

A newsletter from the Borough Councillors for the Test Valley Borough Ward of Mid-Test
Councillors Alison Johnston, Ian Jeffrey, and Stewart MacDonald



Mayor's Autumn Update

The Mayor of Test Valley, Councillor Gordon Bailey, continues to embrace and enjoy his civic year.

Mr Mayor has been busy visiting businesses and groups across the borough and supporting concerts, fetes, award ceremonies and charity occasions.

The annual Showcasing Test Valley event, which is an opportunity to promote the unique and special nature of the borough and its communities to other Hampshire Civic Heads, was held at Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in September which included a talk about the venue and a guided tour of the gardens.

2025 celebrates 200 years of the Andover Guildhall and the Mayor welcomed residents to a Sunday Open Day to look around the Upper Chamber and the Parlour. Councillor Bailey also welcomed Past Mayors' to the Guildhall for a get together and reminisce about their civic years and events held in the Guildhall. A competition for primary aged children to draw/ paint/collage a picture of the Guildhall was well supported with entries being displayed in the Guildhall at the Open Day. Three winners were presented with Andover Toy Shop vouchers, and the overall winner also received a voucher to Riverside Bowl for a family activity.

Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ian Jeffrey and Past Mayor, Councillor Philip Lashbrook, have been supporting Councillor Bailey with engagements and enjoying an opportunity to meet more residents at events across the Borough.

The Mayor and Mayoress are looking forward to the Christmas Season being out and about in the borough, attending Christmas Concerts and visiting Care and Nursing Homes throughout December to wish residents and staff Season's Greetings.



Place-based event

On Thursday 23 October the council held a place-based event with Councillors, partners and staff coming together to consider the concept of neighbourhoods and the opportunities over the coming few years, for communities, the voluntary and public sectors to work together to outline what “good” looks like in order to influence the culture of the future unitary authorities. Many councillors have, for example, indicated that they would like to see Test Valley’s Community Councillor model replicated in the new councils.

Anna Randle, who is currently assisting the Cabinet Office with its Test Learn and Grow programme at national level facilitated a really positive event, allowing space for everyone to reflect on what neighbourhood means to them, share existing good practice examples of working at place with communities, and to think about how to further develop an approach together with the shared belief that communities should be able to shape places and services that matter to them.

Armistice Day 2025

On Tuesday 11 November the Mayor, Councillor Gordon Bailey will be in the Memorial Park, Romsey, and the Deputy Mayor Councillor Ian Jeffrey and Mrs Maura Jeffrey will be in the Garden of Remembrance, St Mary’s Church, Andover, for the Armistice Day Commemorations and 11am Silence.

Annual leaf clearance

The council’s programmed annual leaf clearance will start at the end of October and will take around eight weeks to complete.

The local authority is targeting areas that regularly accumulate a lot of leaves and are responding to ad-hoc requests to clear debris.

If you require more detail, please contact [Environmental Services](#).



Food waste collections

Monday, 13th of October marked the start of weekly food waste collection service across the borough. Nearly 60,000 caddy packs have been delivered to homes in Test Valley, for this new service.

Residents can now recycle their food waste, including meat, dairy, fruit, vegetables, bread, tea bags and coffee grounds using their kitchen and kerbside caddies.

Similar to the current household waste and recycling bins, residents should place their larger caddy out for collection at the kerbside by 7am on their collection day. Caddies will need to be presented

with the handle upright, as this locks the lid and helps the collection team. Some residents have been given a shared wheeled bin instead, and the collection teams will collect and return these once emptied.

The Elections Act 2022 – Postal Vote Re-Application Project

The Elections Act 2022 introduced the ability for online absent vote applications via a central government portal in October 2023, along with the introduction of identity checks for all electors applying for an absent vote. Additionally, the maximum period of time that a postal vote can now be held for is three years, after which electors would need to reapply.

The roll out of the Online Absent Vote Application portal has been successful and the majority of new applicants have been using it as their preferred method of application. The ability to apply by paper application remains for those electors who prefer to apply in this way

Council Grants

Climate Change grants available to support community projects

Test Valley Borough Council launched the Climate Change Grant in June 2025 to help community groups and not-for-profit organisations take action against climate change.

