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



Local government reorganisation

The government recently announced that it will review its decisions on local government reorganisation and has withdrawn its decision for Hampshire and the Solent to effectively merge Test Valley with the New Forest, Winchester and East Hampshire.

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Councillor Phil North, has issued this statement in response: "We have been notified that central government will be reviewing local government reorganisation (LGR) across the country, and in our area has formally withdrawn the decision for Hampshire and the Solent. Local government reorganisation was never a path that we chose to walk down, but having been directed by the government, we have always sought to secure the very best outcome for the residents of Test Valley.

It is frustrating that it feels that we have been marched up to the top of the hill, just to be marched back down again. Whatever comes next, our commitment to securing the very best outcome for Test Valley residents remains. If LGR is to continue, that means creating a new authority where Test Valley communities are not dominated by a large urban area.

'The government's review is also another chance to lobby for all our Test Valley communities to remain together, including those in Chilworth, Nursling, Rownhams and Valley Park, which the government had previously decided to put in a new urban-centric South-West authority.'

The impact of all of this is that significant Council time, and taxpayer money, has almost certainly been wasted. Test Valley Borough Council will now exist for longer and TVBC elections will now take place in May 2027.

Changes to Planning

Borough councillor Stewart MacDonald writes:

In December 2024, Central Government imposed a 78% increase in Test Valley's housing targets. In good faith, through 2025 and early 2026 TVBC progressed a new draft local plan to address that increased housing target and with the aim of limiting the borough's vulnerability to future speculative development.

Following yet further changes to national planning policy, it became clear that even if TVBC had adopted a new Local Plan later this year, the borough would continue to be vulnerable to speculative development for many years ahead due to the dramatic fall off in Housing Delivery.

As such, TVBC took the difficult decision to pause the Local Plan in July and instead pivot towards a new Local Plan based on the expanded geography of the new Mid Hampshire Council (ie with our partner councils in the New Forest, Winchester and East Hampshire).

With the announcement about Local Government Reorganisation being “withdrawn” we now wait while Central Government work out what they want to do next – while at the same time, Test Valley continues to suffer from unplanned, speculative development of inappropriate scale and in inappropriate locations.

Central Government has also changed planning policy such that Local Councillors no longer have an automatic right to call planning applications to committee, with decisions instead being decided by officers.

Many of the speculative planning applications currently being pursued may now, never be built. With the housing market moribund due to high mortgage costs and construction costs, and limited buyer demand due to cost of living and general economic uncertainty, developers would have to be very brave financially to take the risks of pursuing these developments.’

Councillor MacDonald continues to assist a number of communities as they seek to resist speculative development applications. Recent precedent from other parts of Hampshire highlight that the planning inspectorate has and will reject inappropriate development in the countryside (although the bar for refusal remains extremely high).

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.

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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.

The process involves a combination of data matching and direct communication with households. Some residents may receive an email invitation to check and confirm their details online, while others will receive a paper form. In some cases, where records cannot be fully matched, a response will be required even if there are no changes to report. Follow-up reminders and visits may be undertaken where necessary to obtain a response.

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 elecereg@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. The vast majority of postal voters in the Test Valley area were required to reapply by the end of January 2026.

Be a Councillor events

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

The sessions will give people the chance to find out what councillors do, how the role fits around work and family life, and how councillors help shape decisions in their communities.

The in-person event takes place from 6pm on Wednesday 28 October at Longstock Village Hall. An online event will follow at 7pm on Monday 2 November on Microsoft Teams.

The events are just 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.

Design team tender launched for South of Romsey Town Centre Regeneration

The next stage of the South of Romsey Town Centre regeneration project is now underway, with a tender launched to appoint a design team to help shape the scheme. The successful team will include architects, engineers and other specialists who will develop detailed proposals for a new community facility, bus station, public plaza, green space and decked car park.

The appointment builds on the extensive feasibility work and engagement already carried out by the Romsey Future partnership and the council. The successful design team is expected to begin work in January 2027.

Full details of the tender opportunity now available here: <https://uk.eu-supply.com/ctm/Supplier/PublicPurchase/109188/0/0?returnUrl=&b>.

Decision clears way for new riverside park in Andover town centre



Work to create a new riverside park in Andover town centre has taken a significant step forward after the Secretary of State for Transport gave approval for changes to be made to Western Avenue to facilitate the scheme.

