

Hello

April already – the year is flying by. Here’s my 11th County Councillor update covering March 2022.

Highways Information

March Hampshire Highways Update

The countywide clear-up, following the severe storms in late February continued into March. Storm Eunice generated the largest number of highway enquiries for a single event for many years - for this event alone, the Highways team dealt with more than 5,000 reports!

Many of the reports received resulted in the need to deal with multiple incidents – in one case up to 30 different sites were reported in a single call from the Police. We attended to almost 2000 fallen, damaged or dangerous trees, many of which needed emergency or urgent works. Our specialist teams continued to inspect and prioritise tree related issues throughout the month. This unplanned activity significantly impacted our business-as-usual highway maintenance service and also the Operation Resilience work programme but every effort has been made to get things back on track as quickly as possible.

Spring is on its way but for Highways it is still our winter season (up to the end of April), so we need to continue to monitor the daily weather forecasts for snow, frost and ice – it is not unusual for winter gritting to be required in late April!



Foxes Lane, Wellow

I've been talking to Hampshire Highways about the state of the road either side of the ford in Foxes Lane, Wellow. Managing the road surface around a ford is always hugely challenging, most particularly one that crosses a river like the Blackwater where the water level can vary so dramatically dependent upon the amount of rain.



The state of the surface though is really poor at the moment and consequently something needs to be done to effect a more permanent repair.

Paultons Park - new entrance and traffic management plans

Although it's not in Romsey Rural, the traffic accessing Paultons Park, particularly in the Summer holidays, can have a dramatic effect on residents of the area, particularly those in Wellow and those using the A3090 between Ower and Romsey.

I therefore spent a Saturday morning at Paultons Park looking at their plans for improving the entrance to the park in such a way that it will hopefully alleviate the traffic on the slip road from the M27 junction to the Ower Roundabout.

They include a new roundabout which will result in priority being given to those vehicles entering the park from the direction of the Ower roundabout, thus hopefully keeping the traffic coming from the M27 junction flowing. Inside the park there will be an increase in the lanes entering the car park and better traffic management.



The current entrance will be closed, but the road will remain in place to allow for it to be used in the case of an emergency and/or if the new entrance is blocked for any reason.

Safer Crossings on the A36

Earlier last month I was looking at safer crossings of the A36 in Wellow.

I spent the morning with representatives of National Highways, Hampshire County Council, New Forest National Park Authority and Wellow Parish Council looking at the challenges residents have crossing the A36 as it runs through Wellow.

Most particularly we looked at the areas around the Whinwhistle Road/Blackhill Road junctions and Maurys Lane/Monkeys Jump.

The good news is that the National Highways team recognised the challenges and agreed to go away to look at possible solutions.

The less good news is that it will take upwards of 3 years to bring any safer crossings forward. We will though continue to press them for improvements.

Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues are here:

Potholes: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes>

Tree/hedge problems:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/treehedge>

Flooding/drainage issues:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/flooding>

Pavement problems:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/paving>

Problems with rights of way:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem>

When reporting an issue, you'll be sent an email confirming a reference number for the report. If you would like me to follow this up for you then do please forward that message to me and I will add a comment as County Councillor, which should hopefully bump it up the priority list.

Homes for Ukraine – Local Response

I've been contacted by many people asking for information about how the Homes for Ukraine scheme is working and most importantly how home checks are being arranged. I've attended a briefing this morning by [Hampshire County Council](#) which I hope helps in providing some clarity around how the system will work.

 The Council does not have a role in matching hosts with Ukrainian refugees. That is being organised entirely through non-governmental organisations. I hope to have some links to post a little later today to point those still looking for help with offering sponsorship.

 Home checks are being carried out by the County Council. They are only being carried out once Ukrainian refugees have arrived with their hosts. They are NOT being carried out ahead of time. The reason for this is that the checks need to reflect the needs of those using the accommodation and of course those needs aren't known until people have arrived.

 The County Council will contact the host once they have been advised Ukrainian refugees have arrived at the host accommodation.

 Everyone over 16 in the host family or household will have to complete a DBS check. This applies even if the Ukrainian refugees being hosted are living in separate annexes or holiday accommodation. This process will be started at the time of the first visit.

 Hampshire education are ready to accept all Ukrainian children arriving in the County into our local schools. Education Rules (for example impact on class sizes) will be waived for refugee children where necessary.

 The information being received from Government about who the refugees are and when they are arriving with hosts is incomplete and sometimes unclear. So do please forgive HCC if they contact you thinking someone has arrived when they are not yet with you. Similarly. If you do not hear from HCC within a couple of working days of refugees arriving please contact the HCC team, their website is at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/ukraine>

So far I understand 45 families and 9 individuals are in Hampshire. Over 800 hosts have also been registered across the county with the numbers growing daily.

Support for residents struggling with cost of living increases

The combination of inflation and substantial increases in utility costs are causing hardship and worry for many families.

For those worried about the impact of the increased energy price cap on your bills? [The Environment Centre \(tEC\)](#) have a freephone advice line for trusted advice about energy use, your bills, and staying warm in your home.

 0800 804 8601 or find out more: <https://environmentcentre.com>

Hampshire County Council have also awarded over £197,000 in Community Grants to projects that will support vulnerable households with food, utilities and other essentials. Our Community Grants are awarded through our [#connect4communities](#) programme, which is funded by [Department for Work and Pensions - DWP](#) from its Household Support Fund. The latest grant awards will support 13 projects in total, including:

-  Schools assisting with food and utility costs, clothing and other basic essentials.
-  Charities providing food, utility vouchers, warm clothing, bedding and hygiene products.
-  Additional funding for Community Centres providing toiletries and discretionary funding for white goods.
-  Additional funding for the 'Safe and Well' home visits programme - a Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire And Rescue Service initiative to help vulnerable householders heat their homes safely and efficiently.
-  Mobile larders serving remote communities across the New Forest.
-  Vouchers for Citizen's Advice to support households at risk of food or fuel poverty. To find out more, see <https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/11032022connectgrants>

Waltet Liaison Panel

I've chaired a meeting of the Waltet, Bunny Lane Liaison Panel which brings together the site operators, their planning and noise consultants with the parish council, TVBC officers and councillors, HCC officers and the Environment Agency.

The purpose of Liaison Panels is to feedback concerns from the local community and ensure that operators are adhering to the conditions provided in their permission. In the case of Waltet we are looking at particular at noise concerns.



I've also chaired a meeting of the Roke Manor Liaison Panel this month, where the ongoing planning application for an extension to the gravel extraction is the main point of concern, but also the reinstatement of the areas where extraction and back-filling has been completed.

I'm pressing for Liaison Panels to be established for the Ace Liftway site on Yokesford Hill and the Nursling Recycling Site on Lee Lane, both of which have not met for some time.

County Councillor Grant Scheme

The 2021/22 County Councillor Grant scheme has now closed, the new scheme starts again in May. I've already agreed to support two schemes locally, to help establish a Youth Club in Wellow and also for Wellow Scouts who are starting a Squirrels group.

Getting About

Lovely to go to Parish Council meetings in the light. I've attended meetings of Chilworth, Romsey Extra, Romsey Town, Michelmersh & Timsbury, Lockerley, West Tytherley and Wellow parish councils since my last report.

I've been at Hampshire County Council meetings too, where I have attended meetings of the Health and Adult Social Care committee, the HASC Community Funding working group and the Economy, Transport and Environment Committee.

Contact

Do please get in touch if I can ever be of any help. For those of you using social media, I post very regular updates on many local issues including roadworks and planning applications on my Facebook page here: facebook.com/nickadamsking



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