

Hampshire County Councillor Update – October 2024

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By-Election Announced for Bishops Waltham Division

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

The names of the candidates nominated to stand for election will be published on 7 October. 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.

Decision Due this Autumn on Future Services

Earlier this year a public consultation was held which invited people's views on 13 proposals to reduce and change some local services to help the County Council deliver savings towards the £132 million recurring budget gap that the County Council originally anticipated it would face from 2025/26 onwards. Since that time, because demand and costs have continued to rise, the financial shortfall from 2025/26 onwards is now expected to go up to at least £175 million.

During September, Select Committees examined the consultation results and savings recommendations, together with analysis of the potential impact on residents of the proposals if they go ahead. Ten of the recommendations were accepted (some with minor modifications) and 3 were rejected. The rejected proposals were: cuts to passenger transport, cuts to school crossing patrols & cuts to Household Waste Recycling Centres. However, these are only recommendations. Final decision is being made by the Cabinet on 14-Oct.

Check your Flood Risk Ahead of Winter Rainfall

Around 400,000 households in Hampshire are at risk of flooding and with the potential for increased rainfall because of climate change, particularly during autumn and winter. Hampshire County Council has created a new online tool to help people check their flood risk to help protect homes, land, and businesses

The [online community toolkit](#), available on the County Council's website, is designed to provide communities, parish and town councils, householders, landowners and businesses with information on flooding and where to find advice and support, plus where to report flooding for assistance. Reporting incidents of flooding also helps organisations to develop measures to reduce the flooding in high-risk areas.

At least eight of the last 12 months have seen above average rainfall with the highest number of named storms on record. Checking your flood risk takes just a few minutes. If you find your property is at greater risk, you can sign up to receive warnings from the Environment Agency about possible flooding from rivers, the sea or groundwater, together with advice on the practical steps you can take to be prepared. This could include joining a local Community Flood Action Group which supports residents to reduce flood risk in those areas where flooding could be the most severe, keeping a supply of sandbags, or checking your insurance cover is up to date.

Now is also a good time for homeowners and landlords to do checks on any drains or water channels on their property, taking action to remove blockages from their private land. This can make a big difference in helping excess water to flow away naturally.

Schools Consulted as HCC proposes Closure to Education Catering Service

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

- 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.

Hampshire Expands the Number of School Places for Children with Special Educational Needs

More children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are set to benefit from local specialist school places as Hampshire County Council increases the provision at two schools in Fareham and the New Forest, as well as a nursery in Gosport. Most of the 31 new places at Heathfield Special School, Pennington Church of England Junior School, and Haven Nursery School will be available immediately

Solar Together – HCC’s Group Buy Scheme for Solar Energy

The solar energy group-buying scheme 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 by 18 October for a free and without obligation quote.

Home Energy Efficiency Opportunities

The following offers advice and support. But please carefully check eligibility for grants as they will depend on the type of home and your circumstances.

- [Energy Saving Trust](#) – Guidance for the type of insulation for properties
- [Great British Insulation Scheme](#) – Eligible if the property has an energy performance certificate (EPC) of D to G and is in Council Tax bands A-D in England
- [Warmer Homes](#) – Warmer Homes provides fully funded insulation, solar panels and other energy efficiency measures for owner-occupiers and private renters living in low-income, off-gas households. The scheme is available until March 2025.

County Councillor Grants

Groups and organisations can apply for funding for both revenue (one-off) and minor capital projects. Revenue grants should generally be used to support short term project related costs.

It is expected that the grants will benefit a wide range of groups/activities: for example, vulnerable children or adults, young people, facilities for older people, community facilities, parish councils (but only for specific projects), schools' minor traffic or safety works, local environment projects, and community safety.

More details are available on the County Council website. The 2023/24 County Councillor grant scheme is open until 29 February 2024.