

#WednesdayWithoutUs

Campaign in a Box: #WednesdayWithoutUs

TL:DR

Spark Somerset wants you to get involved in our #WednesdayWithoutUs campaign, highlighting the challenges we face as a sector, by celebrating what we do well. Below are campaign materials to help you get involved.

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The Lowdown

Why This Campaign Matters

#WednesdayWithoutUs is a unified advocacy campaign designed to make the invisible visible. It is designed to take our unseen work happening every day and make it impossible for decision-makers to ignore.

How this supports your objectives

- **Elevates Your Profile:** This campaign gives you an opportunity to position your organisation as vital to the health and wellbeing of residents.
- **Reduces Burnout:** By highlighting the hidden costs of coordination and infrastructure, we are advocating for the resources needed to sustain staff and volunteers properly.
- **Algorithmic Authority:** When we come together and use the same hashtag (**#WednesdayWithoutUs**) and post similar content at similar times, algorithms recognise it as a trending topic, increasing organic reach for everyone involved. (Coordinated UK movements like **#CleanAirDay** show sector-wide hashtags can see up to 40% higher engagement rates than standard posts because they tap into a broader, shared audience.)
- **The Drumbeat:** To make change happen we need a drumbeat of evidence. By coordinating our stories, we move from being nice-to-have to being seen as an essential part of a high-performing system.

What do you get out of this

- **Ready-made Content:** We provide the framework, you provide the local story. It saves you time while keeping your feeds active and high-quality.
- **Engagement and Reach:** By tagging partners and using the campaign hashtag, you'll reach new audiences and potential supporters.
- **A Seat at the Table:** This campaign is small-p-political. Spark Somerset is leading and ensuring it is seen by MPs and commissioners, making future funding and partnership conversations much easier.

Content

Making it Happen: A Wednesday Ritual

The goal is to create a consistent drumbeat every Wednesday that celebrates our collective impact. We know every organisation will have their own tone of voice and

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level of risk they are comfortable with, so below are pick-n-mix example posts, followed by useful data, you can select and adapt to the media format you find works for you, whether that's a graphic on social media, a reel or short, or even a physical postcard handed to a visiting MP.

Example Pick-n-Mix Content

Visual	Text
A photo of your team, activity or volunteer in action (using your own visuals helps reach).	<p>It's Wednesday morning and we are proud to celebrate [XXX]. Their work is a brilliant example of why communities keep us healthy. Every week, they ensure people in our town have a place to belong. We're proud of our work and wouldn't want to see a #WednesdayWithoutUs.</p> <p>@[other group] what's happening with you this Wednesday?</p>
A volunteer driver's car or a scenic rural Somerset road designed as a postcard with the wording "A place to belong... even 10 miles from the nearest bus stop."	<p>It's 10am on Wednesday. I'm currently driving a resident from Exmoor to their dialysis appointment. Without this lift, they'd be facing an expensive taxi, ambulance or missed treatment.</p> <p>A volunteer drive costs roughly £5 in expenses. An ambulance call-out costs the system £327.</p> <p>We're here so that living rurally doesn't mean living in isolation.</p> <p>@[other group] where are you today?</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p>
A youth club or a chill-out zone with beanbags.	<p>It's 4pm on Wednesday. Our youth hub is open and 30 young people are here. If we weren't here today, these young people would have nowhere to go. We're building futures, supporting</p>

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	<p>wellbeing and preventing anti-social behaviour before it starts.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] We'd love to hear what you're up to today</p>
<p>A photo of a closed community hall door or an empty chair.</p>	<p>It's 1pm on Wednesday. Usually, this room is full of laughter and support for people living with dementia. Today, we're asking you to imagine where groups will meet if the door closes forever.</p> <p>62% of charities in Somerset are on a financial cliff-edge.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what would stop if you weren't here?</p>
<p>A photo of your work or team.</p>	<p>There are more than 1,902 VCFSE organisations making Somerset a better place to live. If this shadow service closed, the system could not absorb the surge. This isn't a strike; it's a future we hope never comes true.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what is your vision for the future?</p>
<p>A close-up of a volunteer being briefed or a "Safe Space" sticker on a window.</p>	<p>It's 11am on Wednesday. Behind every volunteer is a professional coordinator ensuring they are trained, DBS-checked, and supported. Our spirit is free, but our safety net requires investment.</p>