The decision follows an independent inquiry held in public earlier this year. The inquiry was required as part of the statutory process after a handful of objections were received to the proposed

highway changes. It considered whether changes to the existing highway network, including the 'stopping up' of the eastern arm of Western Avenue and the introduction of two-way traffic on West Street, were necessary to enable the approved development to go ahead.

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-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>

Grants

Future of Andover Museum and Museum of the Iron Age secured thanks to funding package



£100,000 of funding to help secure the future of Andover Museum and the Museum of the Iron Age has been approved by Test Valley Borough Council.

The decision was made at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday 23 September and follows approval from Andover Town Council on 9 September to contribute a further £50,000.

The combined £150,000 funding will support the museum, operated by Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT), to remain open until at least March 2029.

The two councils have been working closely with HCT to identify a long-term solution that protects one of Andover's most valued cultural and heritage attractions after concerns about its future funding.

Romsey business powers ahead with solar innovation thanks to grant



A long-established Romsey business is investing in the future of energy management after receiving support from Test Valley Borough Council to install solar panels at its premises.

BPC Energy Ltd received a £3,900 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) solar grant towards the installation of a 48-panel solar PV array at its Romsey site. The system is generating enough electricity to supply the company's site and is currently exporting surplus to the grid.

However, BPC is now taking its investment a step further by creating an integrated solar, battery and energy management system. The company is installing significant battery storage capacity alongside an intelligent multi-power management station that will optimise how it uses and stores energy generated by the solar array. Once complete, the system will allow BPC to store energy and export it back to the grid during periods of high local or national demand.

Award-winning salon plans expansion with support from Business Incentive Grant



An award-winning hair salon near Stockbridge is expanding its services and creating local employment opportunities following support from Test Valley Borough Council's Business Incentive Grant.

Founded by Yasmin Saunders, **The Copper Barn Hair & Wellness Ltd** has quickly established a strong reputation among customers, offering a premium salon experience from a beautifully restored former agricultural building in a peaceful rural setting near Stockbridge.

Since launching the business, Yasmin has built a loyal client base through social media, word of mouth recommendations, and exceptional customer service. The salon's attractive surroundings, high-quality décor and free parking have proved popular with customers, helping the business grow rapidly.

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 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.

Mooch given fresh new look with Andover Town Centre Frontage Grant



A much-loved independent Andover business has been given a fresh new look thanks to support from our Andover Town Centre Frontage Grant scheme.

Founded by Georgina Roberts in 2004, Mooch has been part of Andover's independent retail scene for more than 20 years. Located on Bridge Street at the lower end of the High Street, the shop has built a loyal customer base through its distinctive collection of gifts, homewares and accessories, along with its commitment to friendly customer service and a welcoming shopping experience.

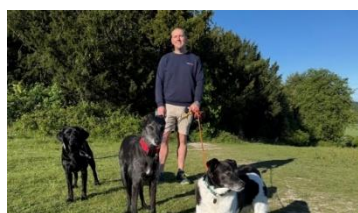
Business Incentive Grant helps Ori Healthcare grow local care services

A growing Test Valley care provider has received support from Test Valley Borough Council to help develop its business and expand the services it offers to local residents.

Ori Healthcare, based at Grateley Business Park, has been awarded a £750 Business Incentive Grant to support business expenses, including the purchase of more stocks of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Founded by registered nurse and forensic psychologist Fungisai Shumba, Ori Healthcare currently supports ten clients and employs seven members of staff.

The business provides a range of care services, including support for people living with dementia, those requiring palliative care, and individuals needing general social care support.



Grant helps growing dog boarding business expand in Test Valley

A dog boarding business has received support from Test Valley Borough Council to help continue to grow.

Paws & Reflect, based in Anna Valley, has been awarded a £750 Business Incentive Grant from the council. Set up by Charlie McCoy, the business provides small-scale dog boarding and day care services, with a focus on creating a calm and relaxed environment for every dog. Demand has grown steadily through word-of-mouth recommendations.

Other News

Hare Coursing in Rural Hampshire.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary has continued patrols and enforcement activity against hare coursing. Residents should report suspicious vehicles or activity, particularly groups entering fields with dogs, to the police. Call 999 where an offence is happening or there is an immediate risk; otherwise report through 101 or the police online reporting service. This can be extremely helpful, but nobody should put themselves at risk to obtain them.

U3A

Thursday 5th November at 2pm The A6 Murder

A talk by Paul Stickler

Paul is a retired detective who has written two books. He explores the detail behind some of the most fascinating cases in criminal history. He will tell us the story of the A6 murder that occurred in 1961.

Doors open at 1.40 pm for the presentation followed by refreshments.

