

A newsletter from the Borough Councillors for the Test Valley Borough Ward of Mid-Test

Cllrs Alison Johnston, Ian Jeffrey, and Tony Ward



## **Council approves £6.5M to deliver next major masterplan project for Andover.**

Test Valley Borough Council has allocated £6.5M to completely redevelop the area around Western Avenue and extend the riverside corridor as part of the authority's ambitious Andover masterplan.

At a full council meeting yesterday evening (Thursday 23 February), members approved the money to transform the area, which will see the creation of a picturesque park as well as a stunning riverside walk south of Bridge Street to further showcase the town's charming River Anton water source.

To enable this to happen, TVBC has been working closely with Hampshire County Council as the highways authority to redesign the road layout in the area and free up space for pedestrians.

The focus on highlighting the town's existing assets stems from extensive public feedback through the Andover Vision and masterplan consultations, which encouraged the council to open up the river in particular for people to enjoy as it is largely hidden in the town.

As a first step, the authority created the new riverside park at Town Mills in 2021 to enable residents and visitors to relax and picnic by the water's edge. The space has also been used as a location for events, encouraging residents to move around the town.

The authority has said that it is keen to accelerate the project and get plans in place to enable work to begin as soon as possible



## **Apply for council grant and throw a coronation party fit for a king.**

Test Valley Borough Council is encouraging residents to come together to celebrate the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and the Queen Consort on Saturday 6 May.

And to help with this, the council has created a Coronation Grant Scheme, which will enable communities to apply for up to £500 towards local celebrations to mark the historic event.

Voluntary groups, not for profit organisations, clubs and societies, parish and town councils, and schools can all apply for a share of the pot. Residents looking to run street parties and other events in their neighbourhood can also apply, but are asked to contact their local community engagement officer first using the contact details at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/CommunityEngagementOfficers](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/CommunityEngagementOfficers)

The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Friday 21 April and all activities must take place no later than Monday 8 May.

The council has also agreed to waive the fee for road closures for events linked to the coronation.

For more information, or to apply for a grant or road closure, visit [www.testvalley.gov.uk/TheKingsCoronation](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/TheKingsCoronation).

For bigger events, organisers can also apply for a Councillor Community Grant at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/councillorcommunitygrantscheme](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/councillorcommunitygrantscheme)

## **Council approves £500k funding for local community projects.**

The creation of a brand new sports pavilion at Over Wallop and rebuilding the stage house at the Plaza Theatre in Romsey are two of four local projects that will benefit from a major funding boost after Test Valley Borough Council agreed to allocate more than £500k towards a range of schemes.

Councillors backed a report at a meeting on Wednesday 25 January to award the money from the authority's Community Projects Reserve (CPR).

The move will see almost £270k go towards the construction of a new sports pavilion at the Alan Evans Memorial Ground, Salisbury Lane, Over Wallop.

Just over £100k has been allocated to providing outdoor exercise equipment, playground apparatus, an all-weather running track, wet weather shelter, new seating, and wilding improvements at the playing fields at Aylwards Way in Nether Wallop.

Meanwhile, £100k will be allocated to the Plaza Theatre to extend the stage house, enabling them to install a new lighting grid, undertake rewiring work and upgrade equipment, and £33k has been earmarked for new play equipment at Bury Dene Playing Fields to completely overhaul the site and ensure the facilities are suitable for children of all ages and abilities.

The money for the Community Projects Reserve comes from funds secured through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is a charge the council levies on new developments in the local area to provide the infrastructure needed to support new homes and businesses.

The fund is open to bids from 1 April to 30 June each year and the council then assesses each project against set criteria to determine which should receive a share of the pot and how much should be allocated. Parish councils and community groups can apply for up to 50 percent of the total project cost.

Since 2018, the council has awarded £3.2M to 28 schemes around the borough.

## Changes to Test Valley Call & Go

In response to Hampshire CC budget review there will be changes to certain Test Valley Call & Go services. From 1 April 2023:

- The Wellow, Sherfield English, Awbridge, plus eastern areas of Romsey town - to Romsey route will be moved to a Monday afternoon from a Tuesday.
- The Braishfield, Ampfield, plus northern side of Romsey town - to Romsey route will be moved to Wednesday afternoon from a Thursday afternoon.

