

### **Dealing with Winter Weather**

Throughout the year, Hampshire Highways completes ditch clearing and maintenance work on Hampshire's 60,000 gullies and 4,600 catchpits, as well as carrying out a continued programme of structural improvements to the highways drainage system to make Hampshire more resilient to the effects of extreme weather.

Anyone who experiences an issue on a Hampshire road can report it at <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport>. Details of flood alerts and updates are available from the Environment Agency at <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/5-day-flood-risk>. Further information on the impact on the electricity network is available from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, see <http://news.ssen.co.uk/news/all-articles/2017/12/ssen-returns-to-business-as-usual/>

### **New Electric Vehicles**

A new electric delivery van and pool car based at Bar End, Winchester, will cost 97% less to 'fuel' than equivalent diesel vehicles. The County Council is also reviewing which other vehicles in its 156 small vehicle fleet could be replaced with electric equivalents – which could save £210,000 every year.

The County Council has already saved nearly £30 million in energy costs over the past seven years after cutting its carbon emissions by 38.1% since 2010. The local authority has now set a more ambitious target to cut carbon from 40% to 50% by 2025. Electric vehicles could also save an estimated 400 tonnes of carbon emissions, helping the environment and delivering cleaner air for Hampshire residents.

### **School Dinners**

The Council has agreed an increase of 15p for a two course school dinner. This will come into effect from September 2018 and will bring the price per meal in line with those charged by many other local authorities, as well as the Department for Education's funding for free meals, which is set at £2.30. In the last school year, HC3S, the County Council's award winning catering business, cooked and served over 14 million school meals in Hampshire's primary and secondary schools.

### **Help with paying for childcare**

Financial support is available if you and your family meet certain criteria. Free Early Years Education (EYE) is also available to some two, and all three and four year olds in school nursery classes, state or private nursery schools, day nurseries, playgroups or pre-schools and with approved childminders. There is also other support for children with special educational needs and disabilities. Visit the Hampshire County Council web page [<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/payingforchildcare/>] to find out more, including universal credit and help if you are in education.

### **Adoption and Fostering 'web chat'**

Deciding to apply to adopt or foster a child is a big step, and it's important that all the information and advice people might need to make a decision is easy to access. Hampshire County Council's new "web chat" service makes it easier to get in touch with adoption and fostering specialists quickly for information, or arrange a call back.

During office hours, people can opt to begin a live, online 'chat' with an adviser if they would like to ask questions about adoption, including their potential eligibility to adopt. There are more than 40 children in the care of Hampshire County Council who are waiting to be adopted. There is a particular need for adopters who feel they could give a home to sibling groups, or a child with disabilities. HCC provide support for adopters and the new additions to their families, and our Adoption Support Team of social worker specialists is on hand for as long as needed.

Anyone over 18 who has a spare room and some personal or professional child care experience can apply to adopt a child, whether an individual or a couple. To find out more, please call 0300 555 1384.

### **New Assault Course**

A new assault course has been opened at Hampshire County Council's Queen Elizabeth Country Park. The free facility is part of the Armed Forces Covenant funded Forts and Fleets project, which also includes a new dog activity course, adventure play area and outdoor community space at the County Council's largest country park near Petersfield.

Proposed improvements in and around the existing visitor centre funded by the County Council are due to be completed in 2019, including a bigger catering offer with more seating, a flexible hall for indoor events and for hire, better car parking and improved landscaping and shelter in the courtyard. The County Council and partner organisations are also investing in new or improved visitor centres and play facilities at Lepe Country Park in the New Forest, Royal Victoria Country Park at Netley, Staunton Country Park at Havant and Manor Farm and River Hamble Country Park at Bursledon.

### **New Year's Resolution?**

If you are concerned about your body weight why not take up this offer? Almost 7 in 10 of Hampshire adults are overweight or obese and the cost to the NHS in Hampshire in managing diseases related to obesity is estimated at almost £340 million per year! The County Council has commissioned a new self-referral service for people aged 18 years and over. If you are a resident in the administrative county of Hampshire, or are registered with a Hampshire GP and have a Body Mass Index [BMI] of 30+, or don't know what your BMI is but think you might qualify for this **free service**, call 0345 602 7068 and quote WWRS095. People who qualify will be offered a free tailored service and will aim to lose not less than 5% of their body weight.

### **Walking and Cycling**

Walking is simple, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, and become healthier. The County Council has six beautiful country parks [see <https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo>] plus Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve which are the perfect places to stretch your legs. Regular brisk walking helps to improve performance of the heart, lungs and circulation, lower blood pressure, and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and strokes. It can also help to reduce stress levels and promote a sense of wellbeing.

**Did you know?** It is recommended that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week. The recommendation for children is at least 60 minutes every day, and preferably more.

To help with ideas of where to stride out and stay fit and healthy, visit the Walking for Health website [see <https://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/>] which offers more than 1,800 free short walks every week. These walks are easy to get involved with, especially if you have an existing health condition and want to keep active.

**Did you know?** There are over 750 miles of off-road cycle routes and urban cycle paths in Hampshire. To find out more visit <https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryside/cycling>

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