

Hampshire County Councillor: Witchurch and the Cleres.
Tom Thacker
Annual Parish Meeting Report 2021

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.

Public Health -Coronavirus (Covid-19) Hampshire County Council continues to play a significant role supporting vulnerable residents and providing local guidance and information. To date over **32 million people** in the UK have received their first dose of vaccine.

The **Hampshire County Council helpline is available** for frail or vulnerable residents who do not have support from families, friends or their local community, and who need urgent assistance with essential food or household supplies, collection of medication, or who are at risk of loneliness.

HCC approves £2.1 billion spending on local services in 2021/22

Plans for the next financial year focus on the county's ongoing work associated with the **pandemic, support for vulnerable children and adults, investment in Hampshire's roads and infrastructure to support economic recovery, as well as climate change mitigation.**

The annual council tax charge for a Band D property will be £1,350.45 – an increase of £1.23 per week, equating to 4.99%, of which 3% is for adults' social care – a Government request. The budget includes **£13 million** for the maintenance of 5,500 miles of roads and an extra £1.2 million in carbon reduction measures across the County Council. **HCC's four-year capital programme of £744 million is one of the largest in the country.**

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/25022021HCCbudgetdecisionFeb2021>

The proposed capital programme includes: • **£68 million** in new and extended school buildings to ensure there is a school place for every child in Hampshire • **£118 million** for structural maintenance and improvement of roads and bridges in Hampshire over the next three years • **£91 million** for integrated transport schemes including over **£18 million** specifically focused on walking and cycling improvements • **£141 million** for major improvement of school and other County Council buildings and land holdings over the next three years • **£33 million** for decarbonisation schemes covering solar PV, single to double glazing window replacements, transition from oil to gas and the implementation of heating controls.

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 via the Expert Forum. At a household level HCC is supporting the county-wide Greening Campaign (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), the Help line, Solar Buy-in scheme and community energy projects. <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/environment/climatechange>

West Berks HWRC

There is much concern in East Woodhay, Ecchinswell, Burghclere, Highclere and Kingsclere about Hampshire residents being granted continued access by West Berks Council to its site at Newbury. HCC does not own the West Berks site, so the decision cannot rest with HCC.

Four years ago, I and my fellow County Councillor, Derek Mellor, persuaded Hampshire County Council to come to an arrangement with West Berks to allow Hampshire residents, who live within a certain radius of the Newbury site, to receive permits to use the site, at a cost to Hampshire taxpayers of about £180,000 per annum. This was a temporary arrangement that was designed to give a breathing space for West Berks to introduce a pay to visit system and which ended last year. That arrangement was extended a further year, following representation from me and my colleague Derek Mellor, with Basingstoke borough and Hampshire collaborating and sharing the costs required by West Berks.

Hampshire County Council is looking at finding a permanent solution for this north western corner of Hampshire and is expecting a report on suitable nearby sites in the county by the end of May. I have told Cllr Humby, the Executive Member, that I want the current temporary arrangements to continue, until such a permanent solution is found.