

## **HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL report to Boarhunt Parish Council – 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

*Please accept my apologies, I am unable to attend the Parish Council meeting as I will be at a full Council meeting at, Winchester City Council.*

### **Solent or Hampshire?**

There is no further news to report on the Solent or Hampshire & Isle of Wight bid for devolution. It would appear that the Solent bid remains on the table at Westminster, with some Ministers expressing support for that model, which includes an elected Mayor. The local authorities who are supporting that bid remain as Portsmouth, Southampton, Fareham, Havant, Gosport, East Hants, part of the New Forest and Isle of Wight. However, no documents have yet been signed and the remainder of Hampshire continues to lobby Ministers and other local Leaders to get the original Hampshire & Isle of Wight combined authority bid, back on the table, although they still do not wish to have a Mayor. It would appear that whilst central Government Ministers are telling local authorities that they must have an elected Mayor, there is nothing in legislation which requires this! I am also given to understand that local MPs support the original Hampshire bid, with the exception of Flick Drummond in Portsmouth and Caroline Dineage in Gosport. I believe there is still a lot to play for and complex negotiations are still taking place, but no firm news yet.

Because of his involvement with the Solent bid, and in order to prevent any possible probity issues, Cllr Sean Woodward has stood down from the County Council Cabinet.

### **New School Building Projects**

Over 60 new schools, major extensions and refurbishment projects have been delivered in the past three years as part of the County Council's commitment to providing thousands of new school places for children across Hampshire. Work to provide a school place for every child in the County began in 2013, and will have seen the Property Services team create 6,300 new places for pupils in primary, secondary and academy schools by the end of this year. A further 11,000 new primary and secondary school places will be delivered between 2016 and 2019. In addition, 97% of all schools in Hampshire, including many academies, choose to buy their property maintenance from the Property Services team through a collective arrangement which has delivered £100 million of services over the past five years.

A three year investment programme worth £227 million was confirmed by the County Council in January, to fund much-needed extra school places across the County. The team are currently working on more than 70 new schools and extension projects, including six new primary and three new secondary academies.

Over the next five years, Property Services' projects include commissions to design and build new primary and secondary schools for North Whiteley (Winchester district) and a new combined primary and secondary school at Horton Heath (Eastleigh district). More detailed design work is also underway for three academies in Aldershot, Whitehill and Bordon, and Winchester which are sponsored by the Universities of Winchester and Chichester.

### **Grants for Short Breaks**

Grants totalling more than £2 million have been agreed by Hampshire County Council for community and voluntary organisations, across the County, that provide short breaks for carers of disabled children. The short breaks programme supports up to 7,000 disabled children and young people to access short breaks activities. The activities to be funded in the 2016-17 financial year will form part of the whole range of the County Council's short breaks provision

for children with disabilities. Activities take place outside of school time, during evenings, weekends and school holidays. The type of break being funded will include:

- educational and leisure activities for disabled children outside their homes;
- day-time care of disabled children either in their home or elsewhere;
- and services to assist carers in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays.

## **Parish Lengthsmen**

The County Council's Parish Lengthsman scheme will grow to support up to 130 parish councils this year. The scheme enables parishes to carry out work that they see as enhancing their local communities, such as ditch clearing, cutting back vegetation and sign cleaning.

The Parish Lengthsman scheme was first reintroduced by Hampshire County Council in 2010, to give local communities more say in the upkeep of their surroundings and to play an active role in the highways service to improve their village environments, while adding value to the County Council's planned and routine maintenance programmes. This year, the Authority is investing an additional £30,000 in the scheme, in recognition of the work the lengthsman carry out on rights of way.

While there is some flexibility in how each parish can operate its Parish Lengthsman service, the main principle is that small highways jobs can be locally managed, by employing a dedicated resource. Parishes can either employ their own Lengthsman or commission a Lengthsman service from the County Council's term highways maintenance contractor, Amey. Each participating parish will receive a total of £1,000.

## **Meals on Wheels**

Apetito have provided the Meals on Wheels service on behalf of Hampshire County Council since April 2013, with over 1,500 people regularly receiving this vital service. Anyone aged over 55 years who has difficulty preparing meals, either because of ill health or disability, can sign up to receive a one off, or regular hot lunch, as well as afternoon tea.

During the past three years, the take up of Meals on Wheels has risen by 55%. In the past year alone, some 5,000 people have received Meals on Wheels support. Meals on Wheels customers can also benefit from the County Council's Food and Friendship Service, delivered by Age Concern Hampshire, which provides vital social contact for many vulnerable older and disabled people who might otherwise not see anyone from one day to the next. Volunteers visit people at home to make lunchtimes more enjoyable and spend time chatting about things that interest the resident and about what's going on in their local community. People can choose the number and frequency of visits and chose a time convenient for them, for example a visit once or twice a week, or once a month. The visit lasts at least 30 minutes.

From April 1 2016, the cost per meal will increase by 15p from £3.80 to £3.95. The cost of an afternoon tea, which includes a savoury pastry, sandwich, piece of cake, plus a serving of fruit, will remain the same, at £3.25.

Meals on Wheels are available 365 days of the year, delivered directly to a person's door. The service is also there as support at times of particular need, for example returning home from hospital. Meals can be ordered from one to seven days per week. Anyone who is interested should contact 01962 779 338 or complete an online application at [www.hants.gov.uk/meals-on-wheels](http://www.hants.gov.uk/meals-on-wheels).

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