

## Coronavirus Update

The briefings we get from TVBC and other bodies now are containing a lot less information on Covid-19 and it would be easy to get lulled into a sense that everything is normal. Certainly, all the signs within the community are there: -

- Village and Community Halls are reopening for business and will need all our support to get the activates loved by all age groups back up and running.
- Leisure Centres are able to relax social distancing and offer more of their traditional services
- Waste recycling centres are relaxing their social distancing measures meaning more slots are becoming available
- Self-isolation rules are relaxing for those double vaccinated
- More countries are being added to the green list and even cruising has restarted allowing many more of our residents to finally get holidays.

All this is due not only to the unbelievable vaccination programme but all the efforts and sacrifices of everyone in the community to help get Covid-19 under control. But its not gone away completely and so the Hands-Face-Space way of life is still the best advice to stay safe and well.

If anyone does have queries or a need for information on Covid-19 we will do our best to help.

## Other Borough News



## Funding to provide new houses for those in need

Test Valley Borough Council has been granted close to £1 million after a successful bid in partnership with Two Saints, Vivid and Aster, that will increase opportunities for those at risk of rough sleeping to have a place to call home.

A total of ten properties throughout Test Valley will be purchased by Aster and Vivid using the money, with specialist support provided to tenants by Two Saints.

During the national lockdown in spring last year, the council was able to provide temporary accommodation to the few individuals sleeping on the streets at the time, along with several people who were otherwise living in unsustainable shared housing arrangements. Now, with these extra properties available through the funding, longer-term housing can be offered.

The grant allocation totals £913,125 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme.

Residents are asked to notify us if they see anyone who may be sleeping rough, via the national StreetLink service. We work with a network of partner organisations locally to deliver rapid rehousing support for anyone who may be sleeping rough in the area.

For more information about StreetLink, please visit <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>. If you or someone you know is worried about their housing situation, please contact our housing options team as soon as possible on 01264 368000.

## High Street planters to be removed as part of streetscape overhaul



The old caged and wooden planters in Andover High Street are set to be removed as part of an overhaul of the town centre streetscape.

Test Valley Borough Council will begin taking out around fifteen planters along Bridge Street and the High Street this weekend before the plant cages are removed in September - following an initial review of the town's features and furniture.

The work marks the beginning of a new project with urban design experts, NEW masterplanning, to transform Andover's public spaces and enhance the area's character and appearance as part of the authority's ambition to regenerate the town centre. They will look at all aspects of the town's streetscape, from buildings, lighting and seating areas, to surfacing, planting and art.

It follows hot on the heels of the town's masterplan adopted by the council in 2020, also developed by NEW masterplanning in conjunction with Hemingway Design, which sets out proposals to totally transform Andover.

### **New flexible office space open for business**



The ribbon has been cut to officially open up a brand-new flexible working space in the heart of Andover.

Launched by IncuHive Group Limited, the space, on the fourth and fifth floor of Chantry House, has been given a completely new lease of life to offer office space in the heart of the town centre.

The project is supported by Test Valley Borough Council, which owns the building, together with funding from the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership. IncuHive, the organisation who has launched the project, will be managing the flexible office space.

Earlier this year, the council secured funding of more than £200k from the LEP to deliver the project with IncuHive. The facility, which is open for business, is aimed at small businesses including start-ups and individuals who have been working from home as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is expected to reduce the need for office workers to undertake long commutes by providing equally well-equipped and better located accommodation, avoiding the need to travel to major cities.

It is also hoped that the new facility will help boost the town's economic recovery from the pandemic by driving up footfall in the High Street. It marks another step in the journey towards the future of Andover's town centre, which will see more of a mix of work, living and leisure uses.

## **Pot Holes and other County Council Issues**

Quite often residents are not clear who is responsible for different services just that it's "the Council" We will always answer you questions or redirect you if you are not sure. Recently our County Council colleagues issued a very useful list of links for their road related services and for reference we have copied them 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 any further follow up and you contact the Parish Council or our County Councillor David Drew then send them a copy of that message.

