

This week the Town Council are pleased to announce The Shepton Innovator Business Awards. Councillors, together with our new project officer, have worked speedily to introduce the awards with several categories. Please take a look at our website where you can nominate a business and help raise their profile. <https://sheptonmallet-tc.gov.uk/siba/>

It is good to see shops start to reopen and I have seen the town start to come back to life, with people queuing in a nice orderly fashion to enter shops. I really feel for local independent retailers, one told me a few weeks ago that they had sold a car to pay the rent and keep things going. We have relied on many local shops of late and they need our support now more than ever.

Thinking of traders and the town centre in general, we are actively pursuing the need for The Market Place and Town Street to be enhanced by resurfacing and are still in dialogue with Somerset County Council. We as a Council made a financial commitment to this project some time ago and as a body we are frustrated at the lack of progress. It is important to get this done to aid the town's recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have a number of projects coming together over the coming months, from town signage to biodiversity. We also await with anticipation the approval of the plans for the extension of Millennium Way through the cutting into Station Road. This will provide a safer east to west multi-user path across town. I cycled The Colliers way last Sunday from Radstock towards Frome and it was very busy with families walking and cycling in the pleasant Somerset countryside. Hopefully we can create something similar nearer home soon (I know I have said this before but the project excites me!).

This week is [Men's Health Week](#), a good time to reflect on the specific issues that men face and learn how we can all take better care of ourselves.

Well as usual I've blathered on too long and I have cold coffee to drink, it was hot before I started on this!

Edric Hobbs, Chair, Shepton Mallet Town Council