

Firstly, the storms of late February brought home how fragile are our services.

This month, I am looking at services that we need for our education, homes and businesses to function:-

Electricity: many of you endured power cuts in the recent Dudley, Eunice and Franklin storms.

I have started a conversation with HCC regarding their emergency planning: asking: does this include improved resilience of SSEN's overhead cables? If SSEN checks trees, how often do they cut back/do something about it?

Some residents are trying to beat the electrical dependency by installing Solar Panels and Back Up batteries, **using an HCC sponsored scheme with iChoosr last year**. Unfortunately, to date, there are just 25 home projects completed, and 271 cancelled out of over 1500 requests. Many have paid significant deposits. I have raised this with the Leader, Cllr Mans. If you know someone who committed to this scheme, please ask them to contact me. Thank you.

Broadband and telephone: residents lost electricity which resulted in no broadband, and the 4G seemed to drop out too. This made reporting difficult. It was interesting to see the power map rise in number of cases as the power was restored. As some areas move into 5G, and BT are moving our landlines, the resilience of 4G and our home phone systems are vital. This can't be left to the commercial providers, and may be a problem to solve that we pass onto Govt. I will ask for HCC if they will add this to the Emergency Planning scrutiny programme.

Your emails:

I *still* do not think your parish emails are working with the HCC system 100% perfectly. HCC has admitted this. Only some of your replies reach me & officers: HCC say it is to do with the security of one of the 'server hops'. HCC say they will not change their security levels, which put your emails at risk of not arriving. I'll pursue this *again* this month.

Trees:

Keeping our roads clear as trees fall : Tim Lawton at HCC has sent a report to Cllrs. which is described at the end of my report. It was a massive task. **If you have a site on which you'd like HCC to plant a tree**, please go to <https://hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/tree-planting> or search 'tree planting' on hants.gov.uk

Emergency planning

In the light of the effects of Dudley, Eunice and Franklin, will you be amending/ updating your Parish emergency plan? The County Council had a huge job to do, but as the lead authority for Emergency planning, with a greatly reduced budget for 2022-3 (at around £300K) I was concerned that they didn't change the plans that weekend to suit the circumstances.

The issue I have raised is- if there was an *expected* emergency that weekend, why wasn't emergency plan '*upgraded*' to include use of the HCC systems that weekend? Using 101 was a huge source of frustration.

It was clearly inadequate to have 101/999 as the only port of call?

Why was the twitter contact not read as a matter of course, and social media not watched for comments from the public? I have a meeting with the Customer Services lead at HCC on the 9th March to discuss this.

Defibrillators:

following a quick trawl from Parishes, it seems that Parishes are taking ownership of the maintenance costs: please could you tell me on which list you place the defibrillator availability?

Please note, the **HCC support grant is available** until the end of March: residents needing help with fuel food or heating should contact WCC (01962 840222) or Citizens Advice (0808 2787861) for assistance.

This is for families or any adult over 60. Schools can assist families, WCC tenants, CA for others.

Update on other matters:

Kings Barton:

The HCC commissioned 'taxi bus' with Winchester taxis to Kings Barton will commence on the 21st March. Details of stops are being finalised: timings will be halfway between the current 86 hourly service. Bus stops on the Andover Road are being upgraded and battery powered real time information added to help new users understand the services available.

A new path has been surfaced by Cala in front of the school and from 1a to the school which at last, gives a surfaced walking route between 1a and 1b! The Wellhouse Lane bridge should be open by mid-April latest.

Cart and Horses: Another month, another accident as commuting traffic grows again. The traffic engineers made changes to speed, light levels and added CCTV following the fatality and subsequent accidents pre lockdown . They (HCC) argue that the junction has been safer since then. I disagree that this is typical- the traffic has been so much quieter. I have seen the CCTV footage of the latest two accidents: it is distressing to watch, and a pattern is emerging. Speed is now much slower and not an issue. Visibility is good. I have asked for consideration of stop signs as requested by drivers on social media. I am working with Cllr Oppenheimer on this, and believe we need to show strength of opinion to National Highways, not just locally, but across the division. I have shared a petition on Facebook, and it is on my website too.

Rain damage of rural roads and paths:

a number of these have been reported : there is something in almost every Parish. If you have a persistent issue, please report it and copy to me. We now have monthly 'road surgeries' which could be useful for these.

