

## **Hampshire County Councillor Update 21**

I'm sure you, like me, are glad to see the back of January. It's been a busy month, not for the best reasons. The cold weather mid month played havoc with our local road network, primarily as a result of ground water flooding freezing. Let's hope for milder, and calmer, conditions through February.

### **Highways Information**

#### **Potholes**

It's the time of year when we begin to see many more potholes forming on Hampshire's Roads.

Potholes form for many reasons, hydraulic action, structural weakness, subsoil movement for example. At this time of year though, and particularly after the range of weather we've had in the last fortnight, they are more likely to form.

Water penetrates cracks in the surface of the road during rain, when it freezes it expands, causing the structure to break down, and as vehicles pass over it that weakness gets worse until such time as the surface breaks away creating the pothole.

Hampshire Highways can't fix them unless we know about them, so PLEASE, if you see a pothole in your road or when you are out and about, take a few moments to report it to the [Hampshire County Council](https://www.hants.gov.uk/.../roadma.../roadproblems/potholes) online system. The link to do so is here:  
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/.../roadma.../roadproblems/potholes>

Reporting it here is the best way to ensure it is fixed as quickly as possible.

We prioritise the busiest routes first when fixing issues, so if it's a minor road it may take a longer to get to it, but we will fix it.

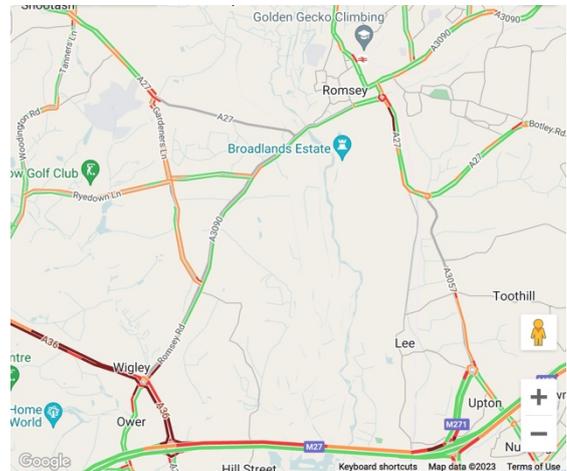
A full list of where to report various issues to HCC is below as always.

## Road closures during icy weather

The week of January 17<sup>th</sup> was a tricky one, given the icy weather which followed two weeks of heavy rain. I thought you may appreciate a description of what happened.

The police closed the A3090 on Monday night as there was flooding across the entire width of the road; Hampshire Highways then installed a full road closure due to the flood and the subsequent formation of ice.

A Highways tanker started pumping the water from the Wednesday morning which carried on overnight and most of Thursday. The water subsided to the extent that it allowed us to carry out some work with a JCB to clear a ditch some way back from the edge of the road along the A3090 to allow the water to get away from the road into the ditch.



The jetter/tanker then returned to carry on pumping and one lane of the road was opened on Thursday at about 10pm. Works continued to achieve a full solution which was dependent on reducing water levels which proved quite difficult due to general groundwater levels.

A significant problem with many of our roads over the past couple of weeks has been the exceptionally high ground water levels. Where there are ditches they have often been full from ground water seepage and therefore unable to take rainwater run-off. In the case of that section of the A3090 there was no ditch, so we have had to clear one ourselves.

I've had loads of comments along the lines of "this wouldn't be happening if the drainage were better" over the last few days in relation to the road problems we are encountering. I hope it's helpful therefore to explain what the situation is.

The sustained rain of the last couple of months has meant that ground water levels are exceptionally high. That means that the ground can hold no more water and explains why water is running along and across roads in many places and standing in the fields.

Ditches are designed largely to take water off surrounding surfaces, some drain into nearby water courses, but many hold it while it soaks into the soil. If however ground water levels are high then that happens far less quickly, if at all, and indeed the ditches can fill with ground water without run off. That is what has been happening in a lot of places and explains much of the standing water on the roadside.

On the A3057 the problem for example was water coming off the field and full ditch on one side of the road and flowing into the road from a utility manhole on the other - the manhole being full of ground water.

The purpose of drainage is of course to take the water away and in very many places it successfully does. The late leaf fall didn't help us this year coming as it did half way through the gully clearing programme.

Finally, you might reasonably say 'stop filling in ditches' - I wish we had the power to stop landowners doing so, sadly we don't. We just have to deal with the consequences when they do.