New members are very welcome to attend our meetings.

U3A is a UK-wide network of groups that provides the opportunity to socialise and learn for fun. Find out more at: u3a.org.uk, or see the latest on our **Test Villages group** at: testvillages.u3asite.uk

Driving Ukraine

You are invited to Stockbridge Town Hall (Hurford Hall) on October 7th at 6 PM

A personal presentation by Hazel Still with video and photos to tell of this most moving experience

Tickets: £12 on the Door or www.tickettailor.com/events/hazelduncaninukraine/2370326

Free glass of wine. Soft drinks.

All welcome All proceeds to Driving Ukraine

Queen Elizabeth II sculpture unveiled at Romsey Abbey



A new life-size bronze sculpture of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been unveiled at Romsey Abbey, providing a lasting tribute to the late monarch and her special connections to the town.

The artwork was officially unveiled on Friday (4 September) by the Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire alongside the Countess Mountbatten of Burma during a ceremony attended by residents, community representatives and invited guests. The event included live music, speeches and an exhibition showcasing the story behind the sculpture's creation.

Battery and Vape Recycling



Please help us spread the word about the importance of recycling batteries, vapes and electrical items correctly following a recent fire in one of our 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. We believe 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. Please do not place batteries, vapes, phones, laptops or other electrical items in their household bins.

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

More information about local recycling options is available on the [Hampshire County Council website](#).

Successful prosecution follows Clatford fly-tipping investigation A successful investigation by Test Valley Borough Council has led to two men being prosecuted for a fly-tipping offence near Andover. Aidan Molumby and Adam Heaver appeared before Basingstoke Magistrates' Court on 4 September after admitting illegally dumping a large concrete block in Watery Lane, Clatford, in January 2025.



Council officers discovered the waste during a routine inspection and used CCTV footage and further enquiries to identify those responsible. Both men later admitted the offence during interviews under caution. The court ordered the pair to pay a combined total of £2,866. The case demonstrates the council's commitment to investigating fly-tipping incidents and taking enforcement action Against offenders to help protect the borough's environment and communities.

Another fly-tipping prosecution

A man has been ordered to pay more than £1,300 after admitting to fly-tipping in Andover. On 4 and 5 August 2025, the council received reports about waste dumped in Pasture Walk, Andover. The rubbish included broken furniture, a mattress, a fridge freezer and a chest freezer.

An investigation showed that a nearby property had been recently vacated and the occupier, Joshua Scarlett, admitted to leaving the waste outside the home to be collected but it wasn't removed. On 24 July 2026 at Southampton Magistrates' Court, Mr Scarlett was fined £425 and ordered to pay £947 in costs. Residents can report fly-tipping online at www.testvalley.gov.uk/fly-tipping.

Stockbridge Community Cinema

Friday 16 October, 7.30pm The Secret Agent (15)



In 1977, in a Brazil still torn apart by military dictatorship, the story of Marcelo comes to life. A forty-year-old teacher who, leaving behind a troubled past, arrives in the city of Recife hoping to build a new life and reconnect with his family. Upon arriving, he quickly realises that the new city is very different from the idyllic refuge he hoped to find.

A tense and gripping tale of surveillance, paranoia, and the shadows of power.

Wednesday 21 October, 5.00pm and 7.30pm My Mother's Wedding (15)

The film follows three sisters who return to their childhood home for a momentous weekend: the third wedding of their twice-widowed mother, Diana Frost (Kristin Scott Thomas). Over the weekend, the family gathers to celebrate the new marriage, but mother and daughters alike are forced to revisit the past and confront the future, all with help from a colourful group of unexpected wedding guests.

Friday 6 November, 7.30pm The Love That Remains (15) 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.

Wednesday 11 November, 4.45pm and 7.30pm Tuner (15) 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.

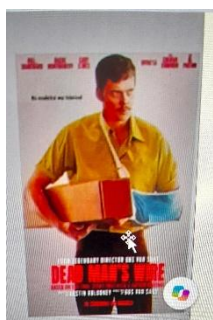
Tickets £6. www.stockbridgecinema.org.uk

Sombornes Community Cinema King's Somborne Village Hall

Dead Man's Wire

Thursday 8th October

History, Crime, Drama 1h 44m



A dramatic true story in 1977 disgruntled real estate developer Tony Kirtsis takes mortgage broker Richard Hall hostage demanding an apology and cancellation of a debt. While tired up in his own apartment a tense 63-hour ordeal unfolds between the two as the authorities try to diffuse the standoff.

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
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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