Mid-Test Matters

November 2026
Issue 86
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A newsletter from the Borough Councillors for the Test Valley Borough Ward of Mid-Test, Councillors Alison Johnston, Ian Jeffrey, and Stewart MacDonald



Annual Canvass 2026 about to begin

Residents across Test Valley will be contacted as part of the annual electoral canvass, an important process that helps ensure the electoral register remains accurate and up to date. The canvass is a legal requirement. Its purpose is to confirm who lives at each address and who is eligible to be registered to vote. Keeping the register accurate helps protect the integrity of elections and ensures residents can take part in local and national polls.

More information about the annual canvass, including details of the different communication routes and how residents can respond, is available on the Test Valley Borough Council website**: www.testvalley.gov.uk/annualcanvass**
Electoral Services can be contacted on 01264 368000 or **elecreg@testvalley.gov.uk**

The Elections Act 2022 – Postal vote re-application project

The Elections Act 2022 changed the maximum period of time that a postal vote can be held to three years, after which electors would need to reapply.

Whilst the majority of new applicants have been applying online at **www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote** as their preferred method of application, the ability to apply by paper application remains for those electors who wish to apply in this way.

Each Electoral Registration Officer across the country must contact all relevant postal voters to advise them to re-apply prior to the 31 January 2027.

Residents can recycle batteries at supermarkets, retailers, and Household Waste Recycling Centres; vapes through participating retailers or Household Waste Recycling Centres; electrical items, including laptops and mobile phones, at Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Exemption from Contract Standing Orders

An exemption from Contract Standing Orders was granted on 29 September 2026 to enable Justice for Tenants to provide legal support on a “pay as you go” basis to the Housing & Environmental Health service in connection with the council’s new statutory duties under the Renters Rights Act 2025.

Justice for Tenants will provide ongoing support around the issuing of civil penalties and any resulting appeals at tribunal, as well as assisting with the recovery of unpaid civil penalty debts where required. This exemption will enable enforcement action to be undertaken without delay with support from legal practitioners who are familiar with housing enforcement activity, and will enable the council to meet its statutory duties
For more information, please contact **Helen Taylor,** Head of Strategic Housing, on 01264 368620.

Council tax refund scam warning

The council are aware that some residents have received scam emails claiming their council tax account is in credit and inviting them to click a link to claim a refund.

Please be cautious of any unexpected emails about council tax refunds. If you receive one and are unsure whether it is genuine, do not click any links. Instead, delete the email and contact the council directly to check the status of your account.

Residents can contact our revenues team through the council website at www.testvalley.gov.uk/ContactRevenues or by using the contact details shown on their latest council tax bill. Verifying contact details independently is the safest way to protect yourself from scams.

Be a Councillor



Residents interested in making a difference in their community are being invited to attend one of two upcoming "Be a Councillor" events.

The free sessions are aimed at people who are not currently councillors but would like to find out more about the role ahead of the local elections in May 2027. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from existing councillors, learn how local councils work, and how the role fits around work and family life, and discover how councillors help shape decisions that affect local communities.

The first event will take place at Longstock Village Hall with refreshments at 6pm with a 6:30pm start on Wednesday 28 October, with a second online session taking place on Microsoft Teams at 7pm on Monday 2 November.

The events are for people who are not already councillors and are interested in finding out more.

People interested can book a place by emailing Ben Ryan, democratic services officer, on **bryan@testvalley.gov.uk.**

Making every scrap count: join Test Valley's food waste recycling success

Please find below some information about Test Valley Borough Council's food waste collection service that you may wish to share with your local networks:

Residents across Test Valley are being encouraged to make the most of the borough's weekly food waste collection service and help turn everyday food scraps into a valuable resource.

Since launching last October, the council's food waste collection service has made it easier than ever for residents to recycle food waste at home. The scheme has quickly become a successful part of the borough's recycling service.

Every week, food waste collected from homes across the borough is taken to a specialist anaerobic digestion facility, where it is turned into renewable energy and nutrient-rich fertiliser.
Most households have a small kitchen caddy for indoor use and a larger kerbside caddy for weekly collections. Residents living in flats or properties with communal waste facilities can use a larger shared food waste bin. A wide range of food waste can be recycled, including leftovers, fruit and vegetable peelings, bread, dairy products, tea bags, coffee grounds, meat, fish, bones and pet food. Every banana skin, tea bag and plate scraping recycled through the service helps reduce waste and supports a cleaner, greener Test Valley.

