

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
TO
ALL PARISH COUNCILS
IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS
1 DECEMBER 2022**

1. Highways preparedness

A lot of work has gone into ensuring that Hampshire Highways are fully prepared for the winter. Salting crews are on standby and salt stores are full. Arboriculture teams are also on standby to clear trees. It is crucial that we keep our roads clear so that residents can get to work, school and college safely, as well as travel for their essential shopping needs.

Heavy, intense rainfall can result in localised flooding, and trying to keep surface water off Hampshire's 5,500 miles of road surfaces is at the forefront of our highways preventive maintenance work throughout the year.

Since January, the service's year-round maintenance programme has seen the cleaning and clearance of over 107,500 roadside gullies and 22,500 metres of linear drainage, 10,076 catchpits (chambers near to the carriageway that act like gullies and from which silt has to be cleared) and nearly 16,000 intercepting ditches (known as grips, which generally run between the road and adjacent ditch and help prevent surface water from pooling on the road), as well as the completion of 13 major drainage improvement schemes across the county.

We have achieved this despite a reduction in real-terms funding brought about by inflation. I would also like to mention that Hampshire Highways won two awards at the National Highways Awards last month: the Environmental Sustainability Award and the Judges' Special Merit Award.

Parish Councils play an incredibly important role in keeping our roads clear by reporting issues to us as they happen. We are very grateful to you all for this – please keep it up.

The direct 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>

When reporting an issue, you will 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.

2. Arts Council boosts funding to Hampshire

In its latest round of funding, which was announced on 4 November, the Arts Council has increased their funding to Hampshire arts organisations to £1.9m. Ten organisations in Hampshire will receive annual funding from 2023-2026 to deliver access to high-quality cultural experiences and provide the opportunity for everyone to engage in arts, culture and creativity. These organisations will deliver projects linked to theatre, music, heritage, arts and dance across the County.

One of the organisations to receive new funding is in East Hampshire: the Phoenix Theatre will receive £81,000 annually for the three years of the funding period. The package also includes £0.5m for the Hampshire Cultural Trust which runs museums across Hampshire including two in East Hampshire.

Arts are a key part of our community vibrancy and our quality of life. The boost to arts funding is also good for the economy as many jobs will be safeguarded or created by this funding.

3. The Miyawaki method of tree planting

HCC has joined forces with the Tree Council to plant our first mini-forest on the Adhurst estate (in Sheet) using the Miyawaki method. We are very grateful to all the allotment holders on the estate who have helped with the planting.



Akira Miyawaki was a Japanese botanist and an expert in plant ecology who specialized in seeds and natural forests. He was active worldwide as a specialist in natural restoration of degraded land.

Miyawaki developed a method of planting trees which achieves growth **ten times faster than normal planting** on an area usually around the size of a tennis court. The method involves careful soil preparation: first you aerate the soil and then add some mulch. The method then involves densely planting a range of native woodland trees. As well as creating faster growth, this method is also proven to be more beneficial to wildlife.

At HCC we intend to plant more mini-forests using the Miyawaki method and so please do contact us at treeplanting@hants.gov.uk if you know of a suitable location.

4. Extra payments for Homes for Ukraine hosts

Hampshire County Council is to make additional Christmas payments to Homes for Ukraine hosts and guests. HCC will be making an extra one-off £250 payment to Hampshire residents hosting Ukrainian guests as part of the Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme this Christmas, and £200 per Ukrainian guest to support them over the holiday period

We remain hugely grateful to the local hosts who continue to provide a safe haven for more than 1,300 Ukrainian families across our county. The county of Hampshire has welcomed the third highest number of Ukrainian nationals in England, which I think is a record we can be proud of.

The new payments will be distributed in mid-December and will be funded via the grant paid to upper tier local authorities to specifically support implementation of the Homes for Ukraine scheme locally. This funding is ring-fenced and cannot be used for any other purpose.

The new payments are in addition to the extra £200 discretionary payment being paid per month over a five-month period to local hosts by the County Council.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers