**Hampshire County Councillor report**

**Cllr Jan Warwick**

**May 2023**

**Potholes** and other road defects are one of our biggest issues locally with the weather this winter a worst possible combination of prolonged heavy rain and sub-zero temperatures. The repeated cycle of rain > freeze> rain > freeze created the perfect environment for potholes to form, and in addition the prolonged periods of heavy rain have kept groundwater levels exceptionally high resulting in localised surface water flooding, and this is despite HCC’s efforts to keep roadside grips, gullies and drains clear.

Potholes can form in a number of ways. Aside from general wear and tear, the freeze-thaw action of water when it gets into cracks can rapidly weaken and break open road surfaces, and this is in addition to the hydraulic effect of vehicle tyres constantly going over standing water in cracks and other small surface defects that can also create potholes.  This explains why, even though we are moving into summer, potholes are continuing to develop and why some of the temporary fixes are beginning to break down.

Given the high number of potholes that have formed this winter, particularly after each of the spells of freezing weather, HCC’s Highways team took the decision to carry out more emergency temporary infill repairs to keep roads safe and serviceable - in the time taken to undertake a permanent fix between 4 and 7 temporary infills can be completed.  As a result, over 40,000 of these potholes were filled in the three months from December to February.

The Government has allocated just under £6million to Hampshire for additional pothole repairs.  We anticipate this money being used to fill approximately 39,000 additional potholes over the summer.

Please continue to report potholes at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes>.

**Schools:** Parents in Hampshire who applied on time for a school place for children starting in September 2023 – either in Reception Year or in Year 3 in a junior school – have been sent the outcome of their application by Hampshire County Council.

Over 98 per cent (98.77 per cent) of parents have been offered a reception year place for their child in one of their three preferred choice schools, with more than 93 per cent (93.02 per cent) allocated a place at their first choice of school. Of pupils transferring from infant school to junior school (Year 3), more than 99 per cent (99.29 per cent) received a place at one of their three choices, and over 97 per cent (97.88 per cent) obtained a place at their first choice of school.

Parents are being encouraged at this time to consider how their child will travel to and from school, and whether they may need transport assistance. School transport is available for children who meet specific eligibility criteria, after they reach compulsory school age (five years old). The deadline to submit transport applications is **31 July 2023**. For more information about school transport assistance, please visit the [County Council's website](https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schooltransport/parent-carer/eligibility).

**The Big Fix:** Hampshire residents are encouraged to give old items, gathering dust or potentially destined for the bin, a new lease of life by visiting their local Repair Café. The network has collectively run over 90 events restoring over 1,000 items to usable order. These include broken items such as electronics, garden equipment, clothing, and jewellery. The initiative is supported through HCC’s waste prevention community grant programme.

To find a local event, search for ‘Hampshire Repair Café Network at <https://therestartproject.org/networks/hampshire/>

**Ticks**: Our Countryside Service hasadvised residents to be ‘tick aware when spending time outdoors as the summer approaches. Ticks are small spider-like animals, almost invisible to the eye. They can serious acute and chronic illnesses, such as Lyme Disease. Prevention tips include avoiding tall grassy areas, reduce the amount of exposed skin, check yourself, your children and your pets for ticks and use insect repellent.

They advise that you should remove any found ticks as quickly as possible with fine-tipped tweezers or a tick removal tool, clean the area, and for several weeks monitor the bitten area for any rashes that may appear. Contact your doctor immediately if you begin to feel unwell with flu-like symptoms or develop a spreading circular red rash.

**God Save the King**! The coronation weekend was a fabulous occasion with communities coming together in celebration. It was a great opportunity to see the benefits of some of the community and coronation grants I have given this year.

Cllr Jan Warwick

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