

Hampshire County Councillor Update 63

Dear All

September has been another very busy month across Hampshire and Romsey Rural. The most significant county-wide development was the Government's decision to withdraw its local government reorganisation proposals for Hampshire and the Solent. There have also been important updates on Hampshire's finances, the condition of our roads, major motorway works and the new Combined County Authority.

Locally, I have continued to publish regular information about roadworks and planning applications, along with updates from our villages and community organisations. I have brought the main points together below, including the most useful information from the first few days of October.

Highways Information

Making the case for fairer highways funding

Hampshire has around 5,500 miles of roads to maintain—one of the largest local highway networks in the country—but we do not receive enough stable, long-term funding to keep that network in the condition we all want to see. The estimated maintenance backlog is now between £550 million and £600 million.

The County Council's Cabinet has agreed to strengthen our case to Government for a fairer share of Vehicle Excise Duty to be invested back into local roads, together with greater freedom to target highways funding where it will make the biggest difference.

We are not waiting for Government action. Since April, highways teams have delivered 42 resurfacing schemes, with 101 planned during 2026/27, completed 122 preventative surface treatments and 154 planned patching schemes covering more than 32,000 square metres. Between April and July, teams also repaired 17,590 reactive defects, including potholes.

The long-term answer is to move increasingly from reacting to potholes to planned, preventative maintenance. Hampshire's highway assets are valued at around £17 billion, and looking after them properly is basic asset management as well as being important to residents and businesses.

Original update: [facebook.com/nickadamsking](https://www.facebook.com/nickadamsking)

M3 Junction 9 closures

National Highways has moved traffic onto the new roundabout at M3 Junction 9 and is beginning the next phase of work, including demolition of the old bridges and further improvements to the northbound exit slip road.

The key dates currently advised are:

- 9pm Friday 9 October to 6am Monday 12 October—closure of the M3 northbound exit slip road.
- Overnight on Friday 9 and Sunday 11 October—closure of the M3 northbound between junctions 10 and 8, from 9pm to 6am.

- 9pm Friday 23 October to 6am Monday 26 October—full M3 closure in both directions between junctions 8 and 9 for demolition of the northern bridge.
- 9pm Friday 6 November to 6am Monday 9 November—full M3 closure in both directions between junctions 8 and 9 for demolition of the southern bridge.

Please allow extra time, follow the signed diversion routes and check the latest information before travelling. National Highways advises drivers not to rely on satnavs during closures because they may direct vehicles onto unsuitable roads or back towards closed sections.

Latest information: [National Highways road closure report](#)

Live traffic information: [trafficengland.com](https://www.trafficengland.com)

M27 Junction 10 opens ahead of schedule

I was immensely proud to cut the ribbon and officially open the upgraded M27 Junction 10, one of Hampshire County Council's most ambitious transport projects. The £100 million-plus scheme has opened almost two months earlier than anticipated.

The project will improve connections between the motorway and Fareham, Wickham, Whiteley, Southampton and Portsmouth, while supporting the new homes, schools, community facilities and employment planned at Welborne. Most of the contractors who worked on the scheme are from Hampshire. The junction began opening to traffic in phases during September, with remaining slip roads following later in the autumn.

Southern Water works at Dunbridge Lane and Romsey Road

Southern Water has continued work to replace the ageing water main along Dunbridge Lane. Dunbridge Lane remains under a rolling closure until Friday 16 October, with the existing diversion in place. I appreciate how disruptive these works are; residents can contact Southern Water on 0330 303 0368 and quote reference PRN 835157.

Duttons Road and Greatbridge Road traffic lights

Temporary lights associated with Openreach works at the mini-roundabout caused severe disruption and gridlock in Romsey after the permit had expired. I asked Hampshire Highways to intervene and the lights were removed that morning, bringing the immediate delays to an end.

Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues are here:

Potholes: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes>

Tree/hedge problems: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/treehedge>

Flooding/drainage issues: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/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-a-problem/brokensigns>

Faulty street lights: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/streetlight>

Faded or missing road markings: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/road-markings>

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. If you would like me to follow this up, do please forward that message to me and I will chase it for you.

Local Government Reorganisation

Government withdraws its Hampshire decision

On 7 September, the Government withdrew its decision on local government reorganisation in Hampshire and the Solent and ordered a review. This was the best possible outcome at this stage and gives councils the opportunity to start again with proper time, evidence and financial analysis.

Hampshire County Council had launched Judicial Review proceedings because the Government had not provided satisfactory answers about the evidence behind the decision or the financial sustainability of the proposed new councils. The earlier proposals also risked splitting established communities, including the New Forest, and transferring major areas of growth and business-rate income between authorities.

I was particularly pleased for everyone involved with New Forest Together. Campaigners collected tens of thousands of signatures and presented their petition to Parliament on the day the decision was withdrawn.

