

Update from your Hampshire County Councillor – Feb 2023

Greetings to the Executive Officers, Staff and Members of Bramshott and Liphook, Headley, and Grayshott Parish Councils. I hope this report finds you well. Apologies for its brevity on local matters. As you know I was in South Africa in January but that didn't stop residents "finding" me!

Local Activities

Street Cleaning

An issue reported to me by residents from all **3 parishes** has been leaves and debris blocking drains and covering footpaths. This has been made worse by recent storms, flooding and the late fall of leaves this winter. Street sweeping, and pavement clearance is the District Council responsibility. Drain clearance is HCC Highways. This is confirmed by EHDC website [Litter and dog fouling | East Hampshire District Council \(easthants.gov.uk\)](https://www.easthants.gov.uk/litter-and-dog-fouling). So please report street cleaning requirements via your MyEHDC account:

<https://my.easthants.gov.uk/services/report/road-sweeping-and-litter>

Bramshott & Liphook

Whilst away, I became aware, thanks to social media, of traffic chaos in **The Square**, with 50 min delays, due to road closures and diversions required to enable the roll out of Swish fibre. I reported this to Highways Operations who alerted the Streetworks team who manage and license 3rd party work on the highway. I am advised that Swish are now required to liaise with Bramshott and Liphook Parish Council on their work schedule in the village.

I have also escalated damage to the amenity strip on **Haslemere Road** to the Streetworks team, following work performed by Swish's subcontractor. Many thanks to the resident who reported this and his photos.

Potholes that were repaired late last year have reopened on **Woolmer Lane, Bramshott**. I have escalated this matter to Highways as some of them are now craters!

Our Safer Roads Officer and I met with residents in **Conford** to discuss potential traffic calming measures to deter speeding following an incident when a little girl was clipped by a car. Whilst there I noted large delivery vans taking up the full width of the narrow lane. I suggested that residents might a) include a special delivery instruction with their order to drive carefully through Conford and b) let other residents know on social media when a heavy load is expected.

I was delighted to advise **Passfield** residents that following lobbying by our Safer Roads Officer, the need for traffic calming measures on the B3004 "straight" will be included in a larger, funded, HCC scheme for Headley Road.

Grayshott

I was shocked to read of the accident on **Headley Road**, outside the Fox and Pelican in the 20mph zone, and hope that no one was seriously hurt. Highways have ordered a replacement yellow reflective traffic bollard, which disappeared in 2018, on the B3002 build out as requested by Katie, our Parish Clerk.

Headley

After several months of waiting for a response, I was pleased to advise a resident that Highways will be attending to the dangerous and unsightly footpath and steps on **Southview Road**.

I was pleased to be able to help a Headley resident secure a funded place at a care home for their elderly mother, changing a decision previously made by Adult Services that she should return home.

A new resident to our lovely part of Hampshire is concerned that motorists do not respect the 30mph speed limit through **Headley Down**. I have taken this to our Safer Roads Officer to discuss what measures could possibly be taken.

Councillor Grants

My grant pot for 22/23 is now completely committed. Many thanks to all of you who encouraged local organisations and groups to apply in the last few weeks. I had a flurry of applications and unfortunately some came too late. My 23/24 pot will be available for applications at the end of May.

Please encourage local organisations with a project that will benefit members of our community to apply EARLY: [County Councillor grants | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/councillor-grants)

News from Hampshire County Council (HCC)

£2.6bn spending programme for 2023/24

HCC's spending plans for 2023/24 are to be considered this month by the cabinet and then by full council. The plans total £2.6bn and cover the hundreds of services delivered by the council to its 1.4 million residents, including supporting its most vulnerable children and adults.

The capital budget proposals will also be considered, with building and infrastructure projects totalling £645.3m over the next three years to be approved. The proposed three-year programme includes:

- £175m investment in new and extended school buildings to provide school places for children in Hampshire, delivering a further 4,393 school places and giving a total of 18,874 new school places by September 2025.
- £142m for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges.
- £103m of Integrated Transport Plan schemes including £58m of schemes focused around walking and/or cycling improvements
- £100m to address condition-based enhancements to schools.
- An additional £0.3m funding towards the County Council's Flood Risk and Coastal Defence Programme as part of HCC's response to the challenge of climate change.