In effect this will mean losing a very small amount of service in terms of operating hours. All destinations on the service will continue to be served. All passengers eligible for the service will still have the opportunity to travel however in the above instances the day they are able to use the service will change. HCC will be writing to passengers to advise them of these changes shortly.

HCC will also be introducing a common fare structure on the Community Transport services across Hampshire (£6 for local journeys and £7 for longer journeys). By April 2024, Romsey residents travelling into Romsey will pay £6 fare for a more local journey and non- Romsey residents plus those travelling on the Andover service will pay £7 for a longer journey. The Romsey resident fare is for those who live in Romsey (about 2-3 miles from the town centre) travelling to Romsey and therefore make a more local journey than those travelling from outside Romsey or those travelling to Andover from its surrounding villages. Passengers have already been made aware of this planned fare increase.

## Dumped wooden crate near Romsey leads to man being ordered to pay nearly £2k



A man has been ordered to pay nearly £2,000 after he dumped a large wooden crate with waste inside in Lee, near Romsey, in spring last year.

On 18 May 2022, Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) received a report from a resident who had witnessed a fly-tip on Station Road.

Following a DVLA search using the registration number of the vehicle spotted at the scene, TVBC

officers invited Shawn Johnson, 28, of Bexhill-On-Sea, to attend an interview under caution.

Johnson admitted depositing the waste, which he had collected from a private job.

He told officers he had been asked to return to the work yard to change vans and panicked as he had previously been told he couldn't use it for private jobs.

Appearing at Southampton Magistrates' Court on 23 January 2023, Johnson pleaded guilty and was given a £1,292 fine and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £129 and costs of £562.10



## Honours nominations for New Year 2024

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has invited recommendations for the New Year 2024 Honours List.

DLUHC is especially interested in people who are working or volunteering in their community. They could be working with the homeless or in housing more widely, supporting community integration and interfaith work, or working in local government over an extended period. It is important that the honours list reflects the rich and diverse communities that make up the country and we would encourage you to consider nominating people from all backgrounds.

To make a nomination, please complete this [online form](#) and send two letters of support to [honours@levellingup.gov.uk](mailto:honours@levellingup.gov.uk). Nominations for Honours are confidential and the candidate must not be told that they are under consideration. For candidates to be considered, the nomination form and 2 letters of support should be sent to [Honours@communities.gov.uk](mailto:Honours@communities.gov.uk) by **12.00 noon on Monday 6 March 2023**.

**Read** - [Start of process stakeholder letter](#)

**Read** - [Information you need](#)

**Read** - [Honours Newsletter](#)

## East Tytherley Neighbourhood Plan - Designation of Neighbourhood Area

East Tytherley Parish Council have submitted an application for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area covering the whole of the parish. The Council has considered the application and approved the designation on 10 February 2023.

The designation of a Neighbourhood Area will enable a Neighbourhood Plan to be prepared for the area. The documents can be found here: [Neighbourhood Planning | Test Valley Borough Council](#).



## Countryside team update - Valley Park planting

Our countryside officers recently organised the planting of new community orchards and wildflower meadows within Valley Park, alongside local schools.

A total of 24 Old English fruit trees have been planted within community areas since the start of February, with the assistance of 70+ year 6 pupils.

18 trees were split amongst three groups at St Francis school on 1 February, and a further 6 trees were planted Knightwood school on the 8 February.

The schools were joined by The Mayor of Test Valley, Cllr Alan Dowden, alongside the Mayoress, Cllr Celia Dowden. The Mayor advised the value of local commodities and their environmental benefits before tree planting commenced.

Following successful planting of the trees, the pupils seeded the areas with a native wildflower mix in preparation for the pollinators.

These orchards and wildflower meadows will be a long-lasting legacy and hope to inspire future generations.

## Police & Crime Commissioner Fund

The Commissioner is launching this first round of the [Commissioner's Emerging Needs Fund](#) focusing on the theme of **Rural Crime**.

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight have large rural areas which makes policing more challenging and adds to the complexities of crime detection. The majority of residents live in towns, villages and rural areas across the two counties. Rural communities are more frequently becoming victims of serious and organised crime. These often include machine thefts, hare coursing - which leads to illegal gambling - poaching, trespassing, and fly tipping. This is costing farmers and land owners hundreds of thousands of pounds per year. The Commissioner is committed to representing the concerns of rural communities.

Applications must demonstrate how they reduce crime or support victims of crime in a rural setting.