This does not mean that nothing should change. It means that whatever comes next must be properly costed, financially sustainable and command much broader support.

Who pays for the abandoned process?

Councils across Hampshire were required to work to Government deadlines, incurring legal, consultancy and implementation costs and diverting many hours of senior officer time from service improvement and financial sustainability work.

I have asked the County Council to establish the full cost of the process to Hampshire and to call on Government to reimburse councils. Every pound unnecessarily spent on a process that has now been withdrawn is a pound that cannot be spent on services residents rely upon.

Hampshire and the Solent Combined County Authority

In its first weeks, the new Combined County Authority has been putting in place the foundations for regional collaboration across Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton.

The initial work has focused on:

- Developing a Local Growth Plan that builds on the region's strengths and supports future investment.
- Preparing a Strategic Skills Plan ahead of taking on devolved adult-skills responsibilities.
- Establishing the boards, committees and partnerships needed for transparent, joined-up decision-making.
- Listening to residents, businesses and partners about local priorities and where regional action can add most value.

By working across boundaries, the Authority can give our region a stronger voice and improve access to jobs, skills, transport, housing and opportunity. Early discussions have included long-term youth unemployment and how to ensure that growth benefits residents, communities and businesses across the whole region.

Hampshire County Council's Finances

During September, the Government confirmed more than £90 million of in-year Exceptional Financial Support for councils facing serious financial pressures, including £6 million for the Isle of Wight and £5 million for West Berkshire.

Hampshire has not had to make a similar request because the County Council acted early. Over the past year, we delivered £95 million in savings, with a further £40 million of efficiencies built into this year's budget. That work enabled us to set a lawful, balanced £3.3 billion budget and manage this year's pressures without seeking exceptional permission to borrow or use capital resources for day-to-day costs.

That does not mean everything is fine. This year's budget relies on £108.5 million from reserves—almost twice the amount used last year—and those reserves can only be spent once. School transport costs, particularly for children with special educational needs and disabilities, have risen from £43 million to £83 million in four years, while demand for adult social care continues to increase.

In 2025/26 Hampshire received £91 per resident in general Government funding, compared with an English average of £205. The new funding formula reduces support by £10.9 million this year and by £42.9 million annually by 2028/29. I will continue pressing for a fair, long-term settlement that protects essential services without exhausting reserves or placing an ever-greater burden on local taxpayers.

Romsey Rural and Test Valley Updates

Nursling and Rownhams Footpath 24

Hampshire County Council has extended the temporary closure of part of Footpath 24 so that National Grid can complete overhead power-line refurbishment and replacement. The order can remain in place until 31 December, but the footpath should only be closed while the work is actually taking place, which is expected to be for a few days. No alternative route is available while the closure is in force.

Awbridge named Best Small Village

Huge congratulations to Awbridge Parish Council and ADVA for winning Best Small Village in this year's Hampshire Association of Town and Parish Councils Awards. Awbridge has been our home for almost 18 years; it is a wonderful village and community in a beautiful location, and this was a very well-deserved award.

Wellow Ways

The autumn edition of Wellow Ways brought volunteers together for the village's twice-yearly clean-up. Caroline Nokes and I joined the team clearing the cattle grid at Monkey's Jump car park before the start of pannage. That work is important to prevent pigs leaving the Forest and reaching the A36. Thank you to Christopher Craig, Wellow Parish Council, G. R. Middleton Groundworks and everyone who helped make the village winter-ready.



Casbrook Household Waste Recycling Centre

Casbrook Household Waste Recycling Centre on Bunny Lane will be temporarily closed from Monday 12 October until Thursday 12 November while essential safety improvements are carried out. The surface beneath the waste containers will be replaced with reinforced concrete.

During the closure, residents can use the household waste recycling centres at Eastleigh or Winchester. Please remember to book before travelling.

Further information: hants.gov.uk/News/20060210CasbrookHWRC

Fly-tipping prosecution

Two men were ordered to pay a total of £2,866 after admitting that they dumped a large concrete block in Watery Lane, Clatford. Test Valley Borough Council officers traced the vehicle through CCTV and pursued the case to prosecution.

Fly-tipping blights our countryside, creates hazards for people and wildlife and leaves council taxpayers paying to clear somebody else's rubbish. If you see it, please report it and provide photographs, vehicle details or dashcam footage where it is safe to do so.

Pannage in the New Forest

The New Forest pannage season began in September. This ancient commoning tradition allows pigs to forage for fallen acorns, beech mast and chestnuts, helping to protect ponies, cattle and donkeys from eating excessive quantities of acorns.

Please slow down and be prepared to stop, give the pigs space, never feed or attempt to move them, and keep dogs under close control. If you are involved in or witness a collision with a Forest animal, call 999 even if the animal appears unhurt.