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	<p>Somerset volunteers contribute more than 10,000 hours every week. We are the glue that keeps Somerset together.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] how do you celebrate your volunteers?</p>
<p>An area with files, a laptop, sign-in sheets, phones.</p>	<p>It's 9am on Wednesday. Before anyone arrives, rotas are checked, risks are reviewed, and calls are already coming in.</p> <p>This quiet work makes community support safe, inclusive, and sustainable.</p> <p>Connection doesn't run on goodwill alone.</p> <p>76% of UK adults agree small local charities understand communities better than government.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what happens behind the scenes where you are?</p>
<p>A kettle boiling, mugs on a table, a warm or welcoming space.</p>	<p>It's 12pm on Wednesday. The kettle's on again.</p> <p>Demand is up. Costs are up.</p> <p>Community organisations are absorbing pressures families and services are feeling every day.</p> <p>Over 40% of Somerset organisations run social and community groups, and nearly a third of us have less than six months' financial reserves.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p>

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	<p>@[other group] where are you seeing demand rise?</p>
<p>A small team, shared table, handwritten signs, modest venue.</p>	<p>It's Wednesday afternoon. We're only a small team, but we do our best for our community.</p> <p>Around half of Somerset's organisations have less than £50,000 per year to spend on supporting communities.</p> <p>Small doesn't mean expendable.</p> <p>It means local, trusted, and close to need.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] small is beautiful, don't you think?</p>
<p>A volunteer chatting with someone, offering tea, welcoming them in.</p>	<p>It's 10:30am on Wednesday. A volunteer notices someone isn't themselves and sits down for a chat.</p> <p>This moment isn't recorded anywhere. But it prevents crisis before it starts.</p> <p>Prevention looks ordinary.</p> <p>Its impact isn't.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what moments are happening with you today?</p>
<p>An empty chair, closed door, quiet community room.</p>	<p>It's 1pm on Wednesday. Usually, this space is full.</p> <p>Short-term funding is the biggest risk facing Somerset's voluntary sector.</p>

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	<p>If this work stops, the need doesn't.</p> <p>This is what we're trying to prevent.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what would stop if you weren't here?</p>
<p>A busy room, smiling faces, people arriving or chatting.</p>	<p>It's Wednesday. And it feels good.</p> <p>People are turning up, conversations are flowing, and support is happening naturally.</p> <p>This is what impact looks like on an ordinary Wednesday. Us sharing our knowledge, knowing we're trusted and turning up.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what's gone well for you today?</p>
<p>A team photo at the end of a session.</p>	<p>It's Wednesday afternoon. This week, [X] people have walked through our doors.</p> <p>Behind that number are conversations, confidence, and small moments that mattered.</p> <p>Impact isn't always loud. But it adds up.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what impact are you quietly proud of this week?</p>
<p>A throwback photo, anniversary banner, or long-standing venue.</p>	<p>It's Wednesday and we're celebrating our [X] years anniversary!</p>

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	<p>Like many Somerset organisations, this work has grown slowly, shaped by local people and real need.</p> <p>Over 64% of Somerset organisations have been operating for more than 10 years.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] how long have you been serving our community?</p>
<p>Two teams together, shared materials, or joint event signage.</p>	<p>We love partnering with other teams to make our work even more powerful.</p> <p>Working in partnership means more reach, fewer gaps, and better outcomes for everyone.</p> <p>Nearly two-thirds of Somerset organisations collaborate. It works and it feels good.</p> <p>This is community infrastructure doing its job well.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[partner organisation] we loved making [XX] possible with your support.</p>
<p>Volunteers mid-activity, laughing, concentrating, or packing away.</p>	<p>It's Wednesday and our volunteers are making things happen.</p> <p>From welcoming people, to noticing who needs a chat, this work is powered by care and commitment.</p> <p>When volunteers are well supported, communities thrive.</p> <p>Today is a good example of that.</p>

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	<p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what have your volunteers made possible this week?</p>
<p>A work-in-progress moment, setting up, planning, trying something new.</p>	<p>It's Wednesday and we're trying something new. Not everything is perfect, but everyone is getting involved, learning their way and shaping what comes next.</p> <p>Progress looks like this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive • Relational • Rooted locally. <p>Innovation starts by doing it differently.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what are you doing today?</p>
<p>If you don't work on a Wednesday Posts</p>	
<p>A work-in-progress moment, a photo that captures your work.</p>	<p>It's Wednesday and we're not open today. We are open on every other day. And we'd like to be open on a Wednesday because we know the need is there. But without funding and support it's not something we can do right now. But we're supporting #WednesdayWithoutUs because we don't want there to be a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday without us.</p> <p>@[other group] what days are you open this week?</p>

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Wider Awareness Days Layering Posts

Layering #WednesdayWithoutUs with Trustees' Week

Trustees mid activity; or group photo

It's **#TrusteesWeek** and this Wednesday, we want to talk about the people you rarely see, but without whom none of this works.

Our trustees aren't on the front line. They're not usually the ones handing out the cups of tea. But they're the reason we can do any of it safely, legally, and well.

