

Hampshire County Councillor Update 16

I hope you have enjoyed the summer. The hot weather seems to have brought autumn forward a little, if only in the sense of early crops of fruit and leaf drop from trees. Here's September's County Councillor update.

Highways Information

Roadworks in Romsey - Winchester Road from Plaza Roundabout to Cupernham Lane

Although not in Romsey Rural, these works will affect anyone travelling through Romsey, so I want to give you (very) early warning of the closure of Winchester Road between the Plaza roundabout and Cupernham Lane for up to 14 weeks between January and April 2023.

The condition of Winchester road from the Plaza roundabout to the Sun arch is a regular feature of comments on my timeline, messages I receive and conversations I have locally. That section of road has long been on the list for resurfacing and indeed that work was due to be undertaken in the next couple of months.

I'm afraid now that won't be happening. Southern Water have given notice that they intend to install a new sewer along the length of the road.

Winchester Road will therefore be CLOSED for a period of up to 14 weeks between the Plaza Roundabout and Cupernham Lane. The provisional start date for these works is January 9th 2023 and the closure is anticipated to be in place until just after Easter, April 14th 2023.

This part of town was one of those worst affected by the floods in 2014. Consequently, as part of the flood alleviation works around Romsey the sewer needs to be renewed and enlarged to ensure there is no repeat of that flooding.

As soon as the sewer is installed Hampshire Highways will then resurface the road. That work will hopefully be completed without a complete closure, but works are likely to continue, largely overnight, for a further couple of weeks at least.

I hope you understand that there is no point doing the resurfacing now only for that to be dug up by Southern Water within three months.

I recognise that the closure is likely to cause very severe disruption around the rest of the town and challenges for the residents who live along and off this stretch of Winchester Road. Access will be maintained for them.

Councillor Mark Cooper and I are pressing for both clarity around those access plans and, much more importantly, for the length of the closure to be kept to an absolute minimum. I have to say 14 weeks seems an inordinately long period to carry out work of this type. I will of course keep you informed as further details emerge.

Hampshire Highways figures for July

Here's the Hampshire Highways update for June, almost 3,000 potholes and other defects fixed across Test Valley last month.

Highways Maintenance Newsletter

August 2022



Summer is the most opportune time for implementing much of our planned highway maintenance programme since, generally speaking, the county usually enjoys sustained periods of dry weather and longer hours of daylight. Through Operation Resilience, our programme of planned structural maintenance, our aim is to ensure that the highway network can more effectively withstand the adverse impacts of extremes in weather and increasing volumes of traffic. With 5,500 of highways to maintain, this is an ongoing challenge but having a longer

term programme in place, with an additional £10 million invested each year by the County Council over and above the grant funding we receive from the Department for Transport, means that we are in a better position than many authorities to effectively manage our local network. Without doubt, the heatwave has been a challenging test of our roads' resilience in extreme temperatures. Road temperatures can be considerably hotter than the air temperatures and once surface temperatures exceed 50 degrees Celsius the risk of softening increases, particularly

on older surfaces. However, modern bitumens are much more resilient to high temperatures so, as expected, most of our network was able to cope without any issues, with just a few localised incidents (fewer than 10) of 'softening' road surfaces by sending out our winter gritters to deposit a fine dusting of sand where needed.

Do remember that the most efficient and effective route for notifying us of problems on a Hampshire road, is online at hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance

Countywide Statistics for July 2022

366

Emergencies attended

35,595

Square metres of carriageway resurfacing

10

Operation Resilience schemes completed

14,657

Gullies and other drainage cleared

270,530

Square metres of surface dressing and micro asphalt

139

Arboriculture jobs completed

2,801

Square metres of footway repaired/resurfaced

10,520

Carriageway defects repaired (including potholes)

573

Other Jobs completed (outside of all works shown)



Test Valley Statistics

for July 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



2,498



Gullies and other drainage cleared

41,226



Square metres of surface dressing and micro asphalt

11



Arboriculture jobs completed

53



Square metres of footway repaired/resurfaced

4,376



Carriageway defects repaired (including potholes)

68



Other Jobs completed (outside of all works shown)



A3057 Update

The works to the A3057 between Greatbridge and Kings Somborne have now been completed for this year.

The structural condition of the road (not the surface) differed in different sections.

Three sections were in need of the entire surface being replaced, these were from Yokesford Hill through Timsbury to the New Road junction. From Mesh Road to the entrance to Lower Brook House and from the northern Horsebridge Road junction to Cox Drove Hill in Kings Somborne.

In three, the underlying structure remained sound, so patching has taken place, these being from Greatbridge to Yokesford Hill. From New Road in Timsbury to the junction with Mesh Road and from Lower Brook through to the northern Horsebridge Road junction.

Next year the teams will return to apply a surface dressing so the section matches the stretch between Kings Somborne and Stockbridge.

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.

Lords Wood, Chilworth anti social behaviour issues

I've been progressing action to address the problems of both motorbikes and other vehicles accessing Lords Wood through Chilworth Drove. The latter being used to dump at least two fly tips in recent months.

Last month I walked the woods with our local manager from Hampshire Countryside Service to see if there was any additional action we could take.

Two positives, the first is that the police and Forestry England seem to have placed signs throughout the woods warning of their interest in the anti social activity. Not a deterrent in itself, but a sign of them taking the issue more seriously, thanks to Test Valley Cops for their help with this.

