

## Update from Hampshire County Council – December 2023



### **Funding boost for childcare providers in Hampshire**

Childcare providers in Hampshire are to receive a cash injection of more than £6 million from Hampshire County Council between now and March 2024. The funding comes from the Government's new Early Years Supplementary Grant which is designed to increase the amount that early years providers receive for delivering free childcare to eligible children aged between two and four-years-old

In total, the Government has awarded £204 million from its Early Years Supplementary Grant to Local Authorities, to be paid to early years providers in the 2023/24 financial year. The scheme has already seen more than one thousand Hampshire providers benefit from additional funding this autumn.

The new Early Years Supplementary Grant will increase the funding that settings receive to provide the following free childcare entitlements:

- 15 hours entitlement for disadvantaged two-year-olds
- 15 hours universal entitlement for three and four-year-olds
- 15 hours additional entitlement for three and four-year-old children of working parents
- Early Years Pupil Premium, to support disadvantaged children aged three and four-years-old
- Disability Access Fund, to support three and four-year-olds with special educational needs and disabilities

The plans will see local hourly rates for funded three and four-year-old places increase by 5.1 per cent, from £5.69 to £5.98. Hourly rates for funded two-year-olds and children under two will also rise to £8.32 and £11.30 respectively.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20231201childcareboost>

### **Hampshire County Council's highways service ready for cold snap**

With a chance of overnight frosts and even some snow in the coming days, the County Council's highway teams remain ready, day and night, to keep Hampshire's main routes gritted, and to respond to surface water flooding and fallen debris on the roads.

Residents are also being reminded to take advantage of the network of community salt bins that are on hand when the temperatures do drop.

The County Council's fleet of winter vehicles are all fitted with the latest technology to ensure salting is deposited on the highway accurately and efficiently, and this includes full satellite navigation guidance, automatic salt delivery and dedicated snow plough fitments. All drivers receive specialist training and our gritters travel at no more than 30 mph when undertaking salting operations.

Hampshire's main roads are always treated first. Our 44 'priority one' routes carry most of the Hampshire's traffic - covering A roads, some B roads, roads to hospitals and other key emergency hubs, large schools and colleges and major bus routes. Each salt run takes approximately three to four hours to complete.

During periods of prolonged severe weather, our 'priority two' routes, which include remaining B roads and single access roads to villages, may also be treated.

Further information for the public is available as follows:

- Salting routes and community salt bin locations

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

- Advice on clearing snow and ice from pavements <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>

Follow @hantshighways on X (formerly Twitter) to find out when and where the salting lorries are going out, throughout winter.

## Update from Hampshire County Council – December 2023

- Report surface water flooding on the highway [www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems](http://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems)
- Report an issue with flooding from a main river to the Environment Agency [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency) or phone 0800 80 70 60.

Last winter, Hampshire's gritter fleet used 17,700 tonnes of salt, enough to fill 20 Olympic size swimming pools; and treated more than 140,660 miles of road, equal to driving seven times around the Earth, or more than halfway to the Moon.

Throughout the year, the County Council routinely maintains Hampshire's 212,000 gullies and 15,000 catchpits (an empty chamber that is installed into a drainage system to prevent silt and debris from building up and causing blockages).

The County Council is responsible for more than 5,000 miles of local roads.

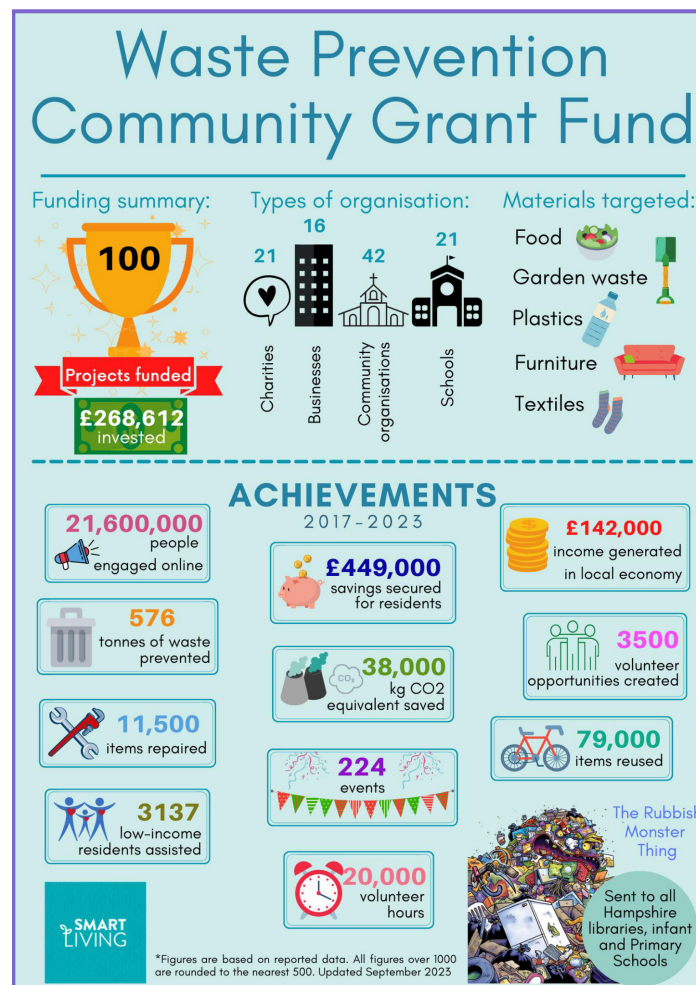
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/29112023HantsHwyscoldsnapPR>