Residents across Test Valley have recycled around 4,000 tonnes of food waste since the council launched its weekly food waste collection service one year ago.

The weekly service has helped residents manage their household waste more effectively by removing food waste from their rubbish bins. Since the service launched in October 2025, Test Valley's household waste has decreased by 18%.

Top tips for successful food waste recycling

- keep your kitchen caddy somewhere convenient, such as under the sink or on a worktop.
- use compostable liners, newspaper, kitchen roll or paper towels to help keep your caddy clean and fresh.
- empty your kitchen caddy regularly into your kerbside food waste caddy.
- put your kerbside caddy out by 7am on collection day, with the lid closed and the handle upright.
- remember that packaging, liquids, cooking oils, pet bedding and garden waste cannot go in food waste caddies.

For more information about food waste collections, including what can and cannot be recycled, tips on keeping your caddy clean and collection day details, visit **www.testvalley.gov.uk/foodwaste**

Grants

More than £233k invested in community projects across Romsey



Community groups and organisations across Romsey have received more than £233,300 through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, helping deliver a range of improvements that will benefit residents and visitors for years to come. The funding was secured by Test Valley Borough Council working in partnership with Romsey Future, with projects identified through engagement with local organisations and groups.

The seven successful projects will enhance community spaces, improve accessibility, support local heritage and education, strengthen volunteering activities and help community events thrive.

Funding has been awarded to projects including improvements at the Romsey Abbey Wildflower Meadow, safer and more inclusive access along the Causeway, a new sensory and social space at Romsey Baptist Church, community education resources at King John's House, equipment for volunteers maintaining the canal, improvements at RAODS and power upgrades to support markets and events in Church Place.

New Community Art Installation Celebrates Creativity across Generations



A community art project that brought together residents of all ages has culminated in a striking new installation in Andover town centre, showcasing the creativity, stories and experiences of people from across the community.

Where the Ash Trees Grow, led by artist Amanda Kane-Smith from Merry-go-Round Storytelling, transformed an empty unit in the Chantry Centre into a vibrant community exhibition inspired by the river, trees, plants and wildlife that shape the local landscape.

Supported through a £1,000 Test Valley Borough Council community councillor grant, the project was designed to make taking part in the arts free and accessible for everyone. Throughout August, a range of creative activities encouraged children, young people, families and older residents to get involved and contribute to the final artwork.

Cllr Alex Gillies said: "This project shows what can happen when we make creative opportunities open and accessible to everyone. People of different ages and backgrounds have come together to create something unique that reflects our community and celebrates the natural environment around us. It's wonderful to see the finished artwork on display in the town centre for everyone to enjoy."

The Test Valley Village Shop Network





The Village Shop Network is dedicated to supporting independent and community-run shops and rural retail businesses within Test Valley.

Village shops play an important role in rural communities, providing access to everyday essentials, supporting local producers and offering valuable social connections for residents.

Established three years ago by the council's Economic Development and Communities Teams, the network supports village shops by providing opportunities to share ideas, discuss challenges, access advice and learn about funding and support available to help them thrive.

Currently, the network includes 13 shops and two community market garden enterprises. Quarterly meetings are conducted at one of the retail locations to provide attendees with an opportunity to share their experiences and insights.

Additionally, members have access to a WhatsApp group, offering a convenient platform to share advice and information, ask questions, and discuss topics of interest.

As part of the network's regular programme of meetings and visits, members recently visited Test Valley Trout to learn more about the business and how its premium-quality rainbow trout are produced in the borough's famous chalk streams. Hosted by Lewis and Arthur Voelcker of **ChalkStream**, the visit gave members the chance to learn more about a successful local producer while building connections with other businesses from across Test Valley.

If you would like to find out more about the group or would like to join this network, please contact your community engagement officer.

Other News

New Tawny Owl Boxes installed at council Nature Sites



Following the success of tawny owls breeding at Mill Lane Meadows earlier this year, a second tawny owl box has been installed at the site to encourage more nesting opportunities.

The new box, installed by Matt from the Hawk Conservancy, is located in the site's wet woodland area within the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). It will be monitored annually, alongside the existing box, to track any future breeding success.

The good news doesn't stop there. Tadburn Meadows in Romsey is also set to receive its own tawny owl box in October after a site visit confirmed the habitat is suitable for the species. The recommendation was further supported by sightings and calls recorded by the countryside team during a recent bat walk, confirming tawny owls are already active in the area.