Support for local businesses

Test Valley Borough Council shared a useful update for employers covering employment-law changes, apprenticeships and free training. From 1 October, the time limit for bringing an Employment Tribunal claim increases from three to six months, with further workplace-access and harassment-prevention duties taking effect from 30 October.

From 1 October 2026, eligible smaller employers may receive a £2,000 payment for hiring a new apprentice aged 19 to 24, or up to £3,000 for a new apprentice aged 16 to 18. Government funding can also cover 100% of training and assessment costs for apprentices aged 16 to 24, up to the relevant limit. Businesses should consult the official guidance or seek professional advice about their circumstances.

Apprenticeship information: apprenticeships.gov.uk/employers

General Updates from HCC

Back-to-school support

Hampshire's back-to-school resources bring together advice on preparing for the first day, walking, wheeling, cycling and school transport, before- and after-school childcare, SEND support, vaccination, mental wellbeing, attendance and free school meals.

All children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are entitled to a free school lunch. Families receiving certain benefits may also qualify for income-based free school meals beyond those years. A successful application can unlock extra support for a child and additional funding for their school.

Family information and support: [Connect to Support Hampshire](https://connecttosupporthampshire.org/)

Hampshire's young jazz musicians recognised

Hampshire Music Education Hub has been shortlisted at the Parliamentary Jazz Awards 2026 for its contribution to jazz education. Its inclusive programme supports more than 110 young musicians and introduces over 1,400 primary-school pupils to jazz each year.

This is wonderful recognition for the young performers, tutors, schools and partners who make Hampshire's jazz programme so welcoming and successful. Congratulations to everyone involved.

Getting About

September provided many opportunities to support local organisations and meet residents. I joined the Wellow Ways clean-up, attended the unveiling of the new Queen Elizabeth II sculpture at Romsey Abbey, enjoyed the Romsey Food Fair and Romsey Show, and spent a very warm and engaging day at DemFest in the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens with the ROMDAG team.

In early October, I also attended Romsey WI's Literary Day, where a strong programme of authors and conversations drew an excellent turnout. The event's letter of support from Her Majesty The Queen was richly deserved.

Further afield, I attended the Local Government Association Health and Wellbeing Committee in London to discuss adult social care and NHS reforms, and represented Hampshire at the opening of the upgraded M27 Junction 10.

Finally, the usual round of parish council meetings resumed for the autumn and I was pleased to be able to attend PC meetings in Awbridge, Lockerley, Wellow, West Tytherley, Sherfield English, Nursling and Rownhams and Chilworth.

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 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



Hampshire County Council to consider next phase of upgrade work for Hayling Billy Trail

The next proposed phase of improvements to the Hayling Billy Trail in Havant is set to be considered by Hampshire County Council in September

[Hampshire County Council to consider next phase of upgrade work for Hayling Billy Trail | Hampshire County Council](#)

New special school in Boorley Green ready to open its doors

A new state-of-the-art special needs school near Botley is ready to start welcoming its very first pupils from next week

[New special school in Boorley Green ready to open its doors | Hampshire County Council](#)

Hampshire County Council confirms mid-September phased opening for M27 J10 improvement scheme

The new M27 Junction 10 scheme will soon open to traffic marking a major milestone in one of the county's most ambitious transport infrastructure projects

[Hampshire County Council confirms mid-September phased opening for M27 J10 improvement scheme | Hampshire County Council](#)

Public consultation on the future of The Clere School, Burghclere

Residents in north-west Hampshire are being asked for their initial views on the proposed closure of The Clere School in Burghclere near the West Berkshire border

[Public consultation on the future of The Clere School, Burghclere | Hampshire County Council](#)

No tricks, just three choices: apply for a secondary school place by Halloween

Parents and carers in Hampshire are being reminded not to let the secondary school application deadline give them a fright this Halloween

[No tricks, just three choices: apply for a secondary school place by Halloween | Hampshire County Council](#)

Hampshire County Council Leader responds on Government announcement to review Local Government Reorganisation for Hampshire and the Solent area

Hampshire County Council's Leader has commented following an announcement today by Government to withdraw and review its previous decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Hampshire and the wider Solent area

[Hampshire County Council Leader responds on Government announcement to review Local Government Reorganisation for Hampshire and the Solent area | Hampshire County Council](#)

New bus travel initiative in Gosport set to boost safety and confidence

People travelling by bus in Gosport are set to benefit from a range of improvements designed to make travel safer and reduce anti-social behaviour, including on the popular Eclipse route

[New bus travel initiative in Gosport set to boost safety and confidence | Hampshire County Council](#)

Hampshire parkruns help raise awareness of World Suicide Prevention Day

Residents across Hampshire are being encouraged to learn more about suicide prevention, access support when they need it, and start conversations about mental wellbeing, ahead of World Suicide Prevention Day on 10 September 2026

