

Hampshire County Councillor report

January 2023

1. Happy New Year

I hope that everyone had an enjoyable Christmas break. With 2022 and all it brought now firmly behind us, let's hope for a more successful year ahead, my very best wishes for 2023.

2. Schools news

The deadline for school place applications is **15th January**. Hampshire County Council is urging parents of children due to start school in reception year or move to year 3 in a junior school in September 2023 to indicate three school preferences on their application.

Over the last six years, 98 per cent of parents secured a school place for their child at one of their three preferred schools, with between 90 and 93 per cent being offered a place at their first preference school. Online guidance can be found on the [Education and Learning](#) pages on the County Council's website.

3. Roads update

The new traffic signals at Parkway Roundabout, Whiteley are due to be switched on next week on Tuesday 10th January. Please be aware that the signals will be operating on temporary timings over the next 4-6 weeks as the final elements of the work on Whiteley Way are completed. The switching on of the signals will see lane markings and stop lines installed and enable the removal of the bulk of the cones and give way signs on the roundabout, which I'm aware are still causing some concern.

In more general terms, finishing activities to complete the works will be ongoing across the scheme during January and February. Works to Junction 9 on the M27 are principally complete, with only night time working on the westbound offslip to install sign foundations and kerbing still ongoing, and the junction is fully open to traffic during daytime hours. Works are continuing on Whiteley Way to complete the installation of drainage and the vehicle restraint barrier. At long last, we should now see the principal capacity benefits of the scheme beginning to be realised.

Elsewhere in the area, there has been some progress on the installation of the average speed cameras on the A32 and the A272 in the vicinity of the West Meon Hut, although not quite as quickly as had been hoped. On the plus side, the contract has been awarded and more detailed survey work has been carried out that will focus on the last details of the engineering necessary to get the installation started. There are, however, some challenges with getting electrical power to some of the camera locations – delays with SSE has also caused substantial delays.

Since the beginning of 2022, Hampshire Highways has repaired around 41,000 carriageway and footway defects, including potholes, and cleared nearly 39,000 gullies and other highway drainage assets to reduce the risk of flooding.

4. Minerals and Waste Plan update consultation

A reminder that the consultation on changes to Hampshire's Minerals and Waste Plan closes at the end of this month, at 17:00 hours on **Tuesday 31 January 2023**.

The consultation allows residents to comment on local sites that have been identified for minerals extraction and transportation. Sites for waste processing, recycling and disposal facilities are also indicated in the Plan.

The proposed updated plan and the response form can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/minerals-waste-update. As before, my advice is to study the plan carefully for proposals for your area and respond accordingly.

5. Tree planting

Trees play an important role in carbon sequestration. As part of the commitment to reach Net Zero by 2050, HCC has produced a Tree Strategy and has committed to facilitate the planting of at least one million trees in Hampshire. The Hampshire Forest Partnership has been set up as the public delivery mechanism for this strategy; its aim is to bring together the public and third sector across Hampshire, as well as residents, businesses, schools and the wider community.

Part of the strategy is to plant mini forests across Hampshire, using a technique developed by a Japanese ecologist, Dr Miyawaki, which encourages faster growth and more successful establishment of the trees, as well as a greater number planted, greater biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

More information can be found at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/hampshireforestpartnership>. The council is also encouraging parishes and residents to suggest locations for mini forests and other tree planting. If you have any local suggestions, please also email the team at treeplanting@hants.gov.uk

6. Keeping homes warm

As more people feel the impact of rising energy costs and increasingly cold weather, Hampshire County Council is reminding those struggling to heat their homes that help is available. Residents can call the 'Hitting the cold spots' phone line for advice and guidance, from temporary heating and first-time central heating to arranging home visits and sourcing boiler repair funding.

To access these services, call the team on 0800 804 8601 (lines are open from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). The phone advice line is open to all Hampshire residents. Some services have eligibility criteria, and the advisors will discuss the best possible solution for each caller. [More information can be found online.](#)

Councillor Hugh Lumby

Meon Valley Division