With two more nesting sites in place, the countryside team will be hoping for another successful breeding season and, fingers crossed, some tawny owl chicks next spring.

Guided walk highlights the value of Mill Lane Meadows



Members of the Romsey Archway U3A recently enjoyed a guided walk at Mill Lane Meadows in Sherfield English, led by TVBC Countryside Officer Gemma.

During the walk, participants learned about the management of the site, partnership work with the Hawk Conservancy to support tawny owls, and the range of wildlife surveys carried out at the meadows, including monitoring butterflies, reptiles and harvest mice. The session also provided an opportunity to discuss responsible recreation and dog walking, with plenty of questions and conversation throughout the afternoon.

The event concluded with refreshments at Sherfield English Village Hall and has already generated positive feedback from attendees. Following its success, a further guided walk is being planned for spring, helping more residents discover and enjoy their local green spaces.

Members can find out more about the Romsey Archway U3A group on their website: **Romsey Archway U3A.**

Don’t Bin Batteries

Please help us spread the word about battery and vape recycling. The Borough Council have asked us to remind everyone about the importance of recycling batteries, vapes and electrical items correctly following a recent fire in one of their refuse collection vehicles.

The incident was dealt with safely and no one was injured. However, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service attended the scene, taking resources away from an already busy service. Investigations found several items in the waste, including a vape, laptop, mobile phone and household batteries.

It is believed the fire may have been caused by an incorrectly disposed vape. As lithium-ion batteries become more common in everyday items, the risk of fires during waste collection and processing continues to increase. These fires can endanger crews, damage vehicles and cause disruption to local services.

Annual leaf clearance

The council's annual programmed leaf clearance operation will begin on Monday 26 October and is expected to take approximately eight weeks to complete. Teams will focus on locations that regularly experience significant leaf fall, while also responding to reports of excessive accumulations across the borough.

If you would like to report a significant build-up of leaves or require further information, please contact **Ben Hamilton** or **Pete Legg** on 01264 368370.

Thank you for helping us keep our streets, paths and public spaces safe and clear throughout the autumn season

Temporary Closure of Casbrook HWRC, Romsey

Casbrook Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) will be temporarily closed for approximately five weeks from Monday 12 October 2026 to allow essential resurfacing works to take place.

The existing tarmac beneath the waste containers has deteriorated due to heavy vehicle movements and requires replacement following recent safety concerns. It will be replaced with reinforced concrete, providing a safer, stronger and more durable surface and reducing the need for ongoing repairs.

Closing the site fully is the safest and most efficient way to complete the works and will minimise the overall period of disruption.

During the closure:

- Residents will be directed to alternative HWRCs at Eastleigh and Winchester.
- There is expected to be sufficient capacity at these sites to accommodate additional visitors.
- Booking slots at Casbrook have already been blocked for the closure period, so no existing appointments will need to be cancelled.

Hampshire County Council will be issuing a media release and providing information through the HWRC booking website and other communications.

If you have any further questions, please contact **Vanessa Cheung**, Head of Environmental Services Technical on 8389.

Households urged to stockpile food

The Government has urged households to prepare for emergencies by storing enough food, water and essential supplies to last three days, amid concerns over extreme weather, cyber-attacks and hostile states.

The Cabinet Office’s Be Ready campaign recommends keeping nine litres of drinking water per person, alongside blankets, cash, a first-aid kit and a battery-powered torch.

Security minister Dan Jarvis said the advice represented simple steps to strengthen national resilience. The guidance follows severe storms, recent cyber-security alerts and the risk of a major European power blackout and brings Britain into line with several European countries.

England's roads set for 7,000 miles of resurfacing

The Government says England's roads are improving, with almost 7,000 miles of resurfacing work due to be completed this financial year following £4.9bn in spending.

The work includes nearly 5,000 miles of preventative maintenance and almost 2,000 miles of structural repairs. Ministers have also announced an additional £220m for councils meeting performance targets for tackling potholes. The proportion of councils completing preventative roadworks has risen from 76% to 94%.

Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues:

- Potholes: **https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes**
- Tree/hedge problems**: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-aproblem/treehedge**
- Flooding/drainage issues: **https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-aproblem/flooding.**
- Pavement problems: **https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/paving**
- Broken or missing signs: **https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report problem/brokensigns**
- Faulty street lights: **https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-aproblem/streetlight**
- Faded or missing road markings: **https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report aproblem/road-markings**
- Problems with rights of way: **https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem**

Stockbridge Music



On Friday 27th November Stockbridge Music is fortunate to have Horn player Benjamin Goldscheider accompanied by Richard Uttley on the piano, playing music by Mozart including Mozart's Horn Concerto no.4 Brahms, Schumann, Simpson and Bowen.

St Peter's Church, Stockbridge 7.30pm Doors open at 7pm
Wine and soft drinks for sale in the Town Hall.

Tickets £25 under 18s £5 from **Stockbridgemusic.uk**

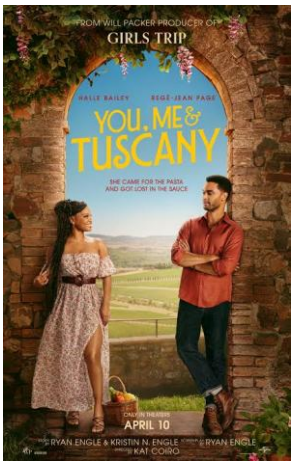
Stockbridge Community Cinema

The Love That Remains (15) Friday 6 November, 7.30pm Anna, an artist, and Magnús, a fisherman, live with their three children and charismatic sheepdog in the quiet grandeur of the Icelandic countryside. As the fractures in their marriage come to the surface, the couple try to hold onto the afterimages of a life together and make sense of a deep and lingering devotion.

Tuner (15) Wednesday 11 November, 4.45pm and 7.30pm Niki (Leo Woodall) works as a piano tuner under the mentorship of Harry (Dustin Hoffman), and the two of them bond over their work and their shared love of music.

Showing at Stockbridge Town Hall SO20 6HE.
Tickets £6. **www.stockbridgecinema.org.uk**

Somborne Community Cinema **King's Somborne Village Hall**



You, Me & Tuscany

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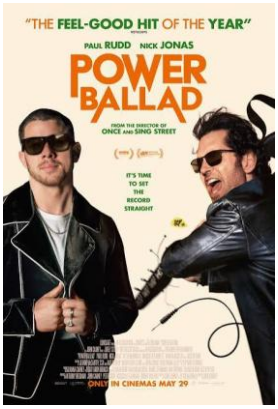
Thursday 12th November 2026
2026 Romantic Comedy 1h:45m

Sometimes the wrong place is right where you need to be! Delightful romantic comedy set in the beautiful Tuscan countryside starring Halle Berry. When Anna (Berry) crashes at an empty Italian villa posing as the owner's fiancée she discovers that little lie becomes a big problem when his mother suddenly appears. Suddenly everything falls apart until she discovers unexpected romance that could transform her life.

Power Ballad

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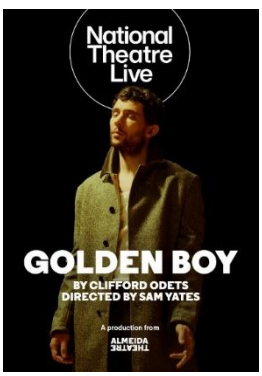
Thursday 10th December 2026
2026 Drama, Music 1h:38m



When Rick (Paul Rudd), a past-his-prime wedding singer, meets fading boy-band star Danny (Nick Jonas) during a gig, the two bond over music and a late-night jam session. But when Danny turns one of Rick's songs into the hit that reignites his career, Rick sets out to reclaim the recognition he believes he deserves -- even if it means risking everything he cares about. POWER BALLAD is a feel-good story about music, self-respect, friendship, and the price of ambition.

Tickets for films are £6 + booking fee online at **www.sombornecommunitycinema.co.uk, or on the door.**
Doors open at 7.15pm and the films start at 8pm leaving plenty of time for drinks and snacks from the bar.

Also showing live at the **Somborne Community Cinema:**



Sunday 22nd November 2026

Doors open 6:45pm : Curtain up 7:30pm

Bar and Refreshments

Tickets £10 + booking fee online at: **www.sombornecommunitycinema.co.uk**
or on the door.

Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult

Defibrillators for public use are located at:

Stockbridge Recreation Ground (24 hours)
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 (on the exterior wall facing the car park)
Dunbridge - The Mill Arms (on the skittle alley exterior wall facing the front car park)
Dunbridge - Railway Station (northern platform)
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
East Tytherley – outside the entrance to the farm.

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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