

## County Councillor's Report to Parishes January 2023: Happy New Year!

### **You may receive requests for help and advice from your residents in these challenging times.**

Citizens Advice provide an amazing service. Led by CEO Dr Claire Moriarty, and locally by Dr Sue Campbell, CA has good networks with HMRC, charity providers, including Cancer care, energy and housing providers etc and currently receives additional funding to cope with the heavy burden of inflation of food and energy costs for families and older people. Go to the 'get advice' tab for details of how to contact them, face to face time for calls & visits etc. <https://citizensadvicewinchester.org.uk>

### **Vaccinations and boosters for children**

Adults are usually invited for vaccination, but it's not so easy to know what to do for children who may not be vulnerable themselves but are in regular contact with someone who *is* medically vulnerable. I asked Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health. His advice is to call the NHS HIOW helpline **0300 561 0018** for details of all under 18's clinics. If you have any direct queries for Simon, he can be contacted on [simon.bryant@hants.gov.uk](mailto:simon.bryant@hants.gov.uk) or 0788 038 4032.

There are no current Winchester venues for infant boosters/vaccinations: I have asked for help with this from Simon.

### **New Directors are now in place at HCC**

Chief Executive: Carolyn Williamson

Adult Services: Graham Allen

Universal Services (including Highways) Patrick Blogg is the new Director. [Patrick.blogg@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.blogg@hants.gov.uk)

People & Organisation: Jac Broughton

Corporate Operations: Rob Carr

Hampshire 2050: Gary Westbrook

Children's Services: Steve Crocker

As is customary, Steve Crocker has written a blog part of which is shared at the end of this report: it shows how directorates are being expanded to accommodate the now defunct CCBS directorate, and the grace with which the additional responsibilities are being accepted.

### **Waste and recycling:**

#### **Change in arrangements for disposal of Upholstered Seating from Jan 2023.**

21/24 HWRC's will now have a separate skip in which upholstered seating will be collected for disposal by incineration. A full description of the reasons are on my website. One of the three sites which will not be accommodating this change is, as usual, Alresford. I will be asking if they expect this to change at the next HCC meeting, but it is principally because of Alresford's restricted size.

#### **Grants continue to be offered for start-up innovative recycling schemes.**

Go to [www.hants.gov.uk/waste-prevention-community](http://www.hants.gov.uk/waste-prevention-community) **THIS GRANT FUND CLOSSES** at 5pm, 10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023.

Potential applicants should contact the Waste Prevention team: [waste.prevention@hants.gov.uk](mailto:waste.prevention@hants.gov.uk) to arrange a discussion about their proposal before they apply.

**The M3 Junction 9 application (called a Development Consent Order, or DCO)** has been validated by the National Planning service. County councillors were briefed on the implications of construction diversions just before Christmas: inevitably, although diversions do not include the A33, it will affect traffic levels as drivers get used to taking the shortest route/using satnavs from Winchester 'Basingstoke & between.

There is no news (as hoped for) on the HHFT application for funding a new hospital/ repairs: maybe 2023?

**Road schemes are progressing albeit slowly.** I chase them regularly. I will outline schemes at each PC meeting, but overleaf is a link to FAQ's about seeking a licence to 'open' a footway, and how HCC deals with it.

PS : I have a confirmation from the Head of Service: there is **no plan to close Alresford Library.**

## Streetworks Team FAQ

Q: What is the Streetworks Team's role ?

A: The Streetworks team is responsible for the coordination of all works and events on the public highway in order to minimise traffic disruption. The Streetworks team also monitors utility Co's activities on the public highway and checks active work sites and reinstatements for compliance with National specifications. The legal basis for these responsibilities comes from the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). The StreetWorks team is not responsible for works off the public highway and enquiries about County Council works, S278 or S38 works should be directed to the County Council project manager or local area office. Enquiries about licenced works should be directed to HOC.

Q: Can utility companies legally work on the public highway ?

A: Yes, they have legal duties and rights to install and maintain apparatus in the public highway from NRSWA. However, they have to comply with National Specifications and obtain a permit from the County Council for planned works. NRSWA and other legislation gives them legal rights to install cabinets and masts (up to 15m high) on the public highway without planning permission.

Q: Can HCC stop a utility company working on the public highway ?

A: No, except under very specific circumstances, for example: were a utility company wants to install new apparatus on a highly important and strategic road that has been specifically designated, by law, as a protected street.

Q: What conditions can be placed on works on the public highway ?

A: The County Council can place conditions on any permit application. Conditions are used to try to minimise traffic disruption. The conditions available as part of the permit scheme are not 'free form' and are restricted to controls over works timing, works area, traffic management type and stakeholder engagement. Conditions have to be reasonable and be able to be met by the works promoter.

Q: Who decides what type of traffic management (TM) to use ?

A: The works promoter is entirely responsible for selecting the most appropriate type of TM. They are the experts in the works they are undertaking and what the risks are. In selecting the TM type they must consider the risks to the workforce, passing traffic (including pedestrians) and relevant legislation and Codes or Practice.

Q: Who decides what diversion routes to use when road closures are needed ?

A: The works promoter is entirely responsible for selecting an appropriate diversion route. Best practice is to ensure that the diversion route uses similar roads to those closed. Unfortunately the existing networks doesn't always permit this. Diversion routes are not enforceable.