By the time we reach March, you will have seen the County Budget report. You can see the debate in full from this page <https://democracy.hants.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=163&MId=7738>

I was pleased to be a part of the '**Stand With Ukraine Vigil**' hastily arranged with City of Sanctuary, Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group (who support refugees days to day) on Monday 1st March at Abbey Gardens. I notified local social media and despite the terribly wet weather, between 300-400 people attended to stand with the Ukrainian people. We are in touch with the Polish Club in Southampton, who say they have enough clothes: money donations can be made via the Red Cross.

This is an extract from Tim's report... written just after the storms

I thought you would appreciate a further update on the Highways response to the recent storms. As you can imagine the operational challenges have been unprecedented and in some places we have seen damage similar to the storms of 1987. The Highways team has been working flat out, day and night, and with Storm Eunice quickly becoming Storm Franklin there has been little time for respite.

Even though the storms have (thankfully) moved away now the team is still receiving reports of tree related issues and this is not surprising as many trees will have been severely weakened by the effects of the high winds. Aside from the storms the overnight weather has also been a concern with road surface temperatures dipping towards freezing requiring the gritter fleet to be mobilised - this has been an additional challenge for us in the light of already stretched resources but I am pleased to say that we have risen to it.

Since the start of the storm Highways have taken in excess of 2,500 individual calls, emails and webform contacts. Of these 1,200 have been tree related, resulting in over 500 emergency task orders. What has complicated the response is where the team responds to a report of a single tree fall only to find many more in the immediate vicinity or on-route requiring attention.

Milestone's specialist tree gangs are ready to deal with more reported incidents, supported by additional emergency gangs. Other business-as-usual resources have been redeployed to help deal with the storm response & recovery. Some roads remain temporarily closed but the situation remains fluid and dynamic.

The network-wide clear up has begun but it could take up to a month for all sites to be dealt with. In some cases specialist inspections will be required to examine damaged trees and it is possible that further localised tree felling will be needed should significant structural defects be found.

Dealing with the storms and their impacts will inevitably mean that some routine and programmed work will need to be rescheduled.

I would ask for your assistance in continuing to advise residents to report issues relating to Hampshire's road network to us online:<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems>

*If anyone needs to report an **urgent** issue or does not have access to the internet, they can call 0300 555 1388 (8:30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). Outside of office hours issues should be reported to 101, or when it is an absolute emergency and life could be in danger, 999.*

Tim Lawton, Asst Director Highways.

March 2022 - Report from AIV Winchester City Councillors to the Parishes

Council Tax/WCC budget setting 2022/23

After the usual late night meeting, it was agreed to increase the City Council precept by £3.95 per annum for a Band D Property. The windfall of a better than expected outturn for 2021/22 has allowed us to make one-off investments:

- an additional £100K for the Council's Hardship Fund - we anticipate increased need;
- £450K for maintenance of historic monuments - early intervention is key;
- £250K to trial low carbon bin lorries and buses - the necessary infrastructure is a challenge;
- £40K for bike storage and cycling and walking improvements;
- £150K for a food waste trial, finding the pitfalls before it becomes mandatory;
- £185K to fund cleaning market towns & city centres and replacement or repair of street furniture;
- £25K to embed City of Sanctuary principles (more on this later);
- £100K to make improvements in the remote working system - it has creaked under the strain of the last two years.

The new budget will be challenging with inflationary pressures, being added daily at present, and no sign of abatement.

Housing

Council House rent increases will be kept below inflation at 3.1%. We have also increased the budgets for repairs, and capped service charges.

Particularly welcome is the £15.8m. for retrofitting energy efficiency measures on existing housing stock. This not only reduces service costs and improves quality of life for our tenants but also leads by example and increases the expertise locally in the necessary skills. The vast majority of the housing stock in Winchester District is less than energy efficient; given the embedded carbon in existing buildings, retrofitting is the way forward.

The Dean Car Park

Some progress; WCC has secured the access road leading to the parking at the rear of the housing; it is vital to have control over the access road so as not to create a ransom strip, but at the cost of reducing spaces to 42. There will be a public consultation event covering the layout of the entire site, prior to a formal planning application. There was a suggestion that some interested parties would have priority for discussions behind closed doors; that would have been highly undemocratic but elected representatives have been included in conversations.

