

Hampshire County Councillor Update 17

Sunny days seem a bit few and far between at the moment, but I managed to catch one when out for a walk at the weekend. The leaf fall is well underway, which explains why both HCC Highways and TVBC are out an about clearing the roads and drains.

The last couple of months have been quite extraordinary, two monarchs, three prime ministers. At least the latest one comes from Chilworth so we can claim him as local.

Here's November's County Councillor update.



Highways Information

Getting Winter Ready

You might have noticed some of these lorries around clearing drains and gullies locally. There was one in Ampfield last night when I was on my way home from Winchester.



Hampshire Highways are getting winter ready, with salting crews on standby, over 100,000 roadside gullies cleared, 13 major drainage schemes completed and more, to help keep the county moving in all weathers:



I've made some comments about the need to properly recognise the importance of maintaining the local road network, particularly as 90% of all journeys in Hampshire are made on these roads

We face huge challenges with highway maintenance due to funding, but through innovation and dedication we can ensure we keep our roads clear and safe this winter.

hants.gov.uk/News/20221027HantsHighwaysWinterReady

Street Lighting

🕒 As the clocks have now gone back,, the darker evenings mean that HCC streetlights will be coming on earlier than is needed during spring and summer.

If you notice a fault, please report using the link:

<https://www.lightsoninhampshire.co.uk/Public/Default.aspx>



Hampshire Highways win awards

As we tackle climate change, we need to be as innovative as possible in doing so. There are opportunities all around us, which I'm very keen to pursue, which is why I am delighted to tell you about innovative work of Hampshire County Council Highways being recognised.

Did you know that some of the material used for road repairs in Hampshire has been recycled from other roadworks, as part of an award-winning Carbon Strategy? ♻️🚗

It's among the steps being taken by Hampshire Highways to reduce the carbon footprint of road maintenance operations and to make the 5,500 mile network more resilient to climate change. Their trailblazing work with partners has just earned two top industry awards.

🏆 The work to become carbon neutral won the Environmental Sustainability Award and the Judges' Special Merit Award in the national Highways Awards last week. One of the ways Hampshire Highways is working to be carbon neutral is through this purpose-built recycling facility in Micheldever, where material dug up in road repairs is brought back to be processed and used elsewhere on the road network.

They are also continually trialling and adopting new, sustainable products and methods for highways maintenance.

These are an amazing achievement' and especially given the strong UK-wide competition.

It is great to see that with the Environmental Sustainability award, the County Council's trailblazing collaborative work with our partners has come under the national spotlight. It is particularly notable that the quality of work and good reputation of the Hampshire Highways partnership has been publicly recognised by their professional peers with the Highways Industry Special Merit Award.



My congratulations to all involved and thanks for their fantastic hard work and dedication.

Redbridge Causeway Works

I'm very aware that the works on the Redbridge bridges have been causing much inconvenience for those who travel across it and also access Southampton via the Redbridge roundabout.

I'm really sorry for the delays, so I've been to take a look at the works and see why they are necessary.

Work is progressing well to complete the refurbishment of the Redbridge Causeway bridges, which vary in age from 50 to 90 years, to ensure they remain fit and strong for the next 30 years.

The structures carry around 60,000 vehicles in and out of Southampton over Test Lane, the railway and the River Test on a regular day and the harsh marine environment has accelerated deterioration of the concrete bridges which hold the A35.

In the third and final phase of this challenging £25 million engineering scheme, engineers are working to steadily remove and repair defective concrete under the eastbound bridges and to replace the southern parapet on the Redbridge Viaduct.

Much of the work to the parapet is taking place behind the concrete crash barrier and beneath the Redbridge Viaduct away from view.

As you can see from the photos, there is severe deterioration of the bridge structure in places. (That's not neon-coloured graffiti, it's highlighting the areas to be replaced.) The work the team is doing not only repairs this but also places a cathodic system in place to extend the life of the repaired structures for decades to come.