### **Hampshire County Council's Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund is now open for applications!**

Funding of up to £5,000 is available to deliver projects which help to reduce household waste in Hampshire, encourage community cohesion and support the local economy.

Find out more and how to apply:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling/smartliving/waste prevention grant fund>



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### OurHants Mobile App

Hampshire [Hampshire County Council](#) has a brand-new mobile app, 'OurHants,' is officially available for both Apple and Android devices! 🎉

🌐 We aim to bring a plethora of online services right to your fingertips through this user-friendly app. Our commitment to reliability and high standards is at the core of this digital venture, and we're taking it one step at a time.

📖 Initially you will be able to access the complete range of County Council web pages on the app, making it easy for residents to access all services. Plus, booking appointments for Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs)!

📅 When you book an appointment through the OurHants app, you can save key details like your vehicle registration and permits, ensuring quicker bookings in the future. Manage all your bookings seamlessly in one place and receive important updates right at your fingertips.

🔄 We're eager to hear your thoughts and will be closely monitoring how the app benefits both you and our HWRC service. Your feedback will guide us as we plan to expand the app's capabilities into other areas of online service.

📱 Ready to experience the convenience? Download OurHants now for FREE from the Apple App Store or Google Play! Share the news with your network, and don't forget to give it a go next time you visit an HWRC.

👉 OurHants - Get it on Google Play - <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details...>

👉 OurHants - Download on the Apple App Store - <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/ourhants/id6470827148>

This is a significant leap forward, and we're optimistic that it's just the beginning of even more positive changes and additions to our online offerings.

### Partners formally commit to reduce flood risk together

In recognition of the joint responsibility to minimise the risk of flooding for Hampshire's residents, Hampshire County Council, the Environment Agency, Coastal Partners, the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Southern Water have signed a 'Joint Leadership Statement' - detailing the intent to work together to reduce flood risk and increase community resilience across Hampshire

The statement, agreed at the recent Flood and Water Management Conference signals the partners' collective commitment to work together to take further action to reduce the risk of flooding for the 400,000 households whose properties are at the highest risk, as well as businesses and infrastructure.

Since the widespread groundwater flooding that took place 10 years ago, the County Council has undertaken extensive work to mitigate against flood risk. For example, five significant flood alleviation schemes have been completed in Buckskin, Farringdon, Hambledon, Romsey and Winchester and the Flood and Water Management team has reviewed over 4,000 planning applications to assess whether the surface water management plans are sufficiently robust.

Furthermore, the team has also considered more than 500 ordinary watercourse consents - required by home or land owners if they wish to make changes to ditches or watercourses (areas of water that are not part of a main river), to ensure Hampshire residents are not inadvertently increasing flood risk in their area by blocking ditches or reducing pipe sizes and in doing so, reducing land drainage networks.

In view of the 400,000 properties in areas of Hampshire at risk of flooding, under the Strategy, the County Council has also developed 18 'Catchment Management Plans' to identify and prioritise the areas within each river catchment that are at the highest risk of flooding. Within each plan are policies to address flooding issues and frameworks for the development of detailed Action Plans to combat flooding.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20231124FloodMgmtIntentStatement>

## **Update from Hampshire County Council – December 2023**

### **County Council welcomes £132m additional money from Government for long-term road improvements**

Hampshire County Council has welcomed a funding package to fix potholes and maintain roads

The Government announced on Friday 17 November a further £132 million for Hampshire over the next ten years to tackle the issue of potholes and invest in longer term, proactive road maintenance.

This is welcome news for Hampshire and follows significant lobbying by the County Council to make the case for additional money, nationally, to help reverse the deterioration of our roads after years of underfunding. Having a ten-year settlement confirmed enables us to plan ahead carefully with more certainty, and to allocate and prioritise resources more effectively. 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. Working with our highways contractor, Milestone, extra frontline resources have been drafted in to repair more road defects following a dramatic and sustained increase in reported issues.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20232011HighwaysFundingResponse>

### **Holiday Activities and Food in Hampshire – Christmas cheer for low-income families**

While most families anticipate a Christmas filled with socialising, treats and presents, for some on low incomes, the winter season and school holidays can put a strain on already tight household budgets

Providing hot meals and keeping these children warm, safe and engaged while school is out, the Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF), is funded by the Department for Education and is administered by local authorities.

As part of the County Council's connect4communities programme, this Christmas, 134 sites across Hampshire will be running HAF schemes, offering free enriching activities and wholesome food each day for those receiving free school meals during term time and other vulnerable school-age children. As well as enjoying hot nutritious meals, children are encouraged to be active by participating in sports and spending time outdoors, and to try their hand at a range of activities such as arts and crafts, cooking, games and free play.

Among those delivering schemes as part of Holiday Activities and Food programme are schools, childcare providers, community groups and sports activity providers. Parents and carers wishing to find out what is on offer in their area should search the Family Information and Services Hub and contact their local providers directly to sign up to schemes.

The upcoming Christmas itinerary follows a successful summer programme, which saw almost £2 million awarded to HAF providers and 9,777 individual children accessing schemes across the county.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20231120hafxmas>

### **Pick your top three school preferences when applying for school places in year R and 3**

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.

Parents can now go online to submit their applications. They can log back into the system to amend their applications at any time before the closing date on 15 January 2024. Applications must be resubmitted after making any changes.

Those who require support with their applications are encouraged to attend one of the following library drop-in sessions where they will be guided through the process:

## Update from Hampshire County Council – December 2023

- Wednesday 10 January, 9.30am-3.30pm – Andover Library, Chantry Centre, 53 Chantry Street, Andover, SP10 1LT
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Parents who apply on time will be notified of the outcome of their application on 16 April 2024. Application advice:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20231110primaryschoolapplications>

### **Don't face money worries alone - support is at hand**

Hampshire County Council is encouraging residents who are concerned about their financial situation to reach out and get the help they need

Whether it's managing expenses, accessing benefits, handling debt, or finding support for mental health, there are services available to residents struggling with the cost of living.

In addition to the help available from people's own banks and utility companies, Hampshire residents concerned about their finances are encouraged to visit the 'cost of living and money worries' advice page on the [Connect to Support Hampshire website](#) - which signposts to a wide range of trusted, free local and national support and advice services.

Further information is available from the County Council's [Cost of Living web pages](#). As well as debt and finance support, these pages bring together a variety of information to help people keep well over winter, such as advice for keeping homes warm, details about meals on wheels and school meals, as well as advice for maintaining physical and [mental wellbeing](#) during challenging times. Practical support with food and heating costs from the government's Household Support Fund is also available to eligible residents and details can be found on the [connect4communities website](#).

Talk Money Week is held each year to encourage the public to have more open conversations about their money – from pocket money to pensions – and continue these conversations all year-round.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/031123talkmoneyweek>



Cllr David Drew  
Test Valley Central Division, HCC

# Update from Hampshire County Council – December 2023

## Utility works on the highway

In my conversations with many of you I've identified that utility companies undertaking work on the highway is often a significant frustration. The notice they give, the disruption they cause and the seeming inability to influence the length, scope and extent of works are, I know, of great concern to many people.

The HCC Highways Streetworks team has provided a briefing to explain how utility works are planned, what influence we have over them and what to do if they are causing significant disruption in your parish. This is in the form of an FAQ section copied below.

I hope you find this useful, do please share it with anyone you think may find it of interest.

Streetworks Team FAQ

Q: What is the Hampshire Highways Streetworks Team's role ?

A: The Streetworks team is responsible for the coordination of all works and events on the public highway in order to minimise traffic disruption. The Streetworks team also monitors utility Co's activities on the public highway and checks active work sites and reinstatements for compliance with National specifications. The legal basis for these responsibilities comes from the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). The StreetWorks team is not responsible for works off the public highway and enquiries about County Council works, S278 or S38 works should be directed to your county councillor.

Q: Can utility companies legally work on the public highway ?

A: Yes, they have legal duties and rights to install and maintain apparatus in the public highway from NRSWA. However, they have to comply with National Specifications and obtain a permit from the County Council for planned works. NRSWA and other legislation gives them legal rights to install cabinets and masts (up to 15m high) on the public highway without planning permission.

Q: Can HCC stop a utility company working on the public highway ?

A: No, except under very specific circumstances, for example: were a utility company wants to install new apparatus on a highly important and strategic road that has been specifically designated, by law, as a protected street.

Q: What conditions can be placed on works on the public highway ?

A: The County Council can place conditions on any permit application. Conditions are used to try to minimise traffic disruption. The conditions available as part of the permit scheme are not 'free form' and are restricted to controls over works timing, works area, traffic management type and stakeholder engagement. Conditions have to be reasonable and be able to be met by the works promoter.

Q: Who decides what type of traffic management (TM) to use ?

A: The works promoter is entirely responsible for selecting the most appropriate type of TM. They are the experts in the works they are undertaking and what the risks are. In selecting the TM type they must consider the risks to the workforce, passing traffic (including pedestrians) and relevant legislation and Codes or Practice.

Q: Who decides what diversion routes to use when road closures are needed ?

A: The works promoter is entirely responsible for selecting an appropriate diversion route. Best practice is to ensure that the diversion route uses similar roads to those closed. Unfortunately, the existing networks doesn't always permit this. Diversion routes are not enforceable.

Q: Who is responsible for the information provided on the permit ?

A: The works promoter is ALWAYS responsible for the information they supply. The County Council must assume that it is correct when assessing the permit and determining what conditions to apply.

Q: Does granting a permit mean that the County Council approves of the works / installation ?

A: No, the permit relates ONLY to the works and its impact on traffic. Approval for installing apparatus is given either by a utility Co's legal rights, or via the local Planning Authority.

## Update from Hampshire County Council – December 2023

Q: I've seen a utility leave a blacktop reinstatement in a flagstone surface. Is this allowed ?

A: Yes, NRSWA allows utility Co's to use a temporary reinstatement in order to re-open a road quickly or to give them time to source specialist materials. Normally temporary reinstatements are allowed for up to 6 months, but this duration can be extended if needed for engineering purposes.

Q: How long is a utility company responsible for its reinstatement?

A: Legislation states that a utility company is liable for any 'reasonable' repairs for two years.

Q: How much notice does the County get for works ?

A: NRSWA requires all works promoters to submit permit applications between 3 working days and 3 months ahead of works starting. As follows;

- Minor works (works lasting up to 3 days) = 3 working days advance notice
- Standard works (works lasting between 4 and 10 days) = 10 working days advance notice
- Major works (works lasting over 10 days OR requiring a road closure) = 3 months
- Immediate works (relating to safety or loss of service) = No advance warning. Works are started and the County Council is alerted within 2 working hours.

Reduced advance warning periods can be agreed on a site by site basis.

Q: What penalties are applied for non-compliances ?

A: The penalties are prescribed by legislation and can broadly fit into one of the following categories:

- Failing to comply with permit conditions = Fixed Penalty Notice
- Failing to comply with works specifications = Correct the non-compliance
- Overrunning agreed works durations without a valid reason = Significant daily charge
- Damaging the public highway = County Council effects repairs and recharges utility co.

Ultimately a works promoter can be taken to court for any non-compliance. But such measures are reserved for extremely serious situations.

Q: How well do utility companies comply with specifications and permit conditions ?

A: Very well. In 2022 Over 95% of sites signage and 96% of reinstatements complied with the National specifications. 97% of utility sites comply with permit conditions. 99% of utility sites were completed on time, or early.

Q: How can I see what works are planned in the County ?

A: The County Council handles all permits via a National IT system. This system automatically publishes all permits on the <https://one.network> website

Q: How can I contact the Streetworks team about problems with utility works ?

A: The best way to report site specific problems is via the 'report a road problem' page on the County Council's website. For more complex issues we would recommend asking your county councillor to raise the concern with the Streetworks Team.

Q: How many utility works are undertaken on the County's network ?

A: in the 2021/2022 financial year we processed 52,000 permit applications / changes from utility co's which resulted in 36,000 works being undertaken.