

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

**1 DECEMBER 2023**

1. Consultation on Pulens Lane traffic-calming scheme

I am pleased to report that HCC has commenced its consultation on the traffic-calming proposals for Pulens Lane in Petersfield. At over 1.5km this is the longest and most ambitious scheme of its kind in Hampshire. The scheme is highly innovative, blending a mixture of placemaking and traffic management tactics. We have put raised pedestrian crossings at the heart of the scheme, which is the first time in 15 years that HCC has agreed to implement such raised crossings.

I am convinced that we need to make it easier for people to walk and cycle in our towns and villages. This will ease traffic, improve health and wellbeing, reduce carbon emissions and pollution, and boost tourism and the local economy.

I am conscious that you cannot please everyone and some people will oppose the plans. I am aiming for 75% support which would be amazing. Without that strong local support there is a real risk that we will not be able to obtain funding to deliver all the elements of the scheme. We want to slow the traffic everywhere in East Hampshire. By getting this scheme delivered in full we have the best chance of rolling out similar interventions widely across the District.

I would therefore be very grateful if Parish Councillors could take 5 minutes to click through on the online questionnaire at this link to express their support. The consultation is open until 7 January 2024.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/transportchemes/petersfield-pulens-lane>

2. New lead contact for Highways queries

Many of you will have met the Senior Highways Engineer Ian Janes over the last six years. Ian did a very good job working with Parishes and I have thanked Ian on behalf of all our communities in Petersfield Hangers. Ian has now moved onto another role at Hampshire Highways and so we have a new lead contact for all highways enquiries under the Community Funded Highways Initiative.

The new Senior Engineer for East Hampshire is Tracey Webb and she will be happy to discuss Highways issues with you. Her contact details are:

Tracey.Webb2@hants.gov.uk

As well as CFI schemes, Tracey is also responsible for road safety concerns and traffic management enquiries, including yellow lines and parking. Supporting Tracey as Senior Engineer will be Trudy Humphrey. Please keep me in the loop with any emails you send to Tracey.

We are still expecting a new 20mph speed limit policy to be brought to the Executive Member Cllr Nick Adams-King in January 2024. So I am expecting to report on the outcome of that in February.

### 3. HCC launches OurHants mobile app and new website

At HCC we have launched the first iteration of our County Council app called 'OurHants'. The app is available for download to your mobile device now! I invite you to visit the App Store (Apple) or Google Play Store (Android) and simply search **OurHants**.

At present, the main useful feature of the app is the ability to book your visit to the HWRC. I have tested this myself and I was pleased to find that it works quite well. It is reasonably quick and simple. In the future, we hope to be able to offer many more online services through the new app. It is important that our reputation for reliability and high standards is reflected by the quality of our online offer, and we are therefore moving forward into this new territory in small steps.

When booking an appointment at an HWRC, the OurHants app allows you to save details if you wish, such as the registration of your vehicle and any permits you have, to make future bookings quicker. It also allows you to see and manage your bookings in one place and will notify you of any important updates about your booking.

We will be reviewing how people respond to the app and measuring the benefit to both customers and the HWRC service. You may wish to let residents in your area know about this new app. By the way, I would like to mention that charges for DIY waste at the HWRCs will be scrapped from 1 January 2024 following changes to national regulations.

#### 4. BOATs update

The HCC Universal Services Select Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of the HCC approach to managing BOATs on 27 November 2024, under the chairmanship of my colleague Cllr Robert Mocatta. Later that day I approved the HCC approach to BOATs at my Decision Day. Here is a link to the paper which was scrutinised and then approved by me:

<https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/documents/s114211/Management%20of%20Byways%20Open%20to%20All%20Traffic%20BOAT%20Update.pdf>

The Select Committee meeting was very helpful in shining a spotlight on this issue and there were very pertinent questions from across the Committee. The strong consensus at the Committee was that HCC needs to take additional steps to reduce the damage to BOATs by vehicles and the associated nuisance. It was agreed that the rollout of gates and signage are an important step and we await news on whether our Community Infrastructure Levy bid to the SDNPA has been successful.

Following the Select Committee discussion, I have this week written to the DEFRA Minister Rebecca Pow MP (the new Minister for Protected Landscapes) requesting greater powers for HCC to make permanent Traffic Regulation Orders on the BOATs. I have also lobbied the senior DEFRA official heading up the relevant unit, as I happened to meet him last month at an event. I think there is a chance of a positive response from DEFRA, but I would be very surprised if I get a response before Christmas!

Next year HCC will undertake a review of the Byway Operating Procedures (BOP) which will keep this issue high on the agenda. That will include new mechanisms for closer working with Parishes. I hope Councillors are encouraged by the progress and I look forward to updating again in due course.

#### 5. Reminder to use salt bins during freezing weather

Hampshire Highways are fully prepared for Winter with our gritter fleet of 42 vehicles on standby day and night. We have put out a very timely Press Notice about the salt bins which I hope Town and Parish Councillors will find interesting. Here is a link:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/29112023HantsHwayscoldsnapPR>

## 6. Christmas at QE Country Park

HCC Countryside Service has teamed up with Petersfield Christmas Trees to offer a selection of Nordmann Fir and Spruce trees sustainably grown in the heart of Hampshire.

You can purchase a tree at the main QE car park where the team will be on hand to help you select the perfect tree for you home. Visitors will have 20 minutes free parking to pick, pay and collect their trees (longer visits will be subject to standard parking charges).

The Opening Hours at QE Country Park this winter are as follows:

**Monday to Friday 10.00am to 3.30pm**

**Saturday to Sunday 10.00am to 4.00pm**

This year QE also have an exciting Peter Rabbit-themed festive adventure trail available which costs £7.50.

To find out more and book your tickets please follow this link:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryparks/qecp/visit-us/whatson/peter-rabbit-2023>

May I take this opportunity to wish you all very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing you in 2024!

**RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER**

**County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers**