

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL – UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD

Parish update for October 2024

County council by-election

Hampshire County Council has announced that a by-election will be held on Thursday 31st October 2024 in the Bishop's Waltham electoral division, following the retirement of the local authority's former Leader, Councillor Rob Humby.

The full list of the candidates nominated to stand for election will be published on 7th October 2024. Currently, we know that Jonathan Williams will stand for the Liberal Democratic party, Alex Ellis for The Green party and Neil Bolton will stand for The Conservative party.

Residents who have not registered to vote will need to do so by Tuesday 15 October. You can register online, at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Winchester City Council is running the by-election on behalf of Carolyn Williamson, the County Council's Chief Executive and Returning Officer.

New applications for a postal vote must be made by 5pm on Wednesday 16th October, at www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote

Applications to vote by proxy must be made by 5pm on Wednesday 23rd October.

Polling stations will be open from 7am to 10pm on 31st October 2024.

Photo identification is now needed to vote at a polling station. If you are planning to vote in person at a polling station, you will need to take photo identification with you. Information about registering to vote and what ID is accepted can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id

Future services review

The County Council undertook a future services review, that many of us contributed to online to express which of 13 service areas offered by the county we valued the most and would wish to save if financial savings were required to balance the budget from 2025 onwards. Although based on many assumptions regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy, one very large assumption being the settlement the county receives from central government, the MTFS currently projects a £85m budget shortfall across revenues of £2.6bn for 25/26. Officers of the County were tasked with looking where savings can be made by stripping back services to statutory minimum levels. During September officers have presented proposals at 4 universal services scrutiny committee meetings in advance of the Cabinet decision day on the 14th October 2024.

The two areas most discussed at parish councils have been the potential cut to bus services and the closure of tier 3 and 4 waste recycling centres. In both cases the recommendations to cut bus services and to close Bishop's Waltham and Alresford tips were effectively rejected by the cross party select committee.

This is a very good result and in the case of the potential cuts to passenger transport there has been a request that the cabinet look again "holistically" at the passenger transport proposal before making any decision. In the case of the potential tip closures, the committee went even further with their amendment to the officers recommendations and flat rejected the recommendations and asked Cabinet to consider alternative arrangements keeping Tier 3 and Tier 4 HWRC's open.

We won't know for certain the fate of either of these services until the Cabinet decision day on 14th October but our efforts to lobby the county may well have been heard.

However, the big question that remains to be answered is, where will the money or savings come from to plug the gap?

Kind Regards

Jerry Pett
Neil Bolton

Winchester City Council Ward Members for Upper Meon Valley