

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL report to Boarhunt Parish Council – 6th March 2019

Social Workers

Graduates and career changers will be given hands-on experience through a fast-track programme to train the next generation of social workers. With rising demands on children's services, the County Council continue to invest heavily in children's social care, particularly in recruiting additional staff and their professional development, so that they have the capacity to work with vulnerable families at an early stage, long before they reach crisis point.

“Step up to Social Work” trainees can expect to learn and achieve their diploma through a combination of in-work and university experiences. On completion, the diploma will allow graduates to register and practice as a social worker. Applications should be submitted by 18th March 2019. Successful, initial applications will be followed by regional assessments. Students who are selected for the programme will start in January 2020 and complete their training in March 2021.

Candidates are eligible to apply if they have a 2:1 degree (for example, with honours), or a 2:2 plus a higher degree, which can include a Master's degree or a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, in a discipline other than social work. They should also have the equivalent of a GCSE Grade C in maths and English, and experience of working with children, young people or families.

The programme is backed nationally by £25 million from the Government, from which successful candidates will receive a bursary of £19,833 to support them while they are training. More information about applying to “Step Up to Social Work” can be found online: www.gov.uk/guidance/step-up-to-social-work-information-for-applicants

Secondary School Choices

Over 98 per cent of parents in Hampshire have been offered a place for their child, at one their preferred choices for a secondary school, by Hampshire County Council. Of those who applied, by the deadline, for a Year 7 place for September 2019, more than 92 per cent have been offered a place at their first choice school.

The County Council received 14,351 on-time applications this year – an increase of 370 applications compared with the number received for places in September 2018. Pupils who did not secure a place at one of their chosen schools have been allocated a place at a school near to where they live, with available spaces. Parents have the right to appeal in these situations and their child's name will be added to the waiting list for their preferred schools. Places do become available if parents change their mind, or families move home. The admissions team is now busy processing primary school applications with offers due to go out to parents on 16 April 2019.

Blue Badge Misuse

A crack down of Blue Badge misuse on the streets of Winchester has resulted in the retention of 10 badges by Hampshire County Council's Blue Badge enforcement team. Blue Badge fraud and misuse is not a victimless crime - the actions of unentitled drivers who break the law and risk a criminal record put disabled residents at a real disadvantage – taking away spaces from those who genuinely rely on the Blue Badge scheme to provide essential support and improve their quality of life.

Hampshire County Council, as the Blue Badge issuing authority, is responsible for Blue Badge enforcement in Hampshire. Together with the district and unitary councils who are responsible for their local parking enforcement, the local authorities work together to identify potential or proven misuse and respond to allegations of misuse. Where cases require further investigation, Hampshire County Council works with Portsmouth City Council, to carry out investigations on the County Council's behalf. These investigations can lead to prosecution should they be serious enough to make such action necessary.

It is a criminal offence:

- For a person to use a badge that does not belong to them
- To alter a badge
- To create a copy of a badge
- To use an expired badge
- To commit any form of fraud relating to the use of a Blue Badge or acquiring a Blue Badge.

People who misuse Blue Badges to access disabled parking areas can face fines of up to £5,000 and a criminal record. In the last three years the enforcement partnership has retained over 1,300 badges for misuse across the county.

For more information about using Blue Badges correctly or to report the misuse of a Blue Badge, visit Hampshire County Council's website: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/parking/bluebadge/rights>

River Hamble Country Park

A new visitor centre, improved play equipment and better paths and trail signage are set to transform River Hamble Country Park in Botley. The £800,000 investment will provide:

- A visitor centre that includes toilets, catering, some under cover seating and a hire space that can be used by the community for learning based activities and school visits.
- Improved play equipment, following feedback from visitors who wanted to see more opportunities for adventure and natural play.
- Improvements to paths to make them more accessible and usable in all weathers, to help make River Hamble a destination in all seasons.
- New signage to give visitors the confidence to explore.

The work is forecast to increase visitor numbers by 10 per cent. It builds on work already underway at the park to improve the entrance and introduce ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) so visitors can pay for parking more easily. The transformation of River Hamble Country Park is the final project in a three year programme of transformation, which has brought significant investment to all five of Hampshire County Council's biggest country parks. Lepe and Royal Victoria Country Park completed their new facilities in 2018. Staunton and Queen Elizabeth Country Parks are set to complete their transformations this year, and the work at River Hamble Country Park is expected to begin in September 2019.

Community Buildings

Community buildings around Hampshire will benefit from £130,000 thanks to funding from Hampshire County Council, to make improvements and maintain their quality. HCC works with Community Associations and Village Hall Trusts which seek to enable local people to meet the recreational, educational, social, cultural and environmental needs of their local communities. These organisations give local people an opportunity to participate in local activities and encourage local initiatives by people of all ages. Money is being awarded to the following organisations:

East Hampshire

Alton Community Association - £6,000 - to refurbish two rooms that will accommodate a youth club and day care. Centre refurbishments will also include access and toilet improvements as well as heating, glazing, floors and kitchenette.

Whitehill Village Hall - £10,000 - for a single-story extension to provide storage for groups

Havant

Community First Wessex, Leigh Park Community Centre - £9,880 - to refurbish the centre garden, kitchen and social areas and create a 'play café'.

Fareham

Sarisbury Athletic Cricket Club - £16,000 - to reconfigure and improve the changing rooms and toilets in the clubhouse and install more accessible doors.

Basingstoke and Deane Silchester Village Hall - £3,040 - to replace chairs at the hall to meet the standards of the newly refurbished building.

Winchester

St Paul's Winchester - £25,000 - to remodel and provide new meeting spaces, community kitchen, toilets, utility / craft room, lift, improved heating, redesigned dais with extended staging for arts performances.

Test Valley

Valley Park Community Association - £15,000 - to refurbish meeting rooms, a corridor, toilets, lights and floors and to improve disabled access.

Hart

Victoria Hall Charity, Hartley and Wintney - £21,300 - for new toilets in a foyer that serves a complex of halls and meeting rooms managed by the organisation.

Waste Prevention Community Grant

With the cost of dealing with Hampshire's household waste now regularly topping the £100 million a year mark, Hampshire County Council is offering grants of up to £5,000 to help kick start or expand projects, products and services which prevent waste at home. The total grant fund available for the year is £65,000.

Interested groups are encouraged to discuss potential projects with the County Council's team prior to applying. Please contact the team via email: waste.prevention@hants.gov.uk to arrange an informal discussion.

Who can apply?

- Community, neighbourhood or voluntary groups
- Registered Charities
- Schools, colleges and universities
- Not-for-profit organisations (including social enterprises)
- Businesses with fewer than 250 employees, i.e. small and medium sized enterprises
- Faith groups delivering community work
- Parish Councils

Previously successful projects include:

- Expanding the reach of family events to share, hire or rent baby products and toys.
- Composting courses with a focus on the health benefits of gardening.
- A waste prevention themed children's book aimed at all infant aged children & their families.
- Launching beeswax wrap 'satchels' as an alternative to plastic sandwich bags.
- Running community upcycling classes.
- An extension of a furniture workshop to enable upcycling and repair activities.
- Running a school cooking club to teach cookery skills and learn about healthy eating.
- Setting up a monthly repair café.
- A local campaign to raise awareness of reusable alternatives to single use plastics.
- Providing a community fridge to redistribute surplus food from local homes.

A Reminder – Shingles Vaccination

A free vaccination is available to all people aged 70 or 78 years. It is not available on the NHS to younger people because shingles is more common in the over-70s. The vaccine does not work as well in people over the age of 80 years. Contact your GP for more information and advice.

Silver Line

The Silver Line is a free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people. Open 24 hours a day, every day of the year, the Silver Line offers - information; signposts callers to the many groups and services that exist in their local community; protects and supports those who are suffering abuse and neglect. If callers would like to be put in touch with Silver Line Friends, they can receive a regular weekly friendship call. Freephone 0800 470 8090 at any time.

Transport to and from Hospital

If you cannot use public transport to get to/from try contacting the Good Neighbours Support Service on 02392 899671 or Portsmouth Action on 02392 822795.

Hampshire Bobby Scheme

This scheme provides free home security and safety checks to anyone in Hampshire over the age of 65 years. This service is also available to those most vulnerable people who have a disability or long-term illness. Ring 0300 777 0157.

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