

## Hampshire County Councillor: Whitchurch and the Cleres.

Tom Thacker

### Annual Parish Meeting Report 2021

**Facts and Figures** Hampshire's population is **1,376,300** (2018) the third most populous county in England (85% is rural). Hampshire CC maintains **5400** miles of roads.

The Hampshire County Council set up a helpline **0333 370 4000** for frail or vulnerable residents who do not have support from families, friends or their local community, and who need urgent assistance with essential food or household supplies, collection of medication, or who are at risk of loneliness.

#### **HCC will spend £2.1 billion on local services in 2021/22**

Plans for the next financial year focus on the county's ongoing work associated with the **pandemic, support for vulnerable children and adults, investment in Hampshire's roads and infrastructure to support economic recovery, as well as climate change mitigation.**

The annual council tax charge for a Band D property will be £1,350.45 – an increase of £1.23 per week, equating to 4.99%, of which 3% is for adults' social care – a Government request. The budget includes **£13 million** for the maintenance of 5,500 miles of roads and an extra £1.2 million in carbon reduction measures across the County Council. **HCC's four-year capital programme of £744 million is one of the largest in the country.**

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/25022021HCCbudgetdecisionFeb2021>

The proposed capital programme includes: • **£68 million** in new and extended school buildings to ensure there is a school place for every child in Hampshire • **£118 million** for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire over the next three years • **£91 million** for integrated transport schemes including over **£18 million** specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements • **£141 million** for major improvement of school and other County Council buildings and land holdings over the next three years • **£33 million** for decarbonisation schemes covering solar PV, single to double glazing window replacements, transition from oil to gas and the implementation of heating controls.

#### **Climate Change**

Hampshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019 and has been taking active steps to ensure Hampshire is resilient to climate change and in mitigating further changes through carbon reduction measures.

Two targets have been set for the County Council, and these also apply to Hampshire as a whole by 2050:

- be Carbon neutral
  - be resilient to the impacts of temperature rise of up to 2°C.

HCC's own emissions have reduced by more than 43%, with more than a 50% reduction by 2025 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

The **2050 Hampshire Commission of Enquiry** placed climate change and the environment as its top priority.

In the budget HCC pledged £2m towards climate change measures in addition to the capital schemes outlined above.

At a household level HCC is supporting the county-wide Greening Campaign (aims to find simple solutions around reducing and measuring power consumption, insulating housing stock, reducing water usage, sourcing local food, community travel and renewable energy schemes), the Help line, Solar Buy-in scheme and community energy projects.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange>

A resident has asked specific questions about vehicle charging in rural areas.

What is the plan for the provision of public charging points? There is an urban pilot scheme currently under way in Winchester and Eastleigh. The council is not currently considering installing on-street charge points elsewhere within the county.

In 2030 there will be a national ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles. HCC has a web page for information on electric vehicle matters:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/electric-vehicles>

There you can complete an EV demand survey and get guidance on charging in Hampshire.

The council has issued guidelines for on-street charging outside the home:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/electric-vehicles/ev-charging-guidance>

The gist is that you do not need a licence to run a cable from your cable to the car and if running it across a pavement or pathway, it should be safe – cable protector channels are recommended.

Who is responsible? There is no clear answer. National government, local government, vehicle manufacturers, petrol station operators and electricity companies all play a role.

Finally, there is a web site that lists EV charging points around the Newbury area:

<https://www.zap-map.com/locations/newbury-charging-points/>

## **West Berks HWRC**

There is much concern in East Woodhay, Ecchinswell, Burghclere, Highclere and Kingsclere about Hampshire residents being granted continued access by West Berks Council to its site at Newbury. HCC does not own the West Berks site, so the decision cannot rest with HCC.

Four years ago, I and my fellow County Councillor, Derek Mellor, persuaded Hampshire County Council to come to an arrangement with West Berks to allow Hampshire residents, who live within a certain radius of the Newbury site, to receive permits to use the site, at a cost to Hampshire taxpayers of about £180,000 per annum. This was a temporary arrangement that was designed to give a breathing space for West Berks to introduce a pay to visit system and which ended last year. That arrangement was extended a further year, following representation from me and my colleague Derek Mellor, with Basingstoke borough and Hampshire collaborating and sharing the costs required by West Berks.

### **Current situation**

I know that the temporary agreement is due to come to an end on 31 July 2021 and I appreciate the concerns of East Woodhay residents. Throughout the last few months, I have communicated with the Executive Member with responsibility for waste and recycling about access to Newtown Road, finding a suitable alternative permanent solution, should West Berks and Hampshire fail to reach a long term agreement.

The executive member wrote to me on Friday that Hampshire County is currently in discussions with West Berkshire Council regarding Hampshire residents' access to the Newtown Road HWRC.

He also confirmed that the investigation into the feasibility of the potential recycling centre site near Kingsclere is progressing, and he is considering a recommendation on 17 June. He has not shared what may or may not be in the recommendation.

I have told the cabinet member, (the Executive Member), that I want the current temporary arrangements to continue for the residents, who currently are eligible for the pass for Newtown Road, until such a permanent solution is found.