Q: Who is responsible for the information provided on the permit ?

A: The works promoter is ALWAYS responsible for the information they supply. The County Council must assume that it is correct when assessing the permit and determining what conditions to apply. Ian Ackerman. December 2022

Q: Does granting a permit mean that the County Council approves of the works / installation ?

A: No, the permit relates ONLY to the works and its impact on traffic. Approval for installing apparatus is given either by a utility Co's legal rights, or via the local Planning Authority.

Q: I've seen a utility leave a blacktop reinstatement in a flagstone surface. Is this allowed ?

A: Yes, NRSWA allows utility Co's to use a temporary reinstatement in order to re-open a road quickly or to give them time to source specialist materials. Normally temporary reinstatements are allowed for up to 6 months, but this duration can be extended if needed for engineering purposes.

Q: How long is a utility company responsible for its reinstatement?

A: Legislation states that a utility company is liable for any 'reasonable' repairs for two years.

Q: How much notice does the County get for works ?

A: NRSWA requires all works promoters to submit permit applications between 3 working days and 3 months ahead of works starting. As follows;

- Minor works (works lasting up to 3 days) = 3 working days advance notice
- Standard works (works lasting between 4 and 10 days) = 10 working days advance notice
- Major works (works lasting over 10 days OR requiring a road closure) = 3 months
- Immediate works (relating to safety or loss of service) = No advance warning. Works are started and the County Council is alerted within 2 working hours.

Reduced advance warning periods can be agreed on a site by site basis.

Q: What penalties are applied for non-compliances ?

A: The penalties are prescribed by legislation and can broadly fit into one of the following categories:

- Failing to comply with permit conditions = Fixed Penalty Notice
- Failing to comply with works specifications = Correct the non-compliance
- Overrunning agreed works durations without a valid reason = Significant daily charge
- Damaging the public highway = County Council effects repairs and recharges utility co.

Ultimately a works promoter can be taken to court for any non-compliance. But such measures are reserved for extremely serious situations.

Q: How well do utility companies comply with specifications and permit conditions ?

A: Very well. In 2022 Over 95% of sites signage and 96% of reinstatements complied with the National specifications. 97% of utility sites comply with permit conditions. 99% of utility sites were completed on time, or early.

Q: How can I see what works are planned in the County ?

A: The County Council handles all permits via a National IT system. This system automatically publishes all permits on the <https://one.network> website

Q: How can I contact the Streetworks team about problems with utility works ?

A: The best way to report site specific problems is via the 'report a road problem' tab on the members portal. For more complex issues members should email [highways.dmt.correspondence@hants.gov.uk](mailto:highways.dmt.correspondence@hants.gov.uk). Using these facilities will help to ensure that the enquiry reaches the correct person in the StreetWorks team.

Q: How many utility works are undertaken on the County's network ?

A: in the 2021/2022 financial year we processed 52,000 permit applications / changes from utility co's which resulted in 36,000 works being undertaken.

Street works are managed by [Ian.Ackerman@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Ackerman@hants.gov.uk)

And as described  
above... Steve Crocker's  
blog in his role as  
Director of Children's  
Services

I am delighted to start the year by welcoming into our directorate the Hampshire Libraries Service; HC3S, which includes the largest school meal provider in the county; and County Supplies, the Authority's purchasing and supply business. All three join us from the former Culture, Communities and Business Services department. I very much look forward to working with each team to help them continue their positive work and develop into even stronger and more sustainable services for the future.

With the majority of their activity being with schools, both HC3S and County Supplies fit naturally into the Children's Services directorate and through their valuable services, help children and young people across Hampshire to get the very best start in life. HC3S supplies healthy, nutritious meals to 440 schools across Hampshire, helping children to make the most of their learning. Similarly, County Supplies offers a wide range of products to almost every school in the county, supporting us in our commitment to provide high-quality, well resourced, learning environments that are well-equipped to meet children's needs.

Like both HC3S and County Supplies, our library service also provides a dedicated service for schools and furthermore, shares a commitment to lifelong learning and skills that resonates with the values held by Children's Services. We know however, that the importance of libraries goes far beyond books and that these are places where community connections can be forged, and vital support accessed. Indeed, we have seen the incredible response of libraries to the rising cost of living, as they have opened their doors to give a warm welcome to those in need.

In Children's Services, we continue to roll out support to the most vulnerable through our Household Support Funding from central Government. In this work we recognise the importance of partners, who know their communities so well and are often best placed to direct support to where it is needed most. On that note, I know that libraries have a valuable role to play in helping us to extend support even more widely and in being another set of trusted eyes and ears on the ground. All 40 libraries have recently been granted the national Library of Sanctuary Award for their work to provide a safe sanctuary to people from across our communities including, most recently, families from Ukraine.

I am genuinely excited about the many opportunities presented by bringing these services into the fold of Children's Services. There will be a busy few weeks and months ahead as we explore how best to maximise those areas of work that are already clearly dovetailed, as well as how to introduce greater collaboration elsewhere.

Of course, I understand that change of any kind can also be met with apprehension and here I want to offer a word of reassurance. We will make every effort to ensure a smooth transition to avoid or minimise any disruption to staff and residents, and ensure that the needs of Hampshire's children and young people remain front and centre as always.