
June 2026 Report from Cllr James Batho, Hampshire County Councillor

Welcome to my first monthly report as your newly elected Hampshire County Councillor for the Winchester Downlands Division.

My aim is to provide a regular update on county-level matters affecting South Wonston and the wider division, together with information about local issues that residents have raised and the work I am undertaking on their behalf.

As always, if there are any issues that the Parish Council would like me to investigate or pursue with HCC, please let me know.

County Councillor Grant Scheme

The County Councillor Grant Scheme is expected to reopen on 1 July 2026. It gives me an annual budget of £5,000 to allocate to local projects, initiatives, or organisations across the division. I'll share more details next month once the scheme is live. If you have a project in mind, please do get in touch.

Local Government Reorganisation

HCC is currently exploring whether there are sufficient legal grounds to pursue a judicial review of the Local Government Reorganisation proposals. Before any decision is made, the council must weigh the likely financial implications and potential costs involved.

This is a fast-moving situation. I will continue to monitor developments and share factual updates as more information becomes available.

My County Council Responsibilities

I have been appointed to the following Hampshire County Council committees and panels:

- Universal Services
- Corporate Parenting
- Deputy on Children & Young People Select Committee
- Deputy on Health & Adult Social Care
- Deputy on Regulatory Committee (planning, rights of way, common land and environmental licensing)

The first meetings are scheduled to take place during June, and I look forward to reporting back on matters relevant to local communities.

Highways

One of the most common concerns raised by residents continues to be the condition of our roads and pavements.

I have now completed training on the Highways Members' Portal which allows me to monitor enquiries, track progress and request additional information from officers. I also have access to mapping systems showing county-owned land, highway assets and county planning matters.

The Highways team reminded me that resident reports remain one of the most important ways of identifying potholes and other highway defects. I would therefore encourage residents to continue reporting issues when they see them. I have submitted several questions to the Highways senior management team and am awaiting responses, including:

- The planned maintenance programme for roads across the division.
- How pothole repairs are categorised and monitored.
- The proportion of repairs that are temporary versus permanent.
- How repeat pothole reports are tracked.
- Failure rates for pothole repairs over time.
- The balance between preventative and reactive highway maintenance.
- How highways performance statistics are reported.

I hope to provide further information in future reports once responses have been received.

Local issues raised

Since being elected, I have already begun raising local issues on behalf of residents and the Parish Council.

These include:

- Bollards and re-instatement of bank on Alresford Drove.
- Pothole and highway maintenance issues across the division.

I have submitted supporting evidence and photographs where appropriate and will continue to pursue these matters with the relevant county council officers.

Community Engagement

One of the most valuable aspects of being a councillor is hearing directly from residents about the issues affecting their daily lives.

I will be launching a monthly drop-in surgery for the North of the Division. I hope it will generate a wide range of discussions and highlight just how important it is that residents have accessible opportunities to raise concerns and ask questions.

Monthly Drop-In Surgery

When: Last Friday of each month at 2pm

Where: TBA

No appointment is necessary – residents are welcome to drop in for an informal conversation.