

Update from Hampshire County Council – September 2023

Schools and RAAC

Residents may be aware of the recent news story regarding schools in England due to close imminently as a result of their buildings containing unsafe concrete: [School buildings in England to shut over concrete safety fears - BBC News](#).

No Hampshire school is being closed. Cranbourne College in Basingstoke is the only site where RAAC has been identified among Hampshire County Council's maintained schools. Temporary works have already been undertaken to one section of the building to make sure it is safe and another area has been taken out of use since the beginning of the year, however, the school is expected to open as normal at the start of the autumn term.

Generating green energy at home – save on bills, protect the environment

The group-buying scheme, Solar Together 2023, is now open to Hampshire residents looking to buy high-quality installations, at the right price, from pre-vetted installers.

The scheme, offered by Hampshire County Council in partnership with independent experts iChoosr, means residents who invest now in solar panels or battery storage for their homes will not only benefit from reduced energy bills, but also boost local renewable energy generation – reducing carbon emissions in Hampshire and helping to build resilience to climate change.

Residents have until 27 October to register their interest online, for free and without obligation – www.hants.gov.uk/solartogether

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20230829SolarTogether>

Every day matters - families urged to prioritise attendance in new school year

With the new school year fast approaching, Hampshire County Council is encouraging families to do all they can to support regular school attendance for their children.

While rates of school attendance are improving locally, there is still more to do to match the levels typically seen before the Covid-19 pandemic. Educational specialists advise that attending school every day, unless unwell, is best for children to ensure that the solid foundations for their future education and employment can be laid. It is also one of the best ways of protecting a child's mental and physical health.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/290823-school-attendance>

Recycle vapes at HWRCs to avoid fire risks urges County Council

Hampshire residents can now recycle vapes at any Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), helping to avoid disposal in general waste, which is a fire risk, and reduce littering

Following the rise in vaping it is now estimated that around 1.3m single use vapes are thrown away each week, making it the fastest growing type of waste.

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Following an increase in young people experimenting with vaping, Hampshire County Council has pledged continuing support for a series of education and enforcement measures to tackle the increasingly pressing issue of teen vaping. In total, 20.5% of children nationally have tried vaping, up from 15.8% in 2022 and 13.9% in 2020.

To help tackle the environmental impact of vapes, all our Household Waste Recycling Centres can now accept reusable, refillable and disposable vapes for recycling. Most large supermarkets and some shops also have special bins where batteries, including single use vapes, can be disposed of safely. Rogue batteries are the single biggest cause of fire in refuse trucks and waste sites, which poses an avoidable risk to staff and unnecessary cost burden on taxpayer-funded services. It can also mean a truckload of valuable recyclable material that were carefully sorted by residents going up in smoke.

Single-use vapes contain lithium-ion batteries which can catch fire if broken. This is an increasing problem across the country, and research by Material Focus, a non-profit organisation which runs the Recycle Your Electricals campaign, found that more than 700 fires in bin lorries and recycling centres nationally were caused by batteries that had been dumped into general waste. In Hampshire, the County Council estimates one fire a month on average in a waste truck or waste facility can be attributed to a battery, faulty electrical item or disposable BBQ.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/07082023RecyclevapesatHWRCs>

HCC launches consultation on future of care homes

On 4 September 2023 a consultation will commence on proposals that would see some £173million invested over the next five to six years to transform and expand the future of nursing and specialist care accommodation directly provided by Hampshire County Council for the county's growing older population. The consultation will run for 10 weeks, closing on 12 November 2023. From 4 September the consultation will be available at this link: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/social-care-2023>

The County Council's seven remaining nursing and short term 'step-down from hospital' care homes will remain in operation. The changes would be phased over time and would help to increase the overall number of directly provided Local Authority beds to around 1,000 from the current position of just over 900 beds.

Annually, the County Council sources care home places for around 1,600 clients, more than three quarters of whom go into private care homes. The investment proposals would enable a similar ratio of care provision to be maintained.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/care-homes>

CLlr David Drew
Test Valley Central Division, HCC