

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL report to Boarhunt Parish Council – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024



## Outstanding



Children in Hampshire continue to benefit from strong and effective services that make a positive difference to their lives. This is one of the key headline findings from Hampshire County Council's latest full Ofsted inspection, which has again rated its Children's Services outstanding

## Schools being Consulted

Hampshire County Council is proposing to close its Education Catering service by 31st March 2026 and is consulting with schools and nurseries which use the service on two potential options to meet their catering needs in future

These are:

- For schools and nurseries to arrange their own catering provision. (There is an active, well-established private sector market of school food providers operating successfully in Hampshire, from which schools can select).
- To provide a managed outsource of the service which schools and nurseries could buy into. This option would see the County Council procure and manage the supply of meals from alternative providers, on behalf of schools and nurseries.

Education Catering, formerly known as HC3S, has experienced significant financial pressure in recent years due to the combined impacts of rising food and staff costs. To cover its costs, the Local Authority has needed to increase the price of its school meals above the funding rate provided by Government to schools. This has resulted in a loss of business and as such, the County Council can no longer continue providing a non-statutory in-house service in the long term without making a loss. The current consultation runs for a period of five weeks until Friday **11th October**.

## Secondary School Places for September 2025

Applications opened on 9<sup>th</sup> September until 11:59 pm on **31st October** for pupils who are currently starting Year 6 [see online <https://educationonlineportal.hants.gov.uk/EducationOnlinePortal/en>]. To improve your chances of getting into a preferred school, remember to name three schools on your application.



## Smokefree Hampshire

With ambitious plans to significantly increase the number of Hampshire smokers quitting each year by 2030 from the current 3,500, Hampshire County Council has signed a new pledge to take even more action to reduce the harm caused by smoking across Hampshire communities.

Smoking is the single biggest preventable cause of ill health and premature death in England, costing the taxpayer millions and placing a huge burden on the NHS and social care. Therefore, helping people to quit smoking is vital and is one of HCC's key legal responsibilities.

In 2022, it was estimated that 10.5% of adults living in Hampshire smoked. Around 4,500 Hampshire residents die because of smoking each year, with a further 8,600 admitted to hospital.

The County Council's action plan includes working with local GPs, hospitals, social housing and adult social care providers, as well as the local voluntary and community sector to boost referrals into the county's free quit smoking service - Smokefree Hampshire, plus more outreach work to engage with those who traditionally do not seek help from formal quit-with-support services. Going forward, there will also be greater support for pregnant mums, as well as help for children and young people to quit electronic cigarettes (vapes) via a dedicated, free service working through local schools and colleges.

This builds on current work to create smokefree sites and provide resources for teachers, parents, and carers around smoking and vaping.

### **Prestigious Green Flag Awards**



Visitors to Hampshire County Council’s five country parks are guaranteed a top-quality day out thanks to the parks being once again awarded Green Flag awards for 2024. Lepe, River Hamble, Royal Victoria, Queen Elizabeth, and Staunton Country Parks have all once again regained Green Flag status for their excellent facilities and amazing outdoor spaces. Staunton Country Park and Royal Victoria Country Park have also once again won Green Heritage Accreditation for the management of the sites’ unique historic features - Lepe Country Park has also secured the heritage accolade this year for the first time.

### **Increase in Annual Road Repairs**

An unprecedented number of potholes and road defects have been fixed across a 12-month period, according to the latest figures from Hampshire County Council. From April 2023 to April 2024, 180,909 repairs were delivered, marking a 37 per cent increase. One year ago, HCC allocated an additional £22.5 million to tackle this issue and make our roads stronger.

With unprecedented volumes of potholes being reported to us, Hampshire is not alone in facing the challenge of keeping local roads in a good condition. The impact of colder, wetter winters takes a heavy toll on the roads, and higher costs due to inflation means that every year we must make our budget stretch further – for example, it now costs the taxpayer around 44% more to repair a pothole.

### **Tap into solar power to save on bills and tackle climate change**

An opportunity for Hampshire residents to benefit from competitively priced, high-quality solar panel installation and save on future energy bills is once again available through the 2024 Solar Together scheme

The solar energy group-buying scheme, offered by independent experts iChoosr and promoted by Hampshire County Council, enables residents to invest in solar panels for their homes, fitted by pre-vetted installers, to reduce reliance on the national grid and lower their energy bills, as well as boost local renewable energy generation.



Through Solar Together, over 28,400 solar panels have already been installed in Hampshire – it is estimated that these installations alone will reduce carbon emissions by 59,205 tonnes over 25 years – equivalent to taking over 32,600 cars off the road during the same period.

Those interested need to register online at [www.hants.gov.uk/solartogether](http://www.hants.gov.uk/solartogether) by **18th October** for a free and without obligation quote.

### **Community Grants**



Don’t forget that grant applications for a Councillor grant are now open. These grants are intended to help small, local, community groups eg lunch clubs, scouts, community centres, village associations, school PTAs, local Church, etc. Grants allocated are fairly small and MUST meet the published criteria. See - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/community/grants/grants-list/county-councillor>. Also, you must discuss with your County Councillor BEFORE application is made. All applications must be made online. *I look forward to hearing from you!*

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