They give their time freely to ask the hard questions, read the papers, and make sure we're doing what we set out to do. They offer guidance when decisions get difficult. They keep an eye on the finances. They make sure we're governed properly. Because like us, they care about we do.

And right now, there aren't enough of them. Across the country, charities are struggling to find trustees, people willing to take on that responsibility and bring their skills and experience to the table.

If you've ever thought about it, this is your week to take that thought seriously.

Behind every open door on a Wednesday is a board that made it possible. That's worth celebrating. And worth protecting.

#WednesdayWithoutUs #TrusteesWeek

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	@[other organisation] let's shout out to all our trustees!
Layering #WednesdayWithoutUs with Carers Week	
Carers sharing tea; a relaxed moment	<p>It's Wednesday and #CarersWeek. Today we're supporting people who support everyone else.</p> <p>Our group gives carers a pause, practical advice, and sometimes their only break of the week.</p> <p>Without this space, the caring wouldn't stop – but our carers might be more lonely.</p> <p>This is why meeting up regularly and #WednesdayWithoutUs matters.</p> <p>@[other group] what is the best piece of advice you give carers on how to take a moment for themselves?</p>
Community hall exterior or closed door	<p>It's Wednesday during #CarersWeek. If this door closed, carers would still be caring. But with less support, poorer health, and more pressure on services.</p> <p>Let's not let that happen.</p> <p>#WednesdayWithoutUs</p> <p>@[other group] what activities do you have planned in the coming weeks to support carers?</p>

MP and Funder Specific Postcards

You can tailor posts by sending posts directly to your MP's social media feed or inbox:

- **To Gideon Amos (Taunton & Wellington):** *"Dear Gideon, this Wednesday, [X] families in Taunton found a place to belong in our SEND groups. If we*

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weren't here, these parents would be navigating a complex system alone. Let's ensure Taunton's safety net is there for everyone. #WednesdayWithoutUs"

- **To Adam Dance (Yeovil):** *"Dear Adam, 62% of the groups keeping Yeovil healthy have less than 6 months of reserves. This Wednesday, we kept [X] people out of A&E. We want to keep giving this gift, but we need a New Settlement for Somerset. #WednesdayWithoutUs"*

A Note for Comms Leads: The "Pick and Mix" Rules

1. **Be Genuine:** Use a photo of your actual space/people (with permission).
2. **Use the Hashtag:** Always use #WednesdayWithoutUs to join the collective signal.
3. **Tag us and one another:** @SparkSomerset so we can amplify your story and build momentum.
4. **The Tone:** Keep it firm, fair, and focused on the "common sense" of prevention.

Sharing Data

As communicators we know the importance of accuracy, to help below are key stats and their sources.

Statistic	Source & Link
1,902 voluntary sector organisations registered as charities or CICs in Somerset.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
9,283 hours a week are contributed by volunteers in Somerset.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
Nearly 62% of Somerset VCFSEs have fewer than six months of reserves.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
67% of organisations expect their expenditure to match or exceed their income this year.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
60% predict funding and sustainability will be their most important challenge over 12 months.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
4.3 million regular volunteers work for third-sector organisations in England and Wales.	Community Foundation (2023b)

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312 million hours of work are contributed annually by these regular volunteers.	Community Foundation (2023b)
£3 billion is the estimated value of these hours at the National Living Wage.	Community Foundation (2023b)
£5 billion is the value of these hours at 80% of average wages.	Community Foundation (2023b)
487,000 regular volunteers and employees work in the third sector in the South West.	Community Foundation (2023b)
21,000 full-time regular volunteer equivalents are contributed by the South West effort.	Community Foundation (2023b)
76% of UK adults agree small local charities understand communities better than government.	Centre for Social Justice (2024)
80.34% of the sector is made up of micro or small organisations.	NAVCA (2021)
32% of organisations have used reserves for essential purposes like rent or wages.	Community Foundation (2023a)
61% of organisations find it difficult to find the volunteers they need.	Evans (2024)
50% of organisations in Somerset fall into the smallest income category (<£50k per annum).	State of the Sector: Lessons from National Picture
47.1% of Somerset VCFSE respondents are in the micro or small category (<£10k or <£50k a year).	Somerset State of the Sector Survey 2024
Short-term funding is the most pressing risk to VCFSE finances in Somerset.	Somerset State of the Sector 2024
Over 40% of Somerset organisations run social and community groups.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
Over 64% of Somerset organisations have been operating for more than 10 years.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
Nearly 65% of Somerset VCFSEs work in partnership with each other.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
Over 50% of VCFSEs report developing new services despite current financial pressures.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
Increased demand is the #1 cost-of-living impact on Somerset VCFSEs.	Somerset VCFSE State of the Sector Summary
1.1 million people were employed by the third sector in England and Wales in 2022.	Community Foundation (2023b)