Hampshire Highways figures for September

Here's the Hampshire Highways update for September:

Highways Maintenance Newsletter

September 2022



After the heatwaves in July and August, September saw some much needed rainfall. However, with the ground hardened by a prolonged period of hot, dry weather, some localised flooding occurred and, as always, highways crews were on standby ready to respond as needed. As we now enter the autumn season, we can expect to see the leaves drop from trees and this can lead to roadside gullies not working properly where

gratings become blocked. Drainage issues can be reported at: hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/flooding

Maintaining and improving our highway drainage systems is a year-round job and the highways crews routinely clear and cleanse many thousands of gullies, catchpits and drains, and also cut and re-cut intercepting channels (known locally as grips) into verges so that surface water

can flow easily off the road and into ditches. It is really important for those who own land next to or over a watercourse, which can include roadside ditches, to take steps to ensure water can always flow as it should. Keeping ditches and drains clear goes a long way to helping to reduce flood risk to land and properties: hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/flooding/floodprevention

Countywide Statistics for August 2022

330

Emergencies attended

66,984

Square metres of carriageway resurfacing

8

Operation Resilience schemes completed

13,769

Gullies and other drainage cleared

320,200

Square metres of surface dressing and micro asphalt

155

Arboriculture jobs completed

1,759

Square metres of footway repaired/resurfaced

8,901

Carriageway defects repaired (including potholes)

614

Other Jobs completed (outside of all works shown)



Test Valley Statistics

for August 2022



Please note that the figures quoted accurately reflect the highway maintenance activity carried out in each district area during the previous month. The scale of activity is generally based on a combination of cyclical work (routine), local demand/need (reactive), and the utilisation of asset management principles (planned), rather than a simple distribution across the 11 district areas. This means that the level of activity will vary from district to district each month so the monthly figures should not be compared on a like-for-like basis. Over the course of a typical financial year, maintenance activity will be relatively proportionate across the Hampshire local authority area, recognising that the size of each district area varies.

30

Emergencies attended

38,274

Square metres of carriageway resurfacing

2

Operation Resilience schemes completed

816

Gullies and other drainage cleared



10

Arboriculture jobs completed

46

Square metres of footway repaired/resurfaced

2,144

Carriageway defects repaired (including potholes)

50

Other Jobs completed (outside of all works shown)



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

Aster Sewerage Charges

An update on progress with Aster Sewerage Charges.

I have been pursuing answers from Aster in respect of their enormous charges for sewerage made to those who are connected to sewerage treatment plants under their control.

It is clear that they have gone to one contractor for their entire estate. This would explain why there have been no local contractors appointed, why tankers are coming from Kent and why the contractor appears to be able to charge whatever they like. My additional question is who sets the maintenance and management schedules? Is it the contractor or Aster?

There is additionally the issue of transparency of charging. How do we know that the amounts being charged reflect the actual amount being levied by the contractor.

You will note from the comments below, that the amounts being charged include amounts for last year - which in large part have not been covered by the amounts people have paid. Why has there been a discrepancy? Why are last year's amount less than this year's? And why did they not reflect the amounts residents were being asked to pay?

- *Advice from other Sewerage Plant contractors.*

I've spoken to two alternative providers of sewerage plant management and maintenance to sense check the costs being charged by Aster and Willow pumps. One is coming back to me. One has responded already, their comments are illuminating:

Are these cost for a service and the tank empties only or do these include other costs. Is the Environmental Agency involved with the below properties at all as this would be the only reason we could think the costs are so expensive.

We do annual servicing and maintenance on sewage treatment plants, septic tanks and pumping stations. We have set costs for shared systems so for example the 11 properties below that are using a shared system the cost for the service would be around £500.00 per service depending on usage it can be either annual or bi-annual service for a 50-pop shared system.

Tank empties on a shared system of this size we would advise the tanks are emptied quarterly and we use local companies who would charge around £230-£250 per empty

(sometimes these can be a little higher due to the number of gallons they need to remove.)

All the above costs would be split between the properties and would be nowhere near as much as they are currently being charged.

So, the advice would appear to be that both the tankering charges, where they are being used, are excessive as are the schedules of maintenance. I will formulate questions of Aster that are appropriate.

I have also spoken with Southern Water and will be meeting with them next week to understand what, if any, help they can be. There certainly has been a move to transfer the Awbridge plant to them in the past, but they refused to take it on due to the poor state of the plant apparently.

- *Publicity*

I am hopeful the BBC will start filming their piece this week. Caroline is still waiting on a date for her adjournment debate - the upheaval at Westminster having delayed parliamentary business. I have a Daily Echo journalist waiting on my giving him the detail to run the story too.

I hope this is all helpful. I'm sorry there isn't a resolution, just currently more questions. For me the biggest is why Aster are choosing a supplier who covers their entire estate, which runs from Somerset to Kent, and consequently costing residents significantly more than if they were using local suppliers.

If you know of residents who pay Aster for their sewerage disposal, could you possibly pass on my details to them please? I'm asking residents to update me on what Aster are asking them to pay please and if they have sent any correspondence to justify them?

