

Hampshire County Councillor report

June 2023

1. Parish Forum on Motorbike Noise and Nuisance

Following the installation of the average speed cameras on the A32 and the A272 and the increased police operations in the wider area, Hampshire County Council is holding a forum with the police and local MPs for parishes on motorbike noise and nuisance. This will take place via Teams at 3pm on Friday 14th July. All parishes within the Meon Valley Division are invited to attend.

If you would like to attend, please let me know and I will forward the Teams link.

2. Cost of living support

Hampshire County Council has announced plans for how £14.2million of additional funding will be used to help local households struggling with the cost of food and energy prices. The funding is an extension of Government's Household Support Fund (HSF) until the end of March 2024. They will continue to work closely with other local organisations including district and borough councils, education settings, charities and neighbourhood groups to ensure that eligible households receive support with food, energy and water bills and assistance with essential household items. This includes up to £200,000 of funding to provide locally-based food and energy advice services, alongside practical help with costs.

The funding allocation includes:

- £800,000 to support the community pantry network and £361,000 for organisations supporting unpaid carers
- £800,000 in community grants for locally based organisations to support local residents
- £4,442,870 to district and borough councils to provide food vouchers and support with exceptional housing costs
- £2,845,622 to schools and other educational establishments to offer support at their own discretion to families most in need
- £460,000 in direct fuel support to vulnerable adults
- £715,000 in food vouchers to foster carers and connected carers

Details of how to seek support can be found at the connect4communities website <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities>

3. Greening campaigns

More communities across Hampshire can be empowered to take positive action on climate change over the next three years, thanks to almost £0.5million of National Lottery funding awarded to the Greening Campaign, with support from Hampshire County Council. This could include improving the energy efficiency of people's homes, reducing

CO2, reducing waste, reusing and repairing, being more sustainable through locally grown produce, and providing green spaces for wildlife to thrive.

The Greening Campaign is a structured process, guiding communities to act on climate change and biodiversity locally. Guidance, based on experience gained from working with over 200 other groups across the UK, provides a blueprint for success for each step of the way, starting with motivating people in the community to get involved, through to making it fun and rewarding. Locally, we have seen a successful campaign in Hambledon.

Two events are being held for those wanting to know more - on 12th June in Winchester and on 15th June in Petersfield, both at 6.30pm. Information or booking can be found at <https://greening-campaign.org/events/>

4. New support for buses

Operators of nine bus routes have secured funding totalling £3.5m from Hampshire County Council, including protecting services in Alresford, Petersfield and Winchester for the next four years. Buses locally are under pressure with bus passenger numbers locally and nationally still below pre-pandemic levels. This is making it more challenging for the operators to deliver viable services, especially when coupled with increased operating costs and driver shortages. I continue to engage with the council on some local changes locally and can how these can be more joined up. The Government has extended the £2 bus fare cap to the end of October 2023, rising to just £2.50 until November 2024, so this is very much an affordable way to travel when services are available and the timetables work.

5. Rural verge cutting

Hampshire Highways have now begun their seasonal grass cutting programme. This can be an emotive subject to many, especially in the nesting season. The department work closely with the conservation charity, Plantlife UK, to ensure that their work promotes biodiversity; in particular, they try to avoid cutting grass at ecologically important times, and particularly at sensitive sites. For safety reasons however, there are some locations where roadside grass still needs to be mown in order to maintain adequate visibility and sight lines, for example on the approaches to roundabouts or at junctions. More information can be found at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/grasscutting>

6. Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan consultation

The consultation on the update to the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan closed at the end of January this year. The summary report on the responses can be seen at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/strategic-planning/hampshire-minerals-waste-plan/minerals-waste-plan-partial-update-consultation>. These responses are being considered and the next stage is for the Minerals and Waste Authority to publish a response.

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