### **Ground Water flooding – Salt Wicks**

Ground water flooding remains a concern locally, particularly if the cold weather returns next week as forecast.

❄️ You may have seen recent posts where I mention that along with gritting the highways and spot salting, our teams have also been busy going out around Hampshire deploying salt wicks.

You might wonder what that is, so here is a description of a salt wick.



## **Salt wick**

A salt wick is a hessian bag filled with salt placed in or near water on the highway to stop the water from freezing.



### **Redbridge Causeway roadworks**

Amongst all the chaos of the weather, the additional closure of a lane across the Redbridge Causeway has caused much disruption this month to the west of Southampton.

I'm really sorry about the traffic problems. These works were trailed considerably in advance, both in the press and on social media. You might remember seeing posts here in December warning of them.

I'm afraid this work is absolutely necessary. I took a look at the underside of the bridge myself recently and have copied some of the photos I took below. Essentially the structure is suffering from 'concrete cancer' and the works we are doing are as a consequence essential to the safety of everyone using the causeway. They will also extend the life of the causeway by at least 60 years.

I realise it is hugely disruptive, but we took the decision to do the works now in a window during which holiday traffic was at a minimum, there are no major events happening either

in the city or the Forest and the number of cruise ship arrivals/departures is at its lowest too.

Nighttime working isn't possible I'm afraid, the work they are undertaking is very noisy and would affect a wide area both in Totton and Redbridge.

If it is of any comfort, this is the final push and the disruptive work should be completed by Easter.

I'm sorry that's an explanation and not a solution to the traffic problems, but I hope you understand why we have to do these works now.

### **20mph zones in Hampshire**

I attended the Transport and Environment Select Committee of Hampshire County Council last month, where the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group into the introduction of 20mph zones in Hampshire were discussed.

There are a number of recommendations in the report, which suggest various criteria for consideration if we are introduce 20mph zones more widely.

There were deputations from supporters of the introduction of 20mph zones, some of whom felt the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group did not go far enough, some of whom welcomed the outcome but asked for a wider, and speedier, roll out than the report envisaged.



Ultimately, the decision will be one for Hampshire's Cabinet, although it is my responsibility to steer the creation of the new policy. I therefore provided the committee with this response to their report:

"I'd like to express my enormous thanks to the Task and Finish Group and the officers who have supported them through what has been a comprehensive and extremely thorough process.

It is clear to me that we must find a way by which the aspirations of communities hoping for the introduction of 20mph zones can be properly considered. As the Task and Finish Group have pointed out (as have Winchester City Council in their submission post their motion supporting 20mph zones last week), ensuring there is wide community support for the introduction of zones is essential. The ability to enforce them effectively, and the cost of their introduction, are also factors which we shall need to take into account.

I very much welcome the suggestion that 20mph zones should be introduced as standard in new developments and that a more flexible approach should be taken to Speed Indicator Device installation.

We must never forget that as the Highway Authority, Hampshire County Council has an over-riding responsibility to our residents when ensuring road safety. This must be paramount in the consideration of any revision of existing policy. I am also determined that we ensure any revised policy is transparent, fair and accessible for communities, and of course deliverable by the County Council.

I will now ask our officer team to begin investigating how we can deliver on the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and the aspirations of our communities. There is much we can learn from policies introduced in other areas and we will be looking to those authorities for suggestions as to how we ensure delivery of an effective, accessible and workable policy.

I hope that we can bring a proposal for a new policy to this Scrutiny Committee and on to Cabinet in June or July of this year."

### **Fake news over '15 minute zones'**

The post below has begun to circulate in the last 24 hours on Facebook. It references a pilot scheme being considered in Oxford to create 'zones', travel between which would be monitored and possibly chargeable with the aim of discouraging car use in favour of public transport, cycling and walking.

The post suggests [Hampshire County Council](#) have signed up to the scheme with a view to introducing it here.

I'm the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways so I can reassure you that it's complete tosh. HCC have not signed up to any proposed scheme, nor has there been discussion whatsoever about one.

The idea might be interesting for urban areas, but I have my doubts about its effectiveness and I believe it would be entirely inappropriate for a rural/suburban county like Hampshire.

Just wanted to be clear. If you see reference to it anywhere do please point people at this post.