The grant is designed to support projects that improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, or help communities adapt to the effects of climate change. Eligible organisations can apply for funding up to £10,000 and are able to apply up until the end of December 2025, unless all funds are allocated prior to this. More details about the grant are available on the website at: [Climate Change Grant | Test Valley Borough Council](#)

The scheme is open to a wide range of groups, including charitable organisations, community associations, parish and town councils, and committees responsible for managing community buildings and assets. So far, 6 grants have been awarded for projects including LED lighting, replacement windows, and solar panel systems. Please do keep letting eligible organisations know about this grant being available.

For more information email: climatechange@testvalley.gov.uk

Celebrating older people and supporting mental health in Andover

The Andover Over 55s People's Forum (AOPF) has received a £290 grant from Winton ward councillors to help fund a community event focused on improving mental health for older residents.

Held on 2 October at Andover Community Church, the "Full of Life" event marked the International Day for Older People. It brought together more than 20 local organisations, including Andover Mind and NHS professionals, to share practical advice and support around dementia, depression, and wellbeing.

The grant, awarded earlier this year by Winton ward councillors Alex Gillies and Lisa Matthews, helped cover venue hire and printing costs for posters and programmes.

Councillor Alex Gillies said “This is a brilliant example of community-led action. Mollie and the AOPF team have created something that’s not only informative but genuinely uplifting. We’re proud to support their work.”

Councillor Lisa Matthews added: “Mental health affects us all and it’s vital that older people know where to turn for help. This event brought people together and made a real difference. We’re grateful to everyone who helped make it happen.”

Ditsy’s Home Help brings compassionate care to Andover, supported by council grant

Andover resident Suzanne Glew has launched Ditsy’s Home Help, a new business offering tailored support to people who need a bit of extra help with everyday tasks. Her services include picking up shopping and prescriptions, providing companionship and transport to appointments.

Suzanne received a £750 Business Incentive Grant from Test Valley Borough Council to help get started. She was signposted to the grant from IncuHive - the council’s Small Business Service, and she’s already building a growing client base. She is building up invaluable relationships with regular clients and provides transport for residents at Andover Nursing Home.



Test Valley Borough Council supports small local businesses with grants. For details apply to councillor Ian Jeffrey cllrijeffrey@testvalley.gov.uk

Other News

Romsey Former Magistrates Court



This week has seen the completion of works outside the FMC in Romsey to enhance the area. The Gaze Burvil wooden benches have been restored and one of the planting beds has been redesigned (inspired by nearby Mottisfont) with a mixture of roses and perennial flowers. As soon as this was planted up, it was a bee and insect haven as well as looking beautiful!

There were some concerns raised by residents and councillors regarding trees to the rear of the FMC, where residents were walking across through the trees, the ground had become very compacted as well as the tree roots becoming exposed and a dangerous trip hazard. As part of the

project the soil around the trees has been air-spaded to reduce the compaction of the soil and 3500 bulbs have been planted which should look amazing throughout the spring. The area has also had some railings placed around it to stop people from walking across it and to further protect the trees.

Whilst on site, staff have had a number of people come and talk to them about the scheme, the majority of residents have been really pleased with improvements to the area and work to protect the trees. .

Citizens Advice Test Valley - Financial and Digital Skills

The Citizens Advice Service aims to provide the advice people need for the problems they face, and to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. They are delighted to offer more support for local communities to manage their money, to try build an emergency fund and to feel more included digitally both individually and for groups.

Please do share this information.

1:1 sessions include a 'Challenge us to save you money' quiz which can be done alone or with support. The areas of need will be identified and then we can begin an open, confidential, non-judgmental conversation.

Group sessions can be delivered and then from this, 1:1 sessions can be offered if needed. All sessions are open, confidential, and non-judgmental conversations.

Some of the questions from the quiz are asking whether the individual/couple are confident that they are on the correct benefits, do they have enough money to pay all their utility bills, are they confident in how to reduce their food/clothing bills. Also, support in finding forgotten pension pots from previous employment and tackling subscriptions.

Citizens Advice also have some funding for digital skills to support an individual to use their device to access GP or Prescription accounts plus manage Universal Credit online. The digital skills also support them to look out for scams and protect themselves.

Southern Water update - River Test drought order withdrawn

September brought the desperately needed rain and the rivers have responded positively. As a result the Environment Agency has agreed to withdraw the Drought Order application for the River Test, because river flows have been above 500 million litres per day for 21 consecutive days.

Despite this improvement, river levels remain volatile and October was drier than average. At least 80% of the average rainfall between now and the end of the year is necessary for our local water resources to recover. **That's why the hosepipe ban is still in place for the time being** and residents are still being asked to save water.

