

Warnford Parish Meeting

Hampshire County Councillor and Winchester City Councillor report

May 2022

1. Homes for Ukraine

Hampshire County Council continues to work with Winchester City Council and key local partners to enable the provision of immediate support and assistance to Ukrainians arriving in Hampshire under the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. The focus is on conducting necessary safeguarding and wellbeing checks via home visits, distribution of financial support and ensuring key information is shared with guests and sponsors efficiently.

The latest available figures at the time of writing are that as of 3 May 2022, 45,126 visas have been issued for England of which 1,685 have been issued for Hampshire. The welcome and the support being given locally to arriving guests has been truly phenomenal, with various groups working across the area.

In addition to the other support available, local community and voluntary organisations working to help Ukrainian families can apply for grants of up to £5,000 from Hampshire County Council - details at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/leaders-community-grants>

Useful information for anyone welcoming Ukrainian guests can be found at www.hants.gov.uk/ukraine which is being regularly updated.

2. Covid-19 update

The current data shows a picture of increased COVID-19 activity and continued high case rates across all ages in Hampshire, with the highest rates currently among 35-39 year olds, and rising infections in the those aged 60+. Despite hospitalisations decreasing since the peak of the Omicron wave, there is a slight upward trend in those admitted to hospital with COVID-19, which HCC's Public Health team are monitoring closely, alongside outbreaks within the community.

More information can be found on the 'Keep Hampshire Safe' web page at www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/coronavirus/covid-changes-faqs.

3. Roads

After years of pushing, the Police and Crime Commissioner has agreed to install average speed cameras on the A32 and the A272 to help tackle antisocial motorbikes in the area. This is a very big investment - sufficiently large in fact that it made it into the Sunday Times recently!

The cameras will be installed around the West Meon Hut, running on the A272 from Bramdean to Langrish and on the A32 from East Tisted to West Meon. Installation is likely to take place later this year. The hope is that by placing them in the middle of the affected area, it will deter bikers from the area.

There have been concerns that this may just displace the issue, but the police have assured us that there will be additional police coverage in the wider area, using the spare capacity freed up by the cameras. In addition, if the area covered turns out not to be sufficient, we have been assured they will look at extending this to a wider area.

There is a renewed push for acoustic cameras to be brought in as well; these measure noise from bikes. There are some issues with these at present but if approved, they could be another game changer. In recent weeks, the Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced further trials of these, with specific reference being made to the trials here (this made both the Times and the Daily Telegraph).

In separate news, Hampshire County Council are looking again as to whether there should be 20-mph zones in residential areas. These clearly have environmental, noise and safety benefits. On the other hand, some may feel this is too slow on larger roads. The result of that review is expected later this year. If you have any particular thoughts on this, please do let me know.

4. Grants

The 2022/23 county councilor grant window has now opened. This was brought forward to allow applications from parishes looking for support for Jubilee events, although applications do not need to be restricted to them. The link for applications is <https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/county-councillor>

I'm delighted that Warnford was an enthusiastic applicant last with a number of successful applications, including in relation to the village hall and the playground.

5. Election news

Both Hampshire County and Winchester City councils have new leaders. Rob Humby has taken over at the County whilst Martin Tod now leads the City.

Having reached the ripe old age of 80, my fellow ward councillor on Winchester City Council, Laurence Ruffell, has decided to take on new ventures and so retired at the May elections. Neil Bolton has taken over from him as member for the Upper Meon Valley ward; Neil lives in Woodlands, between Bramdean and West Meon.

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