The sites of which I am aware currently include:

Butlers Close/Oval Road, Lockerley,
Manor Road, East Tytherley
East Dean Road, Lockerley
Cowleas Cottages, Awbridge
Aylwards Way, Nether Wallop
Lymer Villas, Nursling

Glebe Meadows, East Dean,
The Close, Hatherden
Rectory Hill, West Dean
Verlynch Cottages, Longstock
Stevens Drove, Houghton
Green Pond Lane, Ampfield

Romsey Market Place wins award

Do you remember me asking residents to vote for Romsey Market Place in the People's Choice Award category of the Solent Quality of Place Awards?

Well, We won!

Better still, the Market Place also won the Judge's Award too, the first time that a scheme has won both the public and judge's categories.



Thank you so much to everyone who voted.

I'm delighted Romsey's Market Place has won this award. Everyone who lives here knows what a fantastic town Romsey is, but the enormous number of votes for the scheme shows that it's immensely popular with not only locals but visitors too.

Thanks to everyone who brought this scheme forward which has enhanced our town centre immeasurably

So if you were in the Market Place on Monday lunchtime you might have seen a motley bunch of people have their photos taken, these were for the official press release, which you can read here:

Reminder to use or exchange your 'old' stamps?

Do you have a stock of stamps you are unlikely to use before 31st January 2023? Royal Mail are introducing a new style of stamp at the end of January and current stamps will no longer be valid after that date.

There are only 100 days to go until non-barcoded stamps can no longer be used.

You can swap old style stamps via: <https://www.royalmail.com/sending/barcoded-stamps...> where a form can be printed or requested, call 03457 740740 to request a form or go to the Customer Service Point at your local delivery office.



How could £10,000
in energy-efficiency
upgrades **transform**
your home?

Check if you're eligible for fully-funded
energy-efficiency upgrades.

Apply before:
31st December 2022

#STAYWARM&SAVE



Local residents could get support to manage energy-efficiency upgrades.

Government-funded Sustainable Warmth grants are designed to support those households most impacted by rising energy bills; residents can check if they are eligible here:

<https://www.hampshire-applications.co.uk/>

Energy Support

From October 1st, the Government's Energy Support began. Although, this time the council has no role in administering it, I still thought it would be helpful to try and explain how it works. I have tried to be as succinct as possible.

My main message though is to please be aware of any scams. I've received various texts in the last week encouraging me to apply for a discount. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO APPLY.**

There are **3** aspects to the scheme:



1 The Energy Price Guarantee. The government is helping every household by limiting the unit price paid for gas and electricity. Hence, a typical household will now pay around £2,500 a year for the next two years compared with a predicted average of £6,000 without this intervention. Please be aware though that your bill will still depend on how much you use.

2 The Energy Bill Support Scheme. This will provide every household with a £400 discount on bills this winter. With £66 discounts on the October and November bills and £67 off each month from December until March. The most vulnerable households will also continue to receive £1,200 of support provided in instalments over the year.

3 Businesses big and small, charities, schools, care homes etc will receive equivalent support through the Energy Bill Relief Scheme. This means that non-domestic customers will pay wholesale energy costs below half of expected prices this winter.

To reiterate, you do not need to do anything to receive this support. It will automatically be applied to your energy bill.

There is much more detailed information available here, including for those who are on pre-payment meters - <https://bit.ly/3fCwn8g>

Warm spaces Our library network offers warm space for anyone needing a place to spend some time, connect with others, to work or study. Libraries also provide support with the distribution of Warm Bags and Food Vouchers through the Household Support Fund www.hants.gov.uk/librariesandarchives/library/libraryfinder

Food and essentials Families struggling with the cost of essentials - such as food and fuel - are encouraged to visit the connect4communities website below. You may be eligible for a Council Tax reduction. www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities

We offer a range of **grants** to community organisations working with residents to support their physical and mental wellbeing including grants up to £5,000 to support communities, for example by setting up a Warm Space. Further information is available here: www.hants.gov.uk/costofliving/community-support

County Councillor Grants

I've approved further grants this month, to Romsey Town Council toward the Christmas Lights display (don't forget the switch on and Winter Carnival on Saturday November 26th), the Nursling and Rownhams Friendship Club toward their befriending lunches and Romsey and District Walking Football who help encourage older people to remain active and meet at Sherfield English recreation ground.

Getting About

I've been travelling around the County to view highway works, in Farnborough, Alresford, Durley, Totton, Thruxton, Peteresfield Yateley and Winchester

Additionally, I've been along to Parish Council meetings in Wellow, East Tytherley, Nursling & Rownhams, Chilworth, Romsey Extra, West Tytherley, Sherfield English, Lockerley, 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

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CLLR NICK ADAMS-KING
Caring for Romsey Rural