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72 hours per year is the average time commitment for regular volunteers.	Community Foundation (2023b)
Micro-organisations receive less than 1% of total sector income.	Community Foundation (2023a)
The largest 5% of organisations command nearly 72% of sector income.	Community Foundation (2023a)
3%-5% of active VCSEs in the UK engage in government contracting each year.	DCMS (2023)
VCFSE admin roles pay over 50p-per-hour less than the national average.	Payscale/UK Talent (2024)
83% of organisations in the third sector held some form of reserves in 2022.	Community Foundation (2023a)

Messaging Cheat-Sheet

To support you we've also developed a [27-9-3](#) messaging grid. This communication tool uses 27 words that take 9 seconds to say, hitting 3 key points.

We want you to be as creative as possible with **#WednesdayWithoutUs**, so this grid is a pick and mix menu. Depending on who you are talking to, your tone and approach, you can choose the messaging approach that suits you.

The Vibe	The Essence	The 27-Word Script (9 Seconds)	Soundbite	The 3 Key Points
1. Championing (The Heart)	Everyone needs a place to belong. Connection keeps people healthy and prevents crisis.	Everyone needs a place to belong. When people/we are connected and supported locally they/we cope better, stay healthier, and need less crisis support. Because connection is prevention.	People don't just need services. We need each other.	Belonging Wellbeing Prevention
2. Reality Check (The Value)	Community organisations are essential infrastructure, not	Charities and community groups aren't nice-to-have extras. They're/We're where life	Community isn't a 'nice to have' it's essential.	Essential Impact Irreplaceable

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	nice-to-have extras.	happens. Somerset's volunteers give 9,283 hours every week, work the system cannot afford to replace.		
3. Urgency (The Warning)	Without sustainable funding, the quiet work holding communities together disappears.	Prevention starts where people/we live. 62% of Somerset's charities and community organisations have less than six months' reserves. Without investment, the quiet work keeping Somerset strong stops.	Prevention starts where people live. It begins with connection.	Local Fragile Urgent

How to Scale This

If you have partners outside of Somerset, please send them this Campaign in Box. The hashtag #WednesdayWithoutUs is for everyone. If they use the templates and swap in their own local data, the rolling stone gets bigger and the message to the Treasury gets louder.

Next Steps

Download the Canva assets [here](#) and get ready for Wednesday!

#WednesdayWithoutUs: Your Questions Answered

I don't work on a Wednesday. Can I still take part? Yes, and there's a post for you. You can share what you do on the days you are open and explain that you're supporting #WednesdayWithoutUs because you don't want there to be any day without your community. The campaign is about all the days, not just Wednesday.

We weren't involved at the start. Is it too late to join? Not at all. There is no start and no finish line. Pick a Wednesday, share your story, use the hashtag, and you're

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in. The more organisations that join, the louder the message gets. Whenever you join you can be sure you're making a difference and adding to the drumbeat.

Our brand guidelines say we can't use external templates or logos. Can we still join? Absolutely. Your own photos and your own words work just as well (in fact, they often perform better because they're real.) We would ask that you use the hashtag **#WednesdayWithoutUs**, tag **@SparkSomerset** and another organisation to keep the conversation going and share a story from your Wednesday. The campaign assets are there if you want them, not because you need them.

Do we have to post every Wednesday? No. Post when you can. Once a week, once a month, just when you feel you have something to say is fine. Every post contributes to the collective signal and something is always better than nothing.

What if we don't have great photos or a comms team? A phone, a real moment, and a few honest sentences is all this needs. The campaign works because it feels human, not because it looks polished.

Can organisations outside Somerset take part? Yes. The hashtag is for everyone. If you have partners or networks in other parts of the country, send them this pack, ask them to swap in their own local data, and the campaign grows.

What should we actually post about? We're not sure our work is interesting enough. If you're doing it, it's worth saying. A kettle boiling before a support group starts. A volunteer who noticed someone having a hard day. A room that's about to fill up. The ordinary moments are the point, because they're what disappears when funding goes.

Is this a political campaign? This is not a party-political campaign, we are making the case for investment in community infrastructure by making the invisible visible. We want decision-makers to see our work and understand the contribution charities and community groups make every day. That's something every organisation in the sector can stand behind.

What if our CEO or trustee board is nervous about getting involved? The tone is firm, fair and grounded in common sense. We're not asking anyone to take sides, we're asking everyone to share what they do. The campaign is designed so that organisations can take part at whatever level of visibility they're comfortable with.

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Someone asked me what the campaign has achieved so far. What do I say?

Every post adds to the evidence base. Every story shared is a moment a decision-maker might see. We're building a drumbeat, and it only gets louder when more people join.