



somerset village & community agents
part of the CCS group

Viney Court,
Viney Street,
Taunton,
TA1 3FB

Tel: 01823 331222

Email: info@somersetcc.org.uk

Website: www.ccslovesomerset.org.uk



somerset carers
part of the CCS group

January 2021 Village Agent News

Christmas really brought out the best in everyone following the challenging year – we had so many donations to our Gift of Small Things Christmas Appeal that we were able to deliver well over 300 boxes absolutely STUFFED with presents for those most in need in Somerset. A HUGE thank you to all those people who arranged drop off locations in their community and to the many hundreds of people who donated - it made such a difference!

For Village Agents, the new year and colder weather always brings challenges to our less fortunate clients who struggle with fuel poverty. Often the choice is between food and heating, which is a heartbreaking position to be in to have to make that choice.

We have many ways to help people in crisis or fuel poverty –

The **first** way is to donate your winter fuel allowance to the Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) here: <https://www.somersetcf.org.uk/winter> - SCF then work with us to allocate the donated fuel allowance to those in need. This year, many will need to stay at home to keep themselves safe and will find themselves cut off from family and friends and facing higher costs to heat their homes. Your donations will help us make sure around 500 vulnerable older people across Somerset have the support they need to get through the winter.

Secondly, our #LoveSomerset Crisis Fund: <https://ccslovesomerset.org/somerset-crisis-fund/>

The Crisis Fund has proved to be an enormously valuable and valued extra “tool in the bag” for Village Agents to help people facing personal and family crises. At this time of crisis and hardship for many in our communities this need is greater than ever, and we desperately need donations towards the fund.

<https://localgiving.org/charity/somersetcrisissfund/>

You can donate online via the above link or by contacting us directly – all support no matter how small makes a huge difference to people!

We help when others can't, won't, or don't. Some examples of what these grants have been used for recently are:

- To buy 2 mattress protectors for a carer who was supporting their loved one with night time incontinence
- To support a family with funeral costs after their teenage son died
- To buy children's clothes for a family who had recently lost Dad to cancer
- To buy half a tank of oil for a lady with a chronic health condition who was struggling to heat her home
- To buy a washing machine for a carer who is struggling to keep up with washing demands



CCS
people · place · enterprise

Funded & in Partnership with:

COMMUNITY FUND
Somerset West and Taunton

Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS
Somerset

SOMERSET
County Council

Somerset
Partnership

SPARK
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INSPIRING COMMUNITIES

- To buy food and drink for a client who had been struggling to get shopping during the lockdown.

Thirdly you can join **our Community Oil Buying Scheme** to ensure that you benefit from the best bulk buying discounts on your heating oil. You can find out more here:

<https://ccslovesomerset.org/oil/> . We receive 50% of the small annual membership fee, which goes into our Crisis Fund!

Village Agent TOP TIPS for staying warm and well this winter:

- Check out the energy (& money!) saving advice here:
<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home/heating-your-home/>
- Contact the Centre for Sustainable Energy who can help you find a better rate
<https://www.cse.org.uk/> - if you haven't changed energy supplier is over a year you are guaranteed to save money by changing! CSE can help you with this.
- if you're not very mobile, are 65 or over, or have a health condition, such as heart or lung disease, heat your home to at least 18C
- keep your bedroom at 18C all night if you can – and keep bedroom window closed
- use a hot water bottle or electric blanket to keep warm in bed – but do not use both at the same time
- Have hot drinks often, and have at least 1 hot meal a day – eating helps keep you warm
- draw curtains at dusk and keep doors closed to block out draughts
- get your heating system checked regularly by a qualified professional

And don't forget our **LIVE Talking Cafes** 11am, weekdays on Facebook (also available after on YouTube) regularly cover fuel saving tips, debt advice and more – just check out <https://ccslovesomerset.org/talking-cafe/> and find all previous Talking Cafes on this subject under the 'Everyday Advice & Money/Debt Support' section. Tune in weekdays at www.facebook.com/talkingcafesomerset

If you need help with any of this please do contact your local Village Agent on 01823 331 222 or visit www.somersetagents.org. **We wish you a healthy and warm start to 2021!**

Editors Notes

CCS Village & Community Agents are in your communities 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 and help you with any queries you may have or situations that you need advice and support with.

Please visit:

www.ccslovesomerset.org / www.somersetcarers.org / www.somersetagents.org