

EHDC and Eastleigh college to support tree planting plan

East Hampshire District Council and Eastleigh College have struck up a partnership to support a tree-planting campaign that will reduce carbon and increase biodiversity in the county. East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) has pledged to see 120,000 new trees planted, one for every resident in its district. Now Eastleigh College has agreed to support the scheme with a £5 donation for every student that completes its new environmental sustainability course and a £30 donation for every EHDC officer that does so.

The 8-12 week course will train learners in important techniques to reduce environmental impact, looking at waste management, sustainable development and transport among other areas. EHDC and Eastleigh College both take environmental sustainability very seriously and are both doing whatever they can to improve their own performance and encourage the same in others. EHDC declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and aims to be carbon neutral by 2050, in line with national targets. As part of this project the council is working with the Woodland Trust, landowners, parish and town councils, schools and communities to plant 120,000 trees in East Hampshire.

Green Team launch as EHDC marks COP26 East Hampshire

East Hampshire District Council has marked the anniversary of its COP26 climate change event by launching a 'Green Team' to accelerate the council's ambition to reach net zero. COP26 East Hampshire, held in Alton last October, was run by East Hampshire District Council and Damian Hinds MP, and saw hundreds of residents and campaigners gather to plan what East Hampshire could do to reduce the impact of climate change. It featured contributions from leading Government figures, including video messages from Lord Deben, the Chairman of the UK's Climate Change Committee, and Alok Sharma, the President of COP26, as well as local resident groups, schools, environmental experts and businesses.

Since that time East Hampshire District Council has been driving forward plans to improve its own environmental performance and to help others do the same. Chief among the new initiatives has been the launch of a Green Team to help the council, community and district be more sustainable. EHDC officers spread through the organisation will make up the Green Team, ensuring that responsibility for the response to the climate emergency is distributed throughout all the major departments, including planning, community, facilities management, property and placemaking. Alongside this, EHDC has also worked over the last 12 months to establish a range of major projects to cut carbon emissions and support local residents. Some of the big ideas we have been working on over the last year include:

- Launching our Green Team
- Moving to a new carbon-cutting HQ
- Helping households with energy-saving home improvements
- Developing our greenest ever Local Plan

- Announcing our own community farm

What's been done since COP26?

- Green Team •

Launching this week, the Green Team will work to make the council, the community and the district greener and more sustainable. Council officers will consider the impacts on the environment of the work they do on a day-to-day basis, embedding climate considerations into the culture of the council. Climate change training is already being rolled out across the council on issues such as housing standards, renewable and low carbon technology, carbon offsetting and going net-zero.

- A new HQ

EHDC's new premises in Bedford Road, Petersfield, will reduce the council's carbon footprint by 74 per cent. We already purchase renewable energy for our offices, but our office move will drive further reductions in our carbon footprint. The council intends to spend £500,000 to improve the building's environmental performance. Solar PV and battery schemes will work alongside fabric first measures to improve the thermal performance. Staff will be encouraged to travel sustainably with green bike shelters and electric vehicle charging points.

- Energy saving home improvements

In the last year, 256 homes have been supported through domestic retrofit schemes ECO3 and COSY. Energy efficient measures that have been installed in properties across East Hampshire include smart thermostats, loft and cavity wall insulation, new and replacement boilers, solar panels and replacement windows and doors. The amount of funding in the last year totals £765,000, with over £2.9 million being spent on 1,856 local homes since the schemes began, reducing their carbon emissions and cutting their fuel bills.

- A new scheme has been launched, COSY East Hampshire, offering interest-free loans for energy-saving measures. To find out more go to www.easthants.gov.uk/cosy

More support proposed for residents struggling to pay their council tax

More working-age households could be entitled to higher Council Tax Support payments from April 2023 if wide-reaching changes to the scheme proposed by East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) are approved. Consultation is underway now and will close on 20 November 2022. EHDC is consulting residents and partner organisations on the following proposals:

- Increasing the amount that low-earning households can earn, before affecting Council Tax Support from £20 - £25 to £70 per week for couples, lone parents, carers, those who would be entitled to disability premium, enhanced disability premium, disabled child premium, severe disability premium, in receipt of employment and support allowance component and those working as a part time fire fighter, auxiliary coast guard, part time lifeboat worker or a member of the Territorial Army or similar reserve force.

- Increasing the amount for single applicants' households can earn, before affecting Council Tax Support from £10 to £35 a week.
- Making it so that other adults living in a home do not affect the amount of support the Council Tax payer is entitled to.
- Increasing the amount of money in savings that applicants can hold before it affects their entitlement from £6,000 to £10,000.
- Allowing claims for support to be backdated to the beginning of the financial year (1 April) or six months if that is longer, provided there is a good reason why the claim wasn't made earlier.
- Ignoring certain payments made to a household in a crisis (for example the Energy Rebates) when making payments.
- Ignoring any emergency increases in national benefits (such as the Universal Credit uplift during the coronavirus pandemic). If approved, these changes would come into effect on 1 April 2023.

Household glass collections re started on 3rd October

Our service provider, Norse South East (NSE), has confirmed that they are able to reinstate household glass collections from Monday 3rd October. Ahead of the service restarting on Monday, crews have been out clearing excess glass from bottle bank sites around the district. The reinstatement of services is the result of a successful recruitment drive over the last two months, supported by EHDC. NSE now has enough directly employed drivers and loaders to reduce its reliance on agency staff and provide a more resilient service. The service will be reintroduced following existing glass collection patterns. If you don't have your calendar, please check our website. Where possible, crews will take any excess glass on the first collection, provided it is in a suitable container to be carried and emptied into the vehicle. Additional temporary bottle banks have been installed around the district which will remain in place while the service catches up. These can be found on our online map.

We are sorry for the disruption to the service and thank you for your patience during the suspension