The big problem with the much needed parking on this site is the additional traffic on the Dean/Pound Hill crossroads, estimated at 200-300 movements per day, to an already problematic site. The additional housing on The Dean has increased foot traffic at this point as well, a tribute to the original principle of housing being near shops!

Jackie has requested a strategic review of this junction - to have a professional study and possible improvements would be very welcome. We have recognised this for many years as a problem junction and have been asking for solutions to be assessed.

On Street Parking

The proposals for how Hampshire County Council intends to take back control of this matter will be published in early March. To make any money, and fund enforcement, there will need to be charges. We will continue to press for a minimum one hour free of charge to protect our town centre retailers and residents who have no choice but to drive to shop.

City of sanctuary

CROSS-PARTY AGREEMENT FOR STEPS TO SUPPORT ASYLUM-SEEKERS & REFUGEES IN WINCHESTER DISTRICT.

Recent tragic events in the Ukraine have demonstrated how quickly and easily people living quiet peaceful lives in their own homes can become desperate refugees fleeing for their lives into a foreign country.

We are really proud and happy that there was unanimous, cross-party support at Winchester City Council for the Winchester Liberal Democrats motion to make Winchester District:

1. a more welcoming place for refugees and people seeking asylum and;
2. support taking practical steps, in dialogue with local and national organisations supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, to welcome and integrate all people into our communities, activities and culture and;
3. challenge anti-refugee and anti-migrant attitudes wherever they are found and support the Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group and Winchester City of Sanctuary in the promotion of the Together With Refugees campaign calling for a fairer, kinder and more effective approach to supporting refugees in the UK and;
4. that Winchester City Council be added to a list of supporters of [City of Sanctuary](#).

Thank you to [SWVG](#), [City of Sanctuary](#), [University of Winchester](#) for their support for this motion and we look forward to working with [Hampshire County Council](#), [Two Saints](#) and others in making Winchester District a place of sanctuary to those fleeing persecution and violence.

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CLLR FIONA ISAACS. REPORT March/April

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- The Dean Carpark - Business owners have signed their contracts with the developer. Like everyone, they are awaiting further information on the public consultation prior to the planning application. They have confirmed that they will pull out if this 3rd attempt at contracts falls through.
- Bishop's Sutton footpath - The feasibility study has been completed and options are now being looked at with regard to what can be done with the 106 monies set aside. The cost of delivering the full enhanced path is above what any joint CIL application could apply for. I will update you once more is discussed.
- Litter pick 2022 - Thank you for organising yet another great day. I was happy to help and I know this I saw really appreciate you doing this.
- Winchester road - 40-30mph campaign - Further information has gone onto HCC traffic team for consideration. Along with pictures of the abandoned highways lorry from Dorset, parking in the centre reservation area. The lack of visibility was ridiculous. I attempted to cross from Tichborne to turn right towards Alresford and you could not see traffic from the left. Evidence has been sent along with a call to the depo manager in Blandford asking them to rent a yard instead of parking in the lay-by . These vehicles are working in Dorset and are only being parked there because the driver lives in Itchen Abbas and does not have a car.
- Jacklyns Lane requested reduction of hedge height - Residents requested help after the agreed height of the footpath hedge height was to be kept low for safety and security. Whilst both ends were cut, the middle was left . This area was where antisocial behaviour was and an assault. Hampshire have now confirmed to me that this will be reduced as agreed, once the nesting season has finished. This has been reported back to the residents who raised this issue.
- Fly tipping and burning of rubbish in an open residential parking area - Concerned residents asked for help in a matter relating to fly tipping and then burning of trash, in and shared open residential parking area. This has now been dealt with, the area cleared and the police are now keeping an eye on it.
- I have reported a number of drainage issues onto the HCC site, most of the missing drain covers and pavement issues have now been sorted.
- There are still issues of staffing vacancies across many businesses and at the same time concern over high electricity, gas and petrol costs. This in many ways makes it harder for our area as staff have to travel.
- Host 4 Ukrainians Hants - Like many people, I have been helping with some refugees trying to escape the dreadful time they are experiencing. I have been contacted by a number of residents, who would love to help but can't host. Would the NATC be willing to set up something to welcome our new arrivals when they get here. That way

residents can donate monies into it and the welcome pack might include gift cards to the local shops etc? I have a few ideas and am happy to chat it through with anyone.