

EHDC Report

March 2023

1. EHDC Spring clean

One week in and our Spring Clean teams have already made a massive difference to the parts of the district they have visited. The campaign launched on 1 March and saw extra resources ploughed into street scene teams over the next couple of months to get the district looking fantastic. Crews from service providers Norse SE and from EHDC will roll across East Hampshire litter-picking, road-sweeping, pulling up weeds and generally tidying up prominent places around the district. They have already visited Petersfield, Horndean and Grayshott, battling through rain and icy weather, and there's plenty more to come. The extra work is being carried out through more boots on the ground and more mechanical sweepers cleaning the roads and kerb-sides. All this extra work has been made possible through our transition to a new service arrangement which brings control back to East Hampshire District Council.

2. Finances

This year the Government allowed councils to increase Council Tax by up to 3 per cent but EHDC are planning an increase of just 2 per cent. The £2.4 million increase in costs, largely down to inflation, has been tackled in several ways. A transformation process - a concerted effort to re-shape services and devise new, more efficient ways to deliver them - is expected to save £500,000 in efficiencies, with more to come. Successful cash investments have reaped another £500,000, and the same sum again will be saved in staffing costs thanks to the separation from Havant Borough Council.

Cllr Charles Louisson, EHDC Portfolio Holder for Finance, said: "These are challenging financial times for us all and it has been a difficult task to create a budget that manages the increases in our costs and allows us to meet our welfare ambitions while not placing a financial burden on our residents. Our Council Tax increase of two per cent will gather a further £150,000 to the council, every penny of which will go towards our raft of new welfare projects. We have also made Council Tax repayments easier for residents by offering the option to pay in 12 monthly instalments instead of ten, reducing the monthly payment by about 15 per cent."

The welfare schemes will include funding for:-

- Outreach workers who will attend luncheon clubs, community centres, GP surgeries and other village and town organisations to speak about the help on offer for residents. Supporting foodbanks, emergency heating projects & schemes to provide essential white goods.
- Community Transport, EDHC in partnership with Community First will provide an East Hants Health & Wellbeing bus for residents, particularly those in rural areas, to provide transport to medical appointments or welfare services.
- EHDC will be partnering with Everyone Active to offer up to 500 Children free access to a 12-week course of swimming lessons.
- The "Lets get East Hants Green" campaign being launched later in the year, is intended to inspire young people to connect with nature, this will include habitat creation kits for schoolchildren to grow food and improve biodiversity.
- Also Ten speed cameras for villages where traffic speeds are a problem

3. Fruit tree in every garden

EHDC was very pleased to work with Petersfield Climate Action Network's 'A Fruit Tree In Every Garden' project returned this winter – and it is growing faster than ever.

Supported by grants from East Hampshire District Council and Petersfield Town Council the scheme sees PeCAN distribute trees for residents to plant in their own gardens. Over the previous two winters PeCAN handed over 380 fruit trees in Petersfield, but this year alone it has sold 570 trees for gardens across East Hampshire! That's 950 trees in total, so far. A big step towards EHDC's goal of seeing 120,000 trees planted in the district.

Working in partnership with Alton Climate Action Network, Liphook Climate Action Network, Petersfield Community Garden and Rowlands Castle Gardening Club, PeCAN was able to offer the choice of four collection points this year, so the whole district could benefit from subsidised trees.

The trees would usually cost over £30 plus delivery but thanks to funding from East Hampshire District Council and Petersfield Town Council, the trees were available for only £15, including a stake and information on how to plant and care for your tree.

The scheme has proved so popular that 13 EHDC councillors provided grants totalling £6,450, and a further £3,541 was contributed from the council's Climate and Environment budget. Petersfield Town Council also donated a further £2,200.

EHDC has pledged to see 120,000 trees planted in the district, that's one for every resident. So far agreements are in place for more than 56,000 trees in East Hampshire thanks to the scheme, and programmes like PeCAN's mean more and more are planted every day.

Councillor Robert Mocatta, EHDC's Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Prosperity, said: "This has been an incredibly successful project and brilliantly run by PeCAN. Planting trees is a fantastic way of improving the environment as they capture carbon and enhance biodiversity. It's so important that we get this message into the community and this programme is a great way of doing that. As part of our Climate and Environment work we have promised to see 120,000 trees planted in East Hampshire, one for every resident, so I am delighted we have been able to support PeCAN's '*A Fruit Tree In Every Garden*' project with grants from across the council."

The types of trees available include apple, pear, plum, cherry and ornamental cherry and were sourced from local nursery Blackmoor Fruit Farm. The trees are two years old and approximately 1.5 metres tall, growing to 2-3 metres when mature.