All the information on the criteria and how to apply can be found on our [website](#) This opportunity **closes at 14:00 (2pm) on Friday 21 April 2023**. Applications will not be accepted after this deadline regardless of circumstances. Successful applications will be announced in mid to late May 2023.

## Hampshire County Council Home Movers Survey

HCC are undertaking, a survey of residents living in recent large housing developments across the county. Across Hampshire this covers 13,000 new homes built between April 2020 and March 2022. The survey will include questions on household characteristics, where people have moved from, and what has attracted them to the area. Similar such surveys have previously been undertaken historically, but not since 2010. The survey includes the following sites in Test Valley:

- Andover – East Anton, Picket Twenty and Picket Piece
- Nursling – Redbridge Lane
- Rownhams – Parkers Farm
- Romsey – Ganger Farm

A letter will be sent out which includes a link to the survey along with a QR code to access the online survey (paper copies are available on request). There will an opportunity for those who complete the survey to win a £100 Leisure Voucher.

The survey closes on 10 March.

## A303 and A34 Litter Pick

On 9 January, the council's contractor, Forest Traffic Services, commenced its annual clean-up of the A303 and A34 verges, laybys and slip roads within the borough. It took around three weeks to complete the work, with 337 bags of litter collected amounting to just over 2 tonnes of litter and other roadside debris.

The work is carried out between January and March each year, as the vegetation dies back, allowing for easier retrieval of litter.

## Countryside team update - Great crested newt survey

The countryside team conducted the first great crested newt survey of the season on Tuesday 31 January at Abbotswood Nature Reserve. Great crested newts are the largest native newt to the UK and are a European protected species. Armed with torches, the team found 31 great crested newts. Elsewhere in Hampshire, there have already been reports of egg laying. Though the team didn't find any signs of egg laying, they did observe courtship behaviours meaning egg laying isn't far behind!

These surveys are important for gaging a population density and success of the species on site. This information will be used to guide the continued management of the site.



## Big Band Buffet shortlisted for a national award

The annual Test Valley Big Band Buffet has been shortlisted for the national 'Resolve ASB Awards' 2023 in the 'Best Project' Category. This award is for projects or initiatives that demonstrate measurable improvement in reducing ASB and/or building community confidence. The awards are shortlisted on the basis of their positive impact, transferability, learning and partnership involvement.

The Big Band Buffet is a partnership event led by TVBCs community safety team for older and vulnerable people to meet and enjoy a day out whilst also hearing from partners such as Police, Fire, NHS, Citizens Advice, SSE, Places Leisure, and Blue Lamp Trust on their services providing support and advice to help them stay safe. These included a wide range of topics including safety in the home, deterring crime, social prescribing, cost of living support, avoiding isolation, scams and cybercrime. In feedback given after the event, 97% rated it as good or excellent.

The outcome of the awards will be known on Thursday 30 March.

Those with long memories may also remember that the 'ICE Project' was a runner up in the same category in these Awards back in 2016.



## Ash Dieback work ongoing in Andover.

Ash Dieback goes by several common names such as, Chalara, dieback and often referred to as ADB. The fungus stays in the leaf litter and it is often the case that trees with the disease pass this onto neighbouring trees. The fungus enters the trees vascular system eventually blocking the trees vessels, leaving the tree unable to move water around its internal system. The effects of this cause a significant reduction in the strength of the timber, leaving them liable to limb failure without warning.

As a local authority we have been monitoring the spread and progression of the disease through our council owned trees. This takes place during the summer months whilst the trees are in full leaf and allows us to determine what stage of the disease the tree is in. Following this years monitoring it was found a significant number of trees had become unsafe to retain in public areas due to its progression.

In order for public spaces to remain fully open and used as they currently are the removal of the ash are essential tree works.

Work is currently ongoing in Watermills Park in Andover and should be completed on 3rd March.

This year Ash Dieback works have already been completed across the Borough including Ladies Walk and Berry Way in Andover as well as packages across Romsey and Chandlers Ford. There will be replanting schemes drawn up for the majority of these areas, as well as woodland restocking in Valley Park. Some areas will be allowed to naturally regenerate and form coppice areas. In the short term some of these areas will look different, however with replacement planting over time the canopy cover will return.

We will be replanting tree species to promote biodiversity in these areas and planting various replacement species in order to avoid monocultures (singular tree species) environments.

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