

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
TO
ALL PARISH COUNCILS
IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS**

2 MARCH 2023

1. HCC Budget update

A Council Tax increase of 5% was formally approved by HCC Full Council on 23 February 2023 along with the budget. Technically, the rise is 4.99% but I tend to feel that it is preferable to describe it as a 5% rise.

The increase will generate £37m of vital extra income towards the delivery of crucial, high performing services to the people of Hampshire in 2023/24. 2% of the increase will go specifically towards adults' social care, in line with Government policy. It is worth noting that Hampshire still has one of the lowest council tax precepts of any county in England.

Alongside revenue budget plans, the County Council has approved new capital spending of £645.3m over the next three years which will boost jobs and the local economy, the quality of the environment and contribute towards the County Council's commitment to tackling climate change. This provision for Hampshire's infrastructure brings the County Council's four-year total investment in the fabric of Hampshire, to £927.3m.

2. Highways update and 20mph zones

The weather in February was thankfully not as bad as expected, and the Highways team are now back to business as usual. We are grateful to all Parish Councils and to the community for their patience and understanding during a challenging period for Hampshire Highways caused by severe weather.

A lot of work is currently underway at HCC to expand the Community Funded Highways Initiative (CFHI) scheme in order to give Parish and Town Councils more opportunity to introduce traffic-calming features. We hope that this will include a route to 20mph speed limits where appropriate.

The Transport and Environment Select Committee Review into 20mph considered feedback from a variety of experts and consulted widely. I am grateful to all Parish Councils from Petersfield Hangers that took part in the consultation.

The outcomes of the 20mph Review are summarised in this report:

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s104348/Report.pdf>

And a list of all responding Parish Councils can be found in the presentation summarising the outcomes at this link:

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s104349/Appendix.pdf>

More details of the implementation of the new CFHI system will be shared with you in the Summer.

3. Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board survey

The Hampshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) is a statutory, multi-organisational partnership coordinated by HCC, which oversees and leads adult safeguarding across the county, ensuring that safeguarding arrangements to support and safeguard adults in our area who are at risk of abuse and neglect are working effectively.

To help the Board to understand what's important to local people when it comes to safeguarding adults at risk, and how to prioritise and improve safeguarding services, a questionnaire has been created

here <https://hampshirecc.welcomesyourfeedback.net/Safeguarding2023>.

We would like as many people as possible to give their views – both stakeholders and the public. The feedback provided will assist the HSAB to understand what the most important issues are for local people and help refresh the operational delivery of their [strategic plan](#) going forward. Your assistance in completing the survey would be greatly appreciated and will help us to protect all members of the community. The results of the survey will be published on the HSAB website in due course. The survey closes on 12 March.

4. Hampshire offers 97% of pupils one of their preferred school choices

More than 97% of parents in Hampshire have been offered a place for their child at one of their three preferences for a secondary school in September 2023.

Of those who applied for a Year 7 place (for September 2023) by the application deadline, 90% have been offered a place *at their first preference school*. In contrast, only 69% of London parents have been given their first preference.

The County Council received 15,400 on-time applications this year – an increase of 418 applications compared to the number received for places in September 2022 (14,982).

Nationally, there have been greater pressures this year than there have been for some time due to a spike in the birth rate 11 years ago. This is reflected in the local picture for Hampshire, where again we have had to manage exceptional levels of demand for school places over and above those we already typically see each year. Despite this, our Admissions Team has still been able to deliver another fantastic result, with the vast majority of parents being offered one of their preferences. For those parents and carers who have not secured a place at one of their preferred secondary schools this year, I would urge them to please visit our website for advice and guidance on their options.

Pupils who did not secure a place at one of their preferred schools have been allocated a place at their catchment school or the next nearest available school. Parents have the right to appeal in these situations and their child's name will be added to the waiting list for their preferred schools. Places can become available via the waiting list for various reasons including parents changing their mind, or families moving home.

5. Tree planting gathers pace

Following the planting of the mini-forest in Sheet in January, in the last month the Hampshire Forest Partnership has continued to make great strides towards our target of planting one million trees by 2050.

We have just planted 350 trees at Portchester's Castle Shore Park. And in partnership with Liss Parish Council and the Tree Council we planted 30 trees at the Mill Lane Community Garden in Liss.

Tree-planting is a great community activity and brings a host of benefits in terms of natural beauty, flood alleviation, carbon storage and biodiversity. Please get in touch with the HCC Team if you would like to recommend a patch of land for some tree planting by emailing treeplanting@hants.gov.uk

6. South Downs National Park photo competition



A stunning sunrise over the South Downs has won the National Park's People's Choice vote for best photograph.

“Golden Sunrise” showed a misty morning at Bury Hill, West Sussex, and was the clear favourite in the public poll, which over 1,600 people took part in. Twenty-five shortlisted images from the National Park's 2022 photo competition were pitted against each other in the vote.

Picking up the £75 prize is Kasia Kedziora. Kasia only took up photography during the pandemic and describes the South Downs National Park as her ‘medicine’.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers