

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY DECEMBER 12TH 2023

ITEM 4 – COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Report from County Councillor Edward Heron to Copythorne Parish Council meeting on December 12th 2023

County Councillor Report December 2023 Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division

1. HCC budget reductions

Public consultations will now begin on the implementation of budget reductions approved by the County Council at our meeting in November, to reduce the £132m budget gap forecast by 2025/26. We 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.

The Council remains in a precarious financial position, although one considerably better than many other County and Unitary councils. Hampshire continues, along with other council's with responsibility for adult's and children's services, to make the case to government for sustainable funding, most recently sending a joint letter to the Secretary of State which has been widely reported (<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/dec/06/english-town-halls-faceunprecedented-rise-in-bankruptcies-council-leaders-warn>).

As I have stated on many occasions, without changes to government funding for adult's and children's social care services, Hampshire County Council is not financially sustainable in the medium term and it is of little solace that, given its history of good financial management, will be one of the last councils to reach effective bankruptcy.

2. Schools

Hampshire parents and carers with children due to start school in Reception Year or move to Year 3 at a junior school next year, can now apply for their child's school place for September 2024. 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 the council's school buildings improvement budget.

The council is separately consulting on proposed changes to the admission arrangements for 2025/26 for community and voluntary controlled schools within its area. Check whether local schools are effected and how to respond, at

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/admissionarrangements25-26>.

The consultation will run until Friday 29 December 2023.

3. Wintry Weather Ahead

Hampshire County Council's 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.

We are prepared for any winter challenges, from freezing conditions to heavy rainfall. 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.

For more info:

Salting routes and community salt bin locations:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/severeweather>

Clearing snow and ice advice: <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

Follow @hantshighways on X (formerly Twitter) for real-time updates on salting lorries throughout winter.

And remember, your input is crucial! Report surface water flooding on the highway:

www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems. For flooding from a main river, contact the Environment Agency: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency or call 0800 80 70 60.

4. New HCC app

The County Council's has launched its new mobile app, 'OurHants', which is available for Apple and Android mobile devices. The intent is to offer many online services through the app, beginning with the full range of County Council web pages, to allow residents to access all services.

It also contains new functionality to book appointments for Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Details can be saved to make future booking quicker and the app will allow people to see and manage their bookings in one place and will notify the user of any important updates about their booking. So why not give it a try?

[OurHants - Get it on Google Play](#)

[OurHants - Download on the Apple App Store](#)

5. Police

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, Donna Jones, is carrying out a consultation on her precept and priorities for the year ahead.

The consultation closes on 10 December. You can find the survey here: <https://survey.alchemer.eu/s3/90633344/Precept2024-25>.

You can also read Donna's annual report here - <https://www.hampshire-pcc.gov.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2023/11/Annual-Report-2023-Online-Version.pdf>

6. Merry Christmas!

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

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