Hampshire county council has just signed up to the 15 minute zones, which means YOU will not be able to drive out of your zone without a permit (which you will have to pay for) however YOU can leave your zones as many times as you like via using public transport, a push bike or walking, it is also stated that if leave a zone more than 3 times un-notified or without a permit YOU will be fined, the plans to implement this have not been finalized in hampshire however, this is real AND this IS happening, its being trialed in oxford as of august this year, this will not just effect you your families or friends but business and future generations to come. please do NOT fob this information off as rubbish and untrue its happening, And please look into this for your self's.

Stubbington Matters [#15minutezone](#)

Coming to your town next



30 comments 27 shares

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## 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 chase for you**

## Batteries in bins

Batteries in bins....bad. Bad. Bad.

Please don't do it. We recently had an incident where one of our waste collection teams retrieved a smouldering laptop from their collection vehicle before a fire took hold.

Thankfully, due to their quick and observant actions, the fire was taken care of before it got out of hand and crew members remained safe.

We are reminding the public that batteries and small electrical devices do not belong in their black household waste or brown recycling bins.

For guidance on how to safely dispose of these items visit:  
<http://www.hants.gov.uk/.../inthehome/reuse-electricals>

**PUTTING BATTERIES**



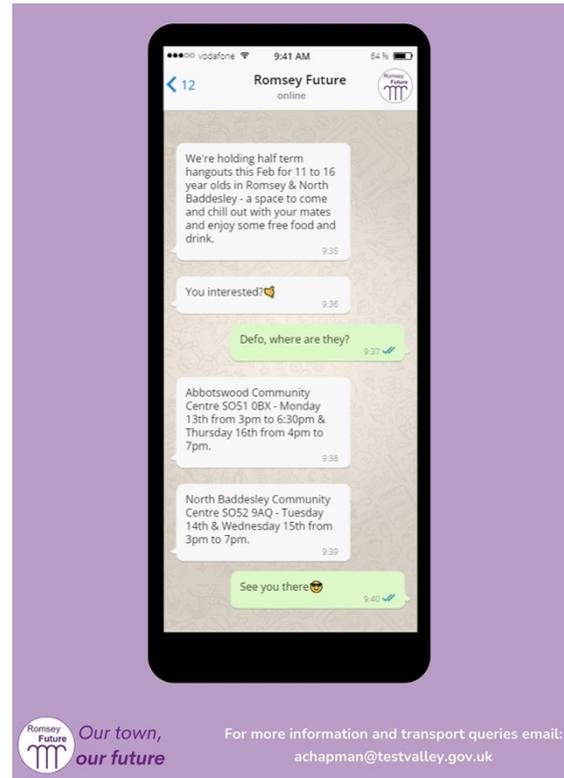
**IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD  
BIN CAUSES FIRES**

## Romsey Future Half Term Hangouts.

[Romsey Future](#) are running 'hangouts' for 11-16 year olds in North Baddesley and Romsey during half term.

Now, I realise the vast majority of teens and pre-teens are way too cool to interact with Facebook. But if you know of any who might be at a loose end over the half term why not wave this invitation in front of them.

We want to know what young people think about our town, what they want for its future and how we can improve the area, they are after all the future of Romsey. The hangouts will be fully supervised by TVBC's communities team who will also be able to signpost young people to services and help if they need it.



## Aster Sewerage Charges – Update

[Caroline Nokes](#) and I met with Aster on January 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the sewerage charge issues. My thanks to them for spending the time with us and for what was a productive, positive and frank meeting.

We made a number of points forcibly:

- The charges being levied are unacceptable and must be reviewed
- The tender process for a provider to manage the sewerage treatment plants resulted in a contractor, based in Kent seemingly charging amounts that are in excess of that which local contractors would charge by as much as 100%
- Aster have not maintained their estate in a proactive manner which would prolong the life of the plants. The consequence is increased cost for home owners and Aster alike.
- That this is simply not good business for them. They are paying excessive costs, and having to pick up a considerable portion themselves as a consequence of their not recouping the full cost from their tenants.



Aster's response was to say that they understood there were serious concerns. In Test Valley there are 350 homes connected to sewerage treatment plants. 203 privately owned. 147 rented out by Aster. I made the point that there are also two schools connected to plants, in Awbridge and Nether Wallop which were causing concern to the County Council.

