

Report from Hampshire County Councillor Jan Warwick

December 2023

40mph to 30mph: Several key routes in the wider Winchester city area will be included by Hampshire Highways in a speed reduction review. In the Winchester Downlands division these include the 40mph sections of the Andover Road, Stockbridge Road up to and including Harestock Road and Badger Farm Road from the Sainsburys to the Pitt roundabout. The Oliver's Battery Road South junction will also be included in this speed reduction scoping work to improve the safety and accessibility of this junction for users including pedestrians and cyclists, as well as improving the bus reliability and times along Badger Farm Road. Work will take place from January to May 2024 followed by a resident and parish council consultation on the proposals. I have asked the team to review the traffic light sequencing from the Pitt roundabout along Romsey Road as the queues have been particularly bad recently and have indicated my support for the speed reduction review.

Finance: Public consultations will now begin on the implementation of budget reductions approved by the County Council at its meeting in November, to reduce its £132m budget gap forecast by 2025/26. It identified that £90.4m could be generated through the savings proposals, of which £75m is expected to be delivered by 2025/26, leaving a forecast unmet budget gap of £57m in 2025/26. Increases in fees, changes in how services are offered as well as more use of smart technology are planned as part of the cost reduction measures.

Schools: parents and carers with children due to start school in Reception or move to Year 3 at a junior school next year, can now apply for September 2024 school places. School applications are open until 15 January 2024. Parents are being reminded to name three schools on their applications, to give them the best chance of being offered a place at one of their preferred schools. Three Hampshire schools (located in Fleet, Chandlers Ford and Eastleigh) are set to benefit from greener energy following the approval of a scheme to install ground source heat pumps and provide low-carbon heating systems. The project is being financed from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and our school buildings improvement budget.

Welly & Coat Exchange: Children's welly boot exchanges are being organised in libraries including Winchester. We are hoping to give welly boots and coats a second life, benefitting those in need while also being a practical solution for quickly growing feet. Please donate clean, good condition items.

Wintry Weather Ahead: Our highways service is geared up for the cold weather. With overnight frosts and potential snow on the horizon, our dedicated teams are ready day and night. Our gritter fleet is on standby with 15,500 tonnes of salt, and our blue and yellow community salt bins are stocked up too. Remember, just one tablespoon of salt can treat up to one square meter of road or pavement, making a huge difference, especially for less mobile individuals.

With high groundwater levels after recent wet weather, we're taking extra measures, cleaning roadside gullies, and urging landowners to clear watercourses. Our winter vehicles are equipped with the latest tech, ensuring accurate and efficient salting with full satellite navigation guidance. Priority one routes, covering major roads and emergency hubs, are treated first, taking about 3-4 hours. Priority two routes, including remaining B roads and village access roads, may be treated during prolonged severe weather.

Community bins are stocked for public paths, pavements, and roads – keeping our shared spaces safe! No private driveways or garden paths, please.

Who Can Use the Salt It's a community effort! Anyone can sprinkle salt on roads and pavements, connecting main road salting to smaller access routes or school pathways. Let's join forces!

How Much Salt to Use? One tablespoon (20 grams) covers a square meter of road or pavement. Use it wisely – too much too soon won't last!

How Bins Get Refilled? HCC will top up bins ASAP, especially during bad weather. In severe conditions, main roads get priority. Please be patient – we're doing our best.

Roads: The County Council has secured a further £132 million from our government over the next ten years to tackle the issue of potholes and invest in longer term, proactive road maintenance. A ten-year settlement allows the council to plan ahead carefully with more certainty. The money will help to tackle the challenges of unprecedented demand, soaring inflation, and the impacts of heavy rain, flooding and sub-zero temperatures. The County Council has already allocated £22.5 million of its own money over the next three years to repair potholes and other defects and this is already helping to make our roads stronger ahead of another potentially difficult winter period.

Mini forests: Thousands more trees are set to be planted across Hampshire as a permanent reminder of His Majesty King Charles III's Coronation following a successful bid by the County Council for £100,000 from a national funding pot to mark the historic occasion. The County Council has also secured a £50,000 award for the establishment of Coronation micro-woods in urban areas – this applies techniques that enable dense woodlands, usually the size of a tennis court, to grow up to ten times faster than normal. Another £50,000 grant is available for Coronation Community Orchards. Groups or communities interested in planting a mini forest or orchard can contact the Hampshire Forest Partnership on email: treeplanting@hants.gov.uk The Forest Partnership's Coronation fund is open for projects that should be planted by March 2025.

New HCC app: The County Council's has launched its new mobile app, 'Our Hants', which is available for smart phones. Most online services are now available through the app, beginning with the full range of County Council web pages, to allow residents to access all services. You can also book appointments for your Household Waste and Recycling Centre.

Season's Greetings: December is here already, I'm not sure where the year has gone! I hope everyone has a lovely Christmas break and my very best wishes for 2024.

CLLr Jan Warwick

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