A final decision on the County Council's budget for 2023/24 will be made by the full County Council on 23 February 2023.

County Deal update

The government has welcomed the proposals put forward by HCC and others for a Pan-Hampshire County Deal, including a directly elected mayor and extensive devolution from central government down to the local area. The next stage is for government officials to meet with upper tier and unitary authorities across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight this month, including to explore how the proposals might be taken forward as part of their next wave of negotiations.

The proposals put forward can be seen at <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s100275/Pan-Hampshire%20Deal%20Prospectus%202022.pdf>

Major investment in Hampshire Schools

On 12 January 2023 the Exec. Member for Children's Services Cllr Edward Heron approved a total planned investment programme in Hampshire schools of £221m over the next three years. The programme includes a number of proposed school expansions; projects for special schools, early years settings and children's social care; as well as other improvements and modernisations across existing buildings.

Ongoing pressure for school places is largely driven by major new housing developments. Additionally, there has been a substantial increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who need a specialist school place. The proposed capital programme includes plans for new schools linked to new housing developments, and a number of special school projects, to respond effectively to demand and ensure that sufficient school places remain available, in line with our statutory duties as a County Council.

National Education Union Industrial Action

You will be aware that the National Education Union is taking industrial action today (1 February) as part of a dispute with the Government regarding pay.

Any decisions to close schools as a result of striking are for individual Headteachers to make and will be based on their ability to open the school safely, and to maintain a full or revised curriculum.

Schools have been advised to declare closures using HCC's emergency closure system, where you will see a number of schools have already notified HCC of their plans to close:

[Emergency school closures, college and children's centres closures in Hampshire | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Increased police numbers announced

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and Isle of Wight, Donna Jones, has presented her budget plan for the years 2023-24. She had previously pledged to increase police numbers by 600 and is on track to recruit these by the end of March this year. Her new budget has added an additional 50 officers to these numbers, to be funded through the police precept of council tax

HCC extends its support for Community Energy projects

A grant of £100,000 has been awarded by HCC to Community Energy South (CES), ensuring continued support to resident groups, helping them develop and manage community-based renewable energy projects in Hampshire. The funding will be available over the next two years as part of the Authority's activity to support the county to become Carbon Neutral by 2050 and be resilient to a two degree rise in temperature.

Further support includes a revolving community energy fund which can invest up to £25,000 in any individual community project in Hampshire. Any profits are reinvested to support further community

schemes. Communities interested in generating renewable energy can find out more at [Community energy | Hampshire County Council](#)

Renewable energy currently generated in Hampshire is only 5% of the total used, so there is a sizeable opportunity to generate local, low carbon energy.

The funding awarded to CES will enable them to train and guide a growing number of Hampshire communities who want to come together to buy, manage, and generate low carbon heat and power. Examples of ways this might be achieved could include setting up a residents' home energy advice service or building community solar power facilities.

News from Highways

The bad weather we have all experienced this month has provided many challenges to Hampshire Highways, especially from blocked drains, flooding and potholes. Even though the weather has improved recently with the water tables falling, the overnight freezing temperatures have exacerbated the pothole situation with many more now appearing, and particularly in the rural areas.

Service demand across the highways service remains extremely high with demand far exceeds capacity at the present time and consequently all work is having to be prioritised so that the highest risk issues are repaired first. This includes the use of temporary 'infill' repairs to remove major potholes, these can then be addressed on a longer lasting basis later.

The outlook for this month is also unfavourable, with the Met Office suggesting that the weather is likely to be unsettled, with the potential for more periods of stormy conditions - potentially like those we experienced in February 2022 - and some further colder/wintry spells. One of the priorities now is therefore ditch and grip clearance to help alleviate surface water flooding and ice problems in at risk areas.

Please do continue to report highways issues online. A reminder that the number to call in emergency is 0300 555 1388 (0830-1700) Monday to Friday, or outside officer hours, 101.

20mph zones in Hampshire

I attended the Transport and Environment Select Committee of Hampshire County Council last month, where the outcomes of the Task and Finish Group on the introduction of 20mph zones in Hampshire were discussed.

