, who will respond back within 10 days.

- Ensure that volunteers have their training certificate (see above), have read the Highway Volunteer Handbook and have the appropriate insurance in place.

## In summary

This is low-level, low risk maintenance. We continue to have regular grass cutting, and general vegetation clearance and gully-clearing as part of a wider highway maintenance schedule, and people can of course still report any issues to the team here [Report a problem on the road](#).

This is not a replacement service, it is simply providing clarity and a legal framework for volunteers to tidy up their local area if they so wish.

We know that this is something that many town and parish councils have requested.

**You will find a downloadable FAQ sheet at the bottom of the page on this link:**  
[Apply for a licence to do minor works on or near the road – Section 171](#)

### For more information contact:

**Name:** David Jones or Bev Norman

**Email:** david.jones@somerset.gov.uk or bev.norman@somerset.gov.uk