In the meantime, Southern Water is finding and fixing leaks more quickly than ever. Over the summer, teams in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight have fixed more than 600 leaks, saving over seven million litres of water per day. Work is continuing to work at pace to deliver the biggest investment programme in Southern Water's history to future proof water supplies in Hampshire and ease the pressure on the chalk streams. Work includes building the UK's first new reservoir in over 30 years, and the country's first ever water recycling plant."

TVBC's Animal Welfare Officer scoops national award

Test Valley Borough Council's Animal Welfare Officer, Rod Mason, has been honoured with the prestigious Care Act Hero Award in the RSPCA's national Pawprints Awards 2025, recognising his outstanding work safeguarding pets and supporting vulnerable residents.

Rod was selected for his efforts to protect animal welfare under the Care Act, ensuring that people entering hospital or care can do so without worrying about their pets. His work has spearheaded practical, preventative solutions that support both owners and animals in times of crisis.

One of Rod's key resources is the [Emergency Pet Care Form](#), which enables residents to record vital information about their pets in case they're suddenly unable to care for them. The form helps emergency services, carers and health professionals quickly identify and support pets, preventing unnecessary distress or abandonment.

A press release and video celebrating Rod's achievement will be published next week.



South Central Makers Market in Stockbridge

Discover beautiful produce from local artists, crafters, makers and bakers - the perfect place to find all your gifts and treats

Location: Stockbridge Town Hall, Stockbridge

Date: Friday 31 October

Time: 10am to 4pm

Tadburn Meadows meadow preparation



Tadburn Meadows in Romsey has had some wildflower TLC this month, with volunteers from the local Tadburn Conservation Volunteers group helping Daisy one of our Reserves Officers preparing the meadow for next year's wildflowers. The work involved included using scythes to cut the meadow and scattering new wildflower seeds on the barer patches of the meadow to try and enhance the growth of the wildflower meadow for next year.

Why use scythes? As it is a more controlled and slower process of cutting versus using machinery, it reduces the risk of impacting an array of wildlife including small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and ground nesting birds, all of which depend on long grass for safe movement, feeding and nesting.

The process also promotes plant diversity due to the selective cutting process, and minimizes soil compaction, preserving structure and health. The technique of scything is also a skill which holds traditional values in our rural heritage.

The volunteers achieved a great deal on this task day - as a group they scythed an impressive 350m² of the meadow, equivalent to approximately one and a half tennis courts.

Half Term Events for Children

Wednesday Creepy Craft Club: Make Your Own Ectoplasm!



Join Andover Museum for some slimy, gooey fun as you mix up and play with your very own batch of museum "ectoplasm."

A perfect hands-on activity for families, children can get creative (and a little messy!) while learning how to make this spooky slime to take home.

Location: Museum of the Iron Age

Date: Wednesday 29 October

Time: Drop in any time between 11am and 3pm.

Cost: £2 per child with free admission to the workshop space at Andover Museum.

Top Secret – The Magic of Science 2025

Fusing the mystery of magic with wondrous and miraculous feats of science. Hang on to your seats and experience a non-stop action packed interactive magical science show with experiments and magic that will capture the imagination.

Location: The Lights, Andover

Date: Monday 27 October

Time: 2pm

Cost: £15/£12, Family ticket £48

Defibrillators for public use are located at:

Stockbridge Fire Station (available 24 hours)

Longstock Village Hall (available 24 hours)

Leckford Estate Office (restricted hours)

Leckford Farm Shop (restricted hours)

Up Somborne Rookley Farm (24 hours)

King's Somborne Village Hall

King's Somborne – The Crown Inn (available 24 hours on front wall of pub)

Over Wallop - the White Hart pub, Pinchbecks Garage and the Army Flying Museum.

Nether Wallop -Village Hall and the Pavilion on the playing fields.

Broughton Village Hall

Mottisfont Social Club

Ashley- Ashley Farm (24 hours)

Lockerley - Outside the main door at the Lockerley and East Dean Memorial Hall. SO51 0JG

Lockerley - Outside the door of Lockerley Stores on Lockerley Green. SO51 0JN

Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered.

In the event of an emergency, after dialling 999 to report the incident, the phone operative should give the access code for the cabinet, to the person/first aider using the device.

Contact

If there are any issues in this copy that you would like to discuss, or any items of news that you would like to be considered in a future copy please contact any of the Borough councillors.



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