## Athletics track opening event



In partnership with [Andover Athletics Club](#) and [Andover Triathlon Club](#) we will be hosting an open session at the newly refurbished Andover Athletics Track on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021 from 5-7pm for members of the community to come and have a go at various running, jumping, throwing events which will showcase the range of facilities available onsite at the athletics track, as well as give the tracks home clubs an opportunity to showcase themselves.

The session will be opened by Cllr Ian Jeffrey and there will be an opportunity to meet GB athlete [Holly Mills](#), who is a rising star in the Athletics community. Holly started her journey at Andover Athletics club, and is now representing Great Britain in pentathlon and heptathlon events across the globe.

After this event the track will officially reopen to the public who will be able to book access to the facility by using our online [bookings system](#), alternatively residents can enquire by contacting the pitch bookings team on [pitchbookings@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:pitchbookings@testvalley.gov.uk)

## **Support and help for Afghan evacuees in Test Valley**

Test Valley Borough Council are working with the Home Office and Hampshire County Councils to support those families leaving Afghanistan, in conjunction with our local partners and charities.

The Home Office have 2 schemes in place to help relocate people from Afghanistan, the ARAP scheme which supports current and former Locally Employed Staff in Afghanistan and the Afghans Citizens' Resettlement Scheme for those who have been forced to flee Afghanistan due to their vulnerabilities.

For more details on both schemes visit

<https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/16/factsheet-uk-support-to-resettle-afghan-nationals/>

We are working to ensure that all new families re-located to Test Valley have the local information and support they need to feel welcome at this difficult time.

### **If you want to donate**

Community First have published a list of priority items that are urgently required, that need to be new or good second-hand condition. The list can be found here [www.cfirfirst.org.uk/donating-to-help-afghan-evacuees](http://www.cfirfirst.org.uk/donating-to-help-afghan-evacuees)

Unity Online have set up a donation point in Andover, see details below.

**Andover Bus Station, West Street, Andover, SP10 1QP**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> September to Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September**

**Open Monday to Friday from 9am-12pm**

They ask that donations are pre-sorted by age and gender and placed in a reusable bag.

Foodbanks in the borough will also be supporting evacuees, click on the links below to see what items are urgently required and where you can drop off donations.

Andover Foodbank donation locations <https://andover.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

Romsey Foodbank donation locations <https://romsey.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

## **Long term empty home to be brought back into use**

Housing and Environmental Health are pleased to report that a house which had been left empty in Andover for at least 27 years has finally changed hands and will be brought back into use very soon.

In November 2020 Members gave approval for officers to negotiate a Voluntary Purchase of the property in Charlton Road, and approval to proceed with the application for a Compulsory Purchase Order, in the event that a purchase was unsuccessful. After detailed negotiations with the property owner, and only 24 hours to go until the anticipated exchange of contracts with the Council, the owner did one last U-turn and decided to sell the house to a private buyer who had been trying to buy it for at least 2 years, and a swift exchange and completion followed.

Numerous officers have been involved in attempting to bring this property back into use over a number of years. Everyone involved is relieved to finally see the end of this long running saga, not least the local residents who have had to live with the eyesore in their local area.

## **We are flying the Red Ensign Flags at council buildings today for Merchant Navy Day**



Fly the Red Ensign is an annual campaign, ran by The Seafarers' Charity, to honour the brave men and women who kept the UK afloat during both World Wars and to celebrate our dependence on modern-day merchant seafarers, who are responsible for more than 90% of the UK's imports.

Councillor Alison Johnston [cllrajohnston@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:cllrajohnston@testvalley.gov.uk) 01794 500610

Councillor Tony Ward [cllrtward@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:cllrtward@testvalley.gov.uk) 01794 389649

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