

## **Dealing with Winter Weather**

With the ground very wet from recent rainfall, some trees may become more susceptible to high winds. This may impact on power lines, communications and transport, as well as roads and footways.

Throughout the year, Hampshire Highways completes ditch clearing and maintenance work on Hampshire's 60,000 gullies and 4,600 catchpits, as well as carrying out a continued programme of structural improvements to the highways drainage system to make Hampshire more resilient to the effects of extreme weather.

Anyone who experiences an issue on a Hampshire road can report it at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport>. Details of flood alerts and updates are available from the Environment Agency at <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/5-day-flood-risk>. Further information on the impact on the electricity network is available from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, see <http://news.ssen.co.uk/news/all-articles/2017/12/ssen-returns-to-business-as-usual/>

## **Finding Solutions**

The Leader of the County Council, Councillor Roy Perry, is to meet with Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Marcus Jones, early in the New Year, to lay out plans to protect a number of important services over the long term – including school crossing patrol, household waste recycling centres and community transport. Proposals include obtaining permission to pilot a pay-as-you-go scheme, where people would pay £1 for each Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) visit. This could raise up to £4 million a year. I have reported regularly on the extent of the County Council's financial pressures. We have had to make some very hard decisions but the Cabinet has also been determined to explore every avenue to meet this challenge. Consequently, last October, we asked County Council officers to look again at a number of proposals to identify some additional and innovative solutions to making the savings.

Subsequently, I am pleased to report that we have made substantial progress on a range of alternative funding options for school crossing patrols, household waste recycling centres and community transport. It is possible that a significant proportion of the proposed savings from these areas, could now be found elsewhere. For example, from our street lighting contract where we have overachieved on our savings, and improving recycling measures, working closely with our district council partners – which will free up extra revenue. Members of the Cabinet are meeting next week to agree to the next steps needed to put these plans in place, in the New Year.

In the consultation feedback residents told us that they would be willing to support raising existing charges or introducing new charges to help cover the costs of running some local services. To raise the funds required to maintain community transport, we would propose making a small charge for issuing older people's bus passes. As such, we will be asking Government to allow us to run a pilot scheme to charge £10 for issuing an older persons' five-year bus pass (this works out as £2 per year and is similar to how Blue Badges operate). This would raise approximately £500,000 a year – enough to pay for core community transport.

## **New Year's Resolution?**

If you are concerned about your body weight why not take up this offer? Almost 7 in 10 of Hampshire adults are overweight or obese and the cost to the NHS in Hampshire in managing diseases related to obesity is estimated at almost £340 million per year! The County Council has commissioned a new self-referral service for people aged 18 years and over. If you are a resident in the administrative county of Hampshire, or are registered with a Hampshire GP and have a Body Mass Index [BMI] of 30+, or don't know what your BMI is but think you might qualify for this **free service**, call 0345 602 7068 and quote WWRS095. People who qualify will be offered a free tailored service and will aim to lose not less than 5% of their body weight.

## Adoption and Fostering ‘web chat’

Deciding to apply to adopt or foster a child is a big step, and it’s important that all the information and advice people might need to make a decision is easy to access. Hampshire County Council’s new “web chat” service makes it easier to get in touch with adoption and fostering specialists quickly for information, or arrange a call back.

During office hours, people can opt to begin a live, online ‘chat’ with an adviser if they would like to ask questions about adoption, including their potential eligibility to adopt. There are more than 40 children in the care of Hampshire County Council who are waiting to be adopted. There is a particular need for adopters who feel they could give a home to sibling groups, or a child with disabilities. HCC provide support for adopters and the new additions to their families, and our Adoption Support Team of social worker specialists is on hand for as long as needed.

Anyone over 18 who has a spare room and some personal or professional child care experience can apply to adopt a child, whether an individual or a couple. To find out more, please visit A or call 0300 555 1384.

## New Fund for Dealing with Waste

Local councils in Hampshire collectively spend £100 million each year dealing with the County’s waste. Reducing the amount of household waste produced could make a big difference, which is why the County Council has launched a new fund to support local projects.

Grants of up to £5,000 are available to support the delivery of projects which set up new products and services that help prevent waste generated from within peoples’ homes. **The closing date for applications for the Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund is 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018.**

Applicants are encouraged to discuss potential projects with the County Council’s Smart Living team prior to submitting an application. Please contact the team via email: [waste.prevention@hants.gov.uk](mailto:waste.prevention@hants.gov.uk) to arrange an informal discussion. For full eligibility criteria and more information on the Grant, including how to apply, visit: [www.hants.gov.uk/grants/environment-grants](http://www.hants.gov.uk/grants/environment-grants) For more information on the Smart Living initiative, visit: [www.hants.gov.uk/smartliving](http://www.hants.gov.uk/smartliving)

## Stay Well and Warm this Winter

As the weather turns colder, some people and families will struggle to keep their homes warm. Hampshire County Council’s *Hitting the Cold Spots* initiative can help. Now in its seventh year, this county-wide fuel poverty project offers advice and support to people who are having trouble staying warm during the winter, including home visits, help to access funding for boiler repairs and replacements, temporary heating, and small grants for winter fuel emergencies. Hampshire residents can also receive advice about tariff switching and how to be referred to other services for further help, including ‘safe and well’ visits and healthy living advice.

If you or someone you know is struggling to stay warm and well this winter, please contact an advisor on Freephone 0800 804 8601 (Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm) or email: [staywarm@environmentcentre.com](mailto:staywarm@environmentcentre.com)

If anyone is worried about an elderly neighbour or relative, they should call Hampshire County Council’s Adult Services team on 0300 555 1386, during the week in working hours, (8.30 am to 5 pm, Monday to Thursday, 8.30 am to 4.30 pm Friday) or call 0300 555 1373 out of hours and on weekends and Bank Holidays.

With all good wishes for 2018.

Patricia Stallard  
Executive Member for Public Health;  
Supporting Families Programme; Emergency Planning & Resilience  
County Councillor for Winchester Southern Parishes  
[pgstallard@aol.com](mailto:pgstallard@aol.com) 02392251484

