



somerset **village** &
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A Very Happy New Year and New Decade - Welcome to 2020!

January – are you glass half full or half empty? Do you start the New Year with resolutions and excitement or shiver with the horror of bad weather, no money and dark nights? Take the half full- option and embrace a more positive mindset to support you through the harsh winter months when life can be most challenging.

You don't need to pay a fortune on diet and detox kits, heating or a holiday to survive winter. Appreciate the beauty of winter to keep you feeling upbeat. Look for the joy in the beautiful sunrises, you may already be at work when they happen but at least it is not at 4am like in June! Watch the murmerations of the starlings and take a walk to see the flooded fields or look out of the window at the winter birds or the different weather formations. Think log fires and walks or time to snuggle under a duvet, with a hot water bottle on the sofa and not feel guilty about watching the TV or reading a book all day! Get excited by planning the work you are doing in the garden for next summer or researching where you want to go on holiday. Eat local and simple foods. Making cheap, homemade vegetable soups keeps you warm and full throughout the day. They can be whipped up in about 15 minutes and cost far less than a detox plan and the heating on!

Driving can be tricky over this period, the rush hour is in the dark and the roads can be filled with ice, floods, potholes and wet leaves. We have many deep ditches on the sides of our roads which fill with icy water at this time of year. Not a pleasant place to be trapped in your car!

I have turned to the AA advice to share with you to keep us all safe. There are great tips on how to drive through a flood and in ice so do look it up. I have included a few preparation tips.

<https://www.theaa.com/driving-advice/seasonal/winter>

- Remember to pack a coat and strong shoes throughout the winter. You may get stuck in the snow, flood or mud and need to walk home! Enough petrol, a blanket and water are useful for motorway journeys, just in case you get stuck in long queues.
- Antifreeze only costs a few pounds, but a frozen and cracked engine costs hundreds to repair. You need a 50-50 mix of antifreeze and water for the winter. Do check you have the correct type for your car.
- Keep the windscreen and other windows clear of dirt, snow and stickers, to avoid a fine.
- Clear snow from the roof – it can fall onto the windscreen and block your view.
- Air-con demists the screen faster and reduces condensation.
- Replace worn or damaged wiper blades.
- Don't leave your wipers on auto when you park up if there's a risk of frost. If the **blades freeze to the screen**, you could damage the blades or wiper motor when you turn the ignition on.
- Use a suitable additive in your screen wash to reduce the chance of it freezing.



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- Keep number plates clean, to avoid fines.
- If you use fog lights, remember to switch them off when visibility improves so they don't dazzle other drivers or obscure your brake lights.
- Use a cigarette lighter to warm a key for a frozen lock.

Also here are some top tips for staying well in the cold – and we know the past couple of years have brought particularly cold weather in the late January – March period with various Beast's storming in! These are particularly aimed at people who Care for others but useful for everyone too!

Ten Top Tips for to help keep us in good health this winter

1. Pressure ulcers often start in the home. If you notice a red spot that doesn't blanch when you press it it could be the start of a pressure ulcer.
2. Do not rub the areas of red skin and this could cause a breakdown of skin.
3. Rubber rings can create areas of increased pressure not prevent them.
4. If incontinence products are used try to not multilayer them as this could increase the risk of pressure ulcers occurring.
5. When moving out of bed try not to ruck up sheets or bedding which could drag on the skin.
6. Where possible, reposition or move regularly to avoid prolonged periods of high pressure.
7. Remember that dehydration does not only occur in the summer. When we turn the heating on we still need to keep hydrated.
8. Keeping properly hydrated helps to prevent against Urinary Tract Infections.
9. Incontinence issues? Try switching to decaffeinated drinks but switch over slowly to allow the body to get used to the withdrawal of caffeine. Keep drinking at regular intervals during the day as this can actually help with incontinence issues.
10. Remember good hand hygiene can help prevent against bugs and infections. Infectious illnesses, like 'flu and norovirus, (the' winter vomiting bug'), are very common at this time of year and whilst the fit and healthy can recover quickly from their symptoms, the elderly and those living with long term conditions are particularly vulnerable and can become quite ill. Good personal hygiene, like washing your hands with soap and water after going to the toilet and before preparing food for others is an essential way to reduce the spread of unpleasant illnesses to friends and family.



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I support unpaid carers in South East Somerset to connect them with community resources, support groups and personal support around benefits and allowances. We also have a team of Community Agents and Village Agents across Somerset. They help to bridge the gap between isolated, excluded, vulnerable and lonely individuals and statutory and/or voluntary organisations which offer specific solutions to identified needs. We can offer advice and support to find local groups and activities available in your community. Please visit www.somersetccc.org.uk and www.somersetcarers.org or call me to find out who can advise you.



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