

Hampshire County Councillor: Test Valley Central Division Cllr Andrew Gibson

Houghton Parish Council Meeting — Report March 2020

Introduction. Hampshire's Highways has been battling over the last month to stop flooding and the rising Ground Water issue. Hopefully we will now see a return to more reasonable rain levels and a degree of normality. However this has left the roads in a very poor state, as we see driving through many of the villages.

Incinerator. As you all now know Wheelabrator have decided not to proceed with the Incinerator at Longparish on the A303. This demonstrates the power of the people to protect their environment. It was clear from the 10km run on 9th February that residents enthusiastic opposition to the project was not declining. I was one of the 100 runners joined by at least as many supporters who took part in the even on the worst day of the year with winds and rain. Caroline Nokes MP was also marshalling at the windiest corner of the run. It was just over a week later that Wheelabrator called to tell us that the project was being withdrawn.

Facts and Figures Hampshire's population is 1,376,300(2018) the third most populous county in England (85% is rural and 15% urban). Hampshire CC maintains 5400 miles of roads, 4300 miles pavements, 133,000 streetlights, 481 schools, 45 libraries, 3 Discovery Centres and 1 e-library, 16 care homes with 960 beds for older people, 9 residential homes for children and young people, 24 Household Waste Centres and 5 Country Parks. Every year 94% of all household waste is diverted from landfill (40% recycled) is burnt for energy and powers 50,000 homes. Every day 454,000 people travel to work by car or van, 86,000 bus journeys are made, and 4% journeys are by train. More than half of Hampshire's EU citizens have signed up to the Government's EU settlement scheme.

Budget (2020-21) includes spending £2.1 billion on delivering important public services 1.3 million residents during the next financial year. One-off investment is pledged for tackling climate change (up to £2 million) and an extra £2 million each year for fixing potholes, with an additional £3 million for 2020/21. This is on top of the £10 million spent annually on Operation Resilience - the long-term strategy to ensure Hampshire's road network is more resilient to the impact of heavy traffic and worsening winters.

Social care pressures top the list of priorities with number of people aged 75+ in Hampshire increasing by almost a third over the next few years. The County Council agreed a 3.99% increase in the council tax precept from 1 April 2020 – of which 2% is specifically for adult social care. Hampshire is still the 2nd lowest council tax of all counties in England.

HCC will also propose major investment in Hampshire's economy, jobs and the quality of the environment - with projects totalling £386.5 million over the next three years.

Schemes include:

£94.8 million for new and extended school buildings in Hampshire to ensure a school place for every child in Hampshire – and 19,100 new school places by September 2023

£115.8 million for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire

£830,000 to deal with the impact of ash die back disease

£3.2m LED Street lighting replacement scheme

£45.8 million for integrated transport schemes including over £10 million specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements

Climate Change Hampshire County Council has been taking active steps to ensure Hampshire is resilient to climate change and in mitigating further changes through carbon reduction measures. HCC's own emissions have reduced by more than 43%, with more than a 50% reduction by 2025 and carbon neutrality by 2050. The **2050 Hampshire Commission of Enquiry** placed climate change and the environment as its top priority. In the budget HCC pledged £2m towards climate change measures in addition to the capital schemes outlined above. HCC is aware its greatest leadership and influence will be achieved by working in partnership with the District, City and Parish Councils, businesses and communities. At a household level HCC is supporting the county-wide Greening Campaign -this aims to find simple solutions around reducing and measuring power consumption, insulating housing stock, reducing water usage, sourcing local food, community travel and renewable energy schemes. Parish representatives will be invited to attend our regular climate change briefing events.

PS If you would like to adopt a tree at **Sir Harold Hillier Gardens**, then please call the team on 01794 369318

Public Health -Coronavirus (Covid-19) Hampshire County Council continues to keep a close watch on the Coronavirus outbreak with processes in place to respond if and when required. A small number of cases have been confirmed in the UK. Hampshire residents can stay up to date with the latest information and guidance on [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Schools 2019 GCSE performance statistics confirmed that Hampshire pupils continue to perform better than their peers nationally at the end of year 11 along with over 90% of our schools being judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Councillor Grants This year I supported the following local causes in my Division. The scheme is now closed until 1st June but I am happy to report that I have support Good Neighbours, Village Agent programmes, Village Hall projects such as a screen for films and support for Village Hall activity groups and green tree planting projects.