They had tendered for a national contract of the sewerage services as they no longer were able to provide the specialist support needed in house. They had no quality concerns with their contractor who are a national company, however they recognised the fact that as they were based in Kent, and that they had been sending staff and vehicles from there was an issue. There was a tacit acceptance their costs were higher than those likely to be charged by a local company.

They insisted that Aster tenants are charged an amount equivalent to the charges made by water companies for sewerage services where properties are connected to mains supply. (We pointed out this was still considerably less than the annual amount being charged to all their home owners).

They emphasised that costs were being charged directly by Aster to all home owners. There were no management charges and no credits against the Aster account at the expense of home owners.

In response the Aster representatives made some commitments:

- Aster will re-tender the contract for the sewerage treatment plant maintenance in smaller lots, based on a County basis.
- Each sewerage treatment plant is to be re-surveyed and a repair/renewal schedule established.
- They will allocate capital expenditure for the repair/replacement of sewerage treatment plants in the 2023/24 financial year.

The \$64,000 question will be whether they look to recoup any of the renewal/repair cost from home owners. They made the point that infrastructure has a natural life span and that homeowners should be prepared to pay for its renewal in time. My answer to that is that any normal company would have a sinking fund which would put money aside to eventually replace the infrastructure, plant and machinery as it ran out. This has not been the case, there is no sinking fund and there has been no amortisation applied to the estate.

Indeed neglect of the sewerage treatment plants, other than basic maintenance, has resulted in their having a shorter lifespan than they otherwise might have had. The sewerage treatment plants were handed to them in full working order and with complete environmental permits by TVBC in 2000. It is under Aster's ownership that the plants have deteriorated and they, therefore, to my mind have a moral duty to bear the cost of their renewal and replacement.

## Minerals and Waste Sites' Liaison Panels

Last week I chaired a meeting of the Bunny Lane Liaison Panel, which looks specifically at the Waltet recycling site there. We met on-site to review their progress with reducing the size of the material stockpiles there and the operation of their new wash plant. Noise is also a major concern with this site, so it was great to have [Test Valley Borough Council](#) environmental health officers with us too.

Liaison Panels are created by [Hampshire County Council](#) for all waste, recycling and quarry sites across the county. They bring together, in the first instance, consultees like planning and environmental health with local parish and borough/district councillors to discuss the progress of implementing planning permission after it has been granted. Once the planning permission is operational they also include local residents.



They are usually chaired by the local County Councillor, so in my case I have four to chair; for the quarry at Roke Manor, the recycling sites on Lee Lane and Bunny Lane and for the Yokesford Hill waste and recycling site.

Meetings are not normally as muddy as this one. They are usually either held online or in village halls.

The next one is for Roke Manor quarry, which is due on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March.

## Parish scam warning

A warning from [Wellow Parish Council](#) about a scam email requesting money for listing on a parish website.

If it's happening in Wellow it could well be happening elsewhere, please always check with the relevant parish clerk or parish office before answering anything asking for your personal details or a payment:

“It appears that there is a scam email going around at the moment to businesses in the Wellow area asking for money to renew their listing in the Wellow Parish Business Directory. One resident thought that it was something to do with the Parish Council so duly paid up and then emailed us to confirm that it was something to do with us, which it isn't.

Your Wellow Parish Business Directory listing for xxxxx expires in 6 days.

[Wellow.parish.uk/business-directory/](http://Wellow.parish.uk/business-directory/)

To renew the listing and confirm the company's contact details are up-to-date, please use the button below. Alternatively you can cancel the listing. Once the listing is cancelled you will not receive any further renewal reminder emails.

Renew Business Listing

Cancel Business Listing

Kind regards,

The Service Support Team

<https://wellow.parish.uk/>

## County Councillor Grants

My County Councillor grant pot is now fully committed, with the final £500 given to Rownhams St Johns primary school for their school gardening project..

## Getting About

January has been busy as you might imagine, including quite a few interviews for the press and local media, ranging from the 20mph zones through to the theft of manhole covers. Visits to Fareham, Liss, and Abbots Ann.



Additionally, I've been along to Parish Council meetings in Wellow, Chilworth, Sherfield English, Awbridge and Michelmersh & Timsbury

## 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](https://facebook.com/nickadamsking)



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**CLLR NICK ADAMS-KING**

Caring for Romsey Rural