There are a number of recommendations in the report, which suggest various criteria for consideration if we are introduce 20mph zones more widely.



The Task and Finish Group report can be read here [Future of 20mph Speed Limit Schemes-2023-01-23-USTE Select Cttee \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Potholes

It's the time of year when we begin to see many more potholes forming on Hampshire's Roads.

Potholes form for many reasons, hydraulic action, structural weakness, subsoil movement for example. At this time of year though, and particularly after the range of weather we've had in the last fortnight, they are more likely to form.

Water penetrates cracks in the surface of the road during rain, when it freezes it expands, causing the structure to break down, and as vehicles pass over it that weakness gets worse until such time as the surface breaks away creating the pothole.

Hampshire Highways can't fix them unless we know about them, so PLEASE, if you see a pothole in your road or when you are out and about, take a few moments to report it to the [Hampshire County Council](https://www.hants.gov.uk/.../roadma.../roadproblems/potholes) online system. The link to do so is here: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/.../roadma.../roadproblems/potholes>

Reporting it here is the best way to ensure it is fixed as quickly as possible.

We prioritise the busiest routes first when fixing issues, so if it's a minor road it may take a longer to get to it, but we will fix it. A full list of where to report various issues to HCC is below as always.

Clearing ditches

A significant problem with many of our roads recently has been the exceptionally high ground water levels. Where there are ditches, they have often been full with ground water seepage and therefore unable to take rainwater run-off.

I've had loads of comments along the lines of "this wouldn't be happening if the drainage were better" over the last few weeks, in relation to the road problems we are encountering. I hope it's helpful therefore to explain what the situation is.

The sustained rain of the last couple of months has meant that ground water levels are exceptionally high. That means that the ground can hold no more water and explains why water is running along and across roads in many places and standing in the fields.

Ditches are designed largely to take water off surrounding surfaces, some drain into nearby water courses, but many hold it while it soaks into the soil. If, however ground water levels are high then that happens far less quickly, if at all, and indeed the ditches can fill with ground water without run off. That is what has been happening in a lot of places and explains much of the standing water on the roadside.

The purpose of drainage is of course to take the water away and in very many places it successful. The late leaf fall didn't help us this year coming as it did halfway through the gully clearing programme.

Finally, you might reasonably say 'stop filling in ditches' - I wish we had the power to stop landowners doing so, sadly we don't. We just have to deal with the consequences when they do.

Ground Water flooding – Salt Wicks

Ground water flooding remains a concern locally, particularly if the cold weather returns next week as forecast. In addition to gritting the highways and spot salting, our teams have also been busy going out

around Hampshire deploying salt wicks. You might wonder what that is, so here is a description of a salt wick.



Salt wick

A salt wick is a hessian bag filled with salt placed in or near water on the highway to stop the water from freezing.



Drain cover thefts

Road users across Hampshire are being urged to be vigilant after a recent spate of drain cover thefts - leaving deep openings in the road surface which could cause a potential hazard to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, and also result in significant expense to council taxpayers. To report a missing cover, please call the number given above or report it to the police online at <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

Lengthsman Funding

I am advised that the Funding to Parishes for the Lengthsman Scheme will continue for the coming financial year 2023/24. This follows the extension of the Milestone contract and an agreement for them to provide funding for this. The Lengthsman scheme is a good example of successful joined-up government in Hampshire, and I am delighted that it will continue

Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues:

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>

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

Please go to [one. network](#) to find out who is digging up your road, why and for how long.

FINALLY! Organising a Coronation Big Lunch Street party in your neighbourhood on Sunday 7 May?

You can now sign up for a FREE event pack full of ideas to make your local celebration one to remember. If you'd like to close off your road to traffic during your celebrations, make sure you apply to EHDC for a temporary road closure licence as soon as you can. If bunting is a must for your celebration, check the rules online before you decorate the highways:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/licencesandpermits/banners>

FREE Coronation Big Lunch event pack – <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch>

I look forward to attending Parish Council meetings this month and taking any questions.

Kind regards – Debbie

8th Feb 2023

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