[Hampshire parkruns help raise awareness of World Suicide Prevention Day | Hampshire County Council](#)

Plans progressed for more than 80 new special needs places across Hampshire

Plans have taken a step forward today for more than 80 new special needs places in Fair Oak, Basingstoke, Hart, Waterlooville, Eastleigh and Fareham

[Plans progressed for more than 80 new special needs places across Hampshire | Hampshire County Council](#)

Funding paves way for 120 new special needs places in Gosport and the New Forest

A major investment in special needs support is set to unlock 120 new school places for children with social, emotional and mental health needs in Gosport and the New Forest

[Funding paves way for 120 new special needs places in Gosport and the New Forest | Hampshire County Council](#)

Update on Traffic Regulation Orders, speed limit changes and road humps linked to Kings Barton Development

Hampshire County Council, acting as the local traffic authority, has approved highway changes linked to the Kings Barton development in Winchester

[Update on Traffic Regulation Orders, speed limit changes and road humps linked to Kings Barton Development | Hampshire County Council](#)

Three secondary schools to benefit from £9.8 million investment in building improvements

[Three secondary schools to benefit from £9.8 million investment in building improvements | Hampshire County Council](#)

Hampshire partnership powers growth, skills and opportunity across the county

Thousands of Hampshire residents and businesses are benefiting from programmes that are boosting skills, creating jobs and driving economic growth, according to the latest annual report on the work of the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board. By bringing together leaders from business, education and local government, the partnership is unlocking opportunities, attracting investment and building a more prosperous future for communities across the county

Green light for new primary school in Whitehill and Bordon

A new primary school for Whitehill and Bordon, providing places for up to 430 pupils including specialist facilities for children with special educational needs, has been given the go-ahead after Hampshire County Council's Regulatory Committee approved a planning application for the development

[Green light for new primary school in Whitehill and Bordon | Hampshire County Council](#)

Start of work confirmed for replacement of Havant Footbridge

Construction work on a new footbridge in Havant will begin on Monday 28 September

[Start of work confirmed for replacement of Havant Footbridge | Hampshire County Council](#)

£220,000 boost for successful Live Longer Better Hampshire programme

Older residents across Hampshire will benefit from a £220,000 investment to expand the successful Live Longer Better Hampshire programme, helping more people stay active, healthy and independent for longer

[£220,000 boost for successful Live Longer Better Hampshire programme | Hampshire County Council](#)

Accessible scales to help disabled residents monitor their health

A new £30,000 grant scheme will help make routine weight checks easier, safer and more dignified for disabled people across Hampshire

[Accessible scales to help disabled residents monitor their health | Hampshire County Council](#)

Everyday actions helping Hampshire tackle a changing climate

From reducing energy use in schools to developing skills needed for jobs in renewable power, helping wildlife thrive, and making sure communities are prepared for the future, Hampshire County Council's latest climate change report highlights the practical steps being taken to cut emissions and ensure Hampshire is prepared for the effects of a changing climate

[Everyday actions helping Hampshire tackle a changing climate | Hampshire County Council](#)

Smoking rates fall as Hampshire builds a healthier future

Smoking rates have fallen across Hampshire, more than 40,000 NHS health checks have been completed, and residents have been supported to improve their health through physical activity, family support and recovery services, according to new public health data from Hampshire County Council

[Smoking rates fall as Hampshire builds a healthier future | Hampshire County Council](#)

Green light for new primary school at Welborne Garden Village

Families in Welborne Garden Village are set to benefit from a new primary school at the heart of their growing community, after Hampshire County Council's Regulatory Committee approved the planning application. The new primary school will provide places for up to 430 pupils, including specialist provision for children with additional needs, helping to ensure high-quality education is available close to home as the neighbourhood grows

[Green light for new primary school at Welborne Garden Village | Hampshire County Council](#)

New support pathway to help Hampshire residents with complex care needs get home sooner after hospital stays

Older people, disabled residents and others who need ongoing care after a hospital stay could return home sooner and receive more coordinated support under a new approach approved by Hampshire County Council

[New support pathway to help Hampshire residents with complex care needs get home sooner after hospital stays | Hampshire County Council](#)

Hampshire County Council calls for fairer share of Vehicle Excise Duty to plug highways funding gap

Hampshire County Council is stepping up its call for a fairer share of national transport funding, urging Government to provide long-term, sustainable investment in local roads and give greater flexibility over how funding is spent

[Hampshire County Council calls for fairer share of Vehicle Excise Duty to plug highways funding gap | Hampshire County Council](#)

New classrooms and science 'super lab' open at Alderwood School

Extra classrooms and a science 'super lab' are among the modern new facilities now benefiting pupils at Alderwood School in Aldershot, thanks to a 300-place extension to the secondary site

[New classrooms and science 'super lab' open at Alderwood School | Hampshire County Council](#)