Secondly, and more importantly. We discussed ways by which we could stop vehicles accessing the permissive by way. The challenge is that it needs to remain open for carriages but can be blocked for motor vehicles. HCC have agreed to put in place a 'coach barrier' at the beginning of the byway where it leaves the lane to the kennels.

Essentially these are large posts over which a coach and horses could drive, but which would block the entry of the vast majority of motor vehicle. Won't stop the motorbikes I'm afraid, but will stop any access by 4 wheel drives and vans.

I've agreed that I will discuss with Chilworth Parish Council at their September meeting to confirm this is the correct location and also check whether there are any other accesses to the woods where one might be needed. (On the County side).



Successful fly-tipping prosecution

August is traditionally quiet from a prosecution perspective for Test Valley Borough Council, but there has been one prosecution taken to court this month. Once again, we have brought those who blight our lovely area with their rubbish to justice.

More than £1,500 in fines and costs has been handed down after garden waste and household rubbish was found along Newbury Lane, Andover, last summer.

Michael Cole, now of Bromley, Kent, and Gemma Long, of Andover, both admitted dumping of garden waste, a car stereo, fast food wrappers and cans last June.



Mr Cole, 29, had been running a garden waste collection business, and pleaded guilty to the offence after an investigation by Test Valley Borough Council.

Ms Long, 37, initially said that she had paid a man £10 to get rid of the waste and therefore wasn't responsible. She even gave a description of this person, before later admitting she made the whole thing up and indeed dumped the waste herself.

At Basingstoke Magistrates Court, they were both fined £480, made to pay £48 victim surcharge, with the costs divided between them at £289.46 each, totaling £1,634.92. People often come up with excuses or falsehoods to avoid paying for their actions. However, as usual, our environmental and legal teams have worked together to ensure those responsible are held to account, and that the clean-up bill for this selfish act isn't passed on to our taxpayers.

As always, my thanks go to our brilliant investigation officers and I hope that this day in court serves as a further deterrent to those who think they can openly flout the law when it suits them.

Council Tax Energy Rebate - Make sure you claim yours

Over the past few months, we've been working hard to get the £150 council tax/energy rebate out to thousands of eligible households across the Test Valley Borough Council area.

 We have already paid the rebate to households where we have bank details on file. We have also written directly to households where we don't have bank details with instructions on what to do.

 However, time is running out. The government have stipulated that councils only have until the end of September to resolve any outstanding applications.

 Therefore, anyone who thinks they are eligible and has not received a rebate payment or a letter requesting their bank details, should contact the council this week (or certainly by the 9th September). By calling 01264 368000 (Andover) or 01794 527700 (Romsey) and selecting option one. Alternatively, you can reach us online at testvalley.gov.uk/ContactRevenues

You can check if you are eligible by visiting testvalley.gov.uk/energybillsrebate

Remember too that Test Valley has set up a Cost of Living Support Hub. Details of which can be found at - testvalley.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport



The graphic features a blue background with a yellow envelope icon containing green banknotes. Below the icon, the text reads '£150 COUNCIL TAX REBATE' in large white letters. At the bottom, it says 'Visit www.testvalley.gov.uk/energybillsrebate' and includes the Test Valley Borough Council logo.

TVBC launches Cost of Living Support Hub

The impact inflationary pressures are having on hard-pressed residents is something that's at the forefront of our minds at the moment - and although it's incumbent on national government to offer more assistance to those that need it, TVBC's administration has been concentrating on what we can do locally.

So recently a special meeting of the Test Valley Partnership was held, jointly hosted by both the Conservative administration and Lib Dem opposition on the Council - it focused solely on the cost of living.

Working cross-party to help those who are struggling. The meeting provided a platform for partner organisations to discuss what we are all already doing, identify any gaps and determine what else we can do to assist.

We are currently working up an action plan to help people further but one of the first things we've done is create the Test Valley Cost of Living Support Hub. A dedicated page on the council's website which gives advice on the help and support already available. Making sure people who are eligible are claiming everything to which they are entitled, links to local community pantries, advice on energy bills and much more.

The link to it is here: testvalley.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport

The graphic features a dark blue curved header with the text 'Cost of living support' in white. Below this, the text 'Find information on:' is followed by three icons: a lightbulb, puzzle pieces in speech bubbles, and a calculator. Each icon has a corresponding text label below it. At the bottom, the website URL and the Test Valley Borough Council logo are displayed.

Cost of living support

Find information on:

-  Help for households
-  Advice if you're in debt
-  Benefits calculators

www.testvalley.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport

Test Valley Borough Council

County Councillor Grants

The grant system is back up and running and I've made my first grants for this financial year. To the Romsey Show (hope to see any of you there on September 10th), to Hampshire Youth Orchestra towards the costs of local members and to Baby Necessities, a charity based on the Abbey industrial estate which supports families with equipment for new-borns who are facing financial challenges

Getting About

I've spent much of my summer getting to grips with my highways role, which has meant trips out of the area to see colleagues in other parts of the county. A really worthwhile activity for me, but also one that has helped me by giving me a chance to see other areas and what works well and does not in them.

Additionally, I've been along to Parish Council meetings in Chilworth and Romsey Extra

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

