

## Update from Hampshire County Council – January 2026



### **Hampshire County Council confirms M27 reopening ahead of schedule after successful completion of major engineering operation**

The M27 between Junctions 9 and 11 will fully reopen 24 hours ahead of schedule at 4am on Saturday 3 January, following the successful completion of a major engineering scheme to deliver a new underpass beneath the motorway

The project has been delivered by Hampshire County Council and main contractor VolkerFitzpatrick, in close collaboration with National Highways, supported by a number of specialist subcontractors.

The motorway has been closed since Christmas Eve to enable the construction of improvements to Junction 10 using an innovative 'box slide' technique that has only been deployed in the UK a handful of times. Using precision engineering, a 60 metre long pre constructed concrete underpass was slid 65 metres into position before the road surface was reinstated. This innovative, time saving approach replaced what would otherwise have been many months of lane and speed restrictions, as well as overnight works – and it will enable the motorway to reopen earlier than originally planned. Over the closure period, around 130 people have worked in total around 10,000 hours, day and night. The M27 had originally been scheduled to reopen at 4am on Sunday 4 January.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260201M27UpdateReopening>

### **Advice for staying safe and well during the cold snap**

The UK Health Security Agency has extended the amber alert for cold, with overnight temperatures as low as minus six degrees Celsius, expected from 8PM on 2 January until 10AM on 9 January across the South East. This period of cold weather has the potential to affect anyone, not just those who may be more at risk due to health or other vulnerabilities

During this prolonged period of cold temperatures which started with a yellow alert on 28 December, Hampshire County Council is advising residents to follow a few simple steps to help keep themselves and others safe and well.

Councillor Liz Fairhurst, Hampshire County Council's Lead Member for Adult Social Care and

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Public Health, said: “While Hampshire is experiencing such cold conditions, it is important that we all do what we can to keep warm and stay safe. Some people in our communities are at particular risk from the ill effects of the cold weather so I would urge residents to look out for their relatives or neighbours who may be vulnerable or unable to get out due to the weather.”

Follow these top tips to help yourself and others stay well during the cold snap.

### Keep warm

A cold home can increase the risk of health impacts, particularly for the very young, the old, and people with long term conditions.

- Try to heat rooms you spend a lot of time in, such as the bedroom or living room, to at least 18°C (65°F), day and night - and keep bedroom windows closed. You may prefer your main living room to be slightly warmer.
- Wear several layers of thinner clothing rather than one thick layer – this will help keep you warmer.
- Draw curtains at dusk and block out draughts.
- Try not to sit still for too long, ideally not more than an hour or so. Anyone who has trouble getting up and moving around can also stretch their arms and legs to help them stay warm.
- If you need to go out, remember to wrap up warm, and wear shoes with good grips to avoid slipping on icy surfaces.
- If you're worried about the cost of heating your home, seek financial support.

Vulnerable people who struggle to keep their homes warm can get help from Hampshire County Council's Hitting the Cold Spots initiative. Residents can call on behalf of themselves or someone else on Freephone 0800 804 8601 (Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm).

### Looking after yourself and others

- Eat well. Try to have at least one hot meal a day. Hampshire's Meals on Wheels service is available to anyone aged 18 and over with a long-term health condition who may struggle to shop for or prepare food for themselves. Warm drinks are a good way to keep warm as well.
- Stock up on food in the house in case you can't get out during a cold spell.
- Keeping paths and pavements free of snow and ice can help prevent falls. Older and vulnerable people are most at risk from slips and may need help to keep their pathways clear.
- Boost your immunity – get vaccinated. People who are eligible for a COVID19 or flu vaccine are encouraged to take up the offer as soon as they can.
- During icy and freezing conditions, motorists should take extra care when travelling. Keep an eye on the weather forecast and check conditions before you travel.

Some people may need extra support during periods of cold weather. Look out for friends, family and neighbours who may be vulnerable by keeping in touch, checking they are well, making sure they know how to keep warm and safe, and whether they need practical help such as stocking up with food or essential medications. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.

If you think they may have hypothermia, contact NHS 111 for further assessment, and in an emergency dial 999; typical signs that someone may be suffering from hypothermia include shivering, slow breathing, tiredness or confusion, and pale, cold skin.

For more information visit: Winter vaccinations and winter health - NHS.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260102ambercold>

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### **Hampshire County Council welcomes national funding to improve bus travel**



People across Hampshire are set to benefit from a funding boost to bus travel, following the Government's announcement of the Local Authority Bus Grant (LABG)

Hampshire County Council has secured £27.2m of capital funding from the Department for Transport and £24.9m revenue funding over a four-year period, starting from the next financial year (2026-2027).

This long-term funding gives us the certainty to work with bus operators and community partners to improve bus services – which is already paying off as Hampshire's bus passenger journeys have increased by 6.8% over the past year. It means we can plan ahead with confidence and invest in improvements that will make bus travel more frequent, cleaner, and more reliable, bringing real benefits for residents.

Recent figures released from the Department for Transport confirm a rise in the number of bus passenger journeys in Hampshire. They have risen from 24.9m in 2023/24 to 26.6m journeys in 2024/25 - an increase of 1.7m trips.

Specific investment areas for the Local Authority Bus Grant are based on strict criteria set out by Government. Funding will be targeted on a range of improvements aimed at boosting bus use across the county, including bus priority lanes, expanding timetables on busy services, infrastructure at sixth form colleges, real-time and on-bus passenger information, a fund for rural bus shelters and a community transport fund and toolkit.

From 2025/26, Government funding for Bus Service Improvement Plans and the Local Authority Bus Service Operators' Grant will be combined into a single, consolidated grant. This national funding must be directed by local authorities towards specific service improvements and cannot be used to provide long-term subsidies for commercial bus routes.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20251218buses>

### **Securing a greener, healthier Hampshire for everyone – County Council launches new blueprint for nature recovery**

A thriving natural environment is at the heart of Hampshire's future, supporting the wellbeing of residents, strengthening communities, and ensuring that wildlife and green spaces can be enjoyed for generations to come

Hampshire County Council, together with partners, has today (8 December) launched the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Hampshire, a shared plan to restore nature, protect precious habitats, and create more opportunities for people to connect with the outdoors.

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As part of our Hampshire Pledge, we set out our commitment to look after and enhance Hampshire's rich and diverse natural environment, and ensure the countryside is available for everyone to explore and enjoy. Our ask of our communities is to engage with conservation where possible, to consider the impact of our actions on climate change and to join us in taking care of our surroundings. Everyone can play their part, from nature-friendly choices at home, or simply enjoying the county's beautiful landscapes. Every action, big or small, helps to build a greener Hampshire.

Graham Horton, Deputy Director for Natural England's Thames Solent team, said: "Natural England warmly welcomes the launch of Hampshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This ambitious plan is a vital step towards protecting and enhancing the county's diverse and special natural environment. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed, and we encourage communities, landowners, and partners to play their part. The time for action is now - together we can deliver recover nature across Hampshire."

The full strategy is available to read here: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/nature-recovery-hampshire/hampshire-strategy>

To find out more about the Hampshire Pledge commitment to champion the Hampshire environment, visit:

[www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/hampshire-pledge](http://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/hampshire-pledge)

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20251208newblueprintfornaturerecovery>

### **Consultation on Proposals for Local Government Reorganisation in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton – Closes 11<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

#### Overview

This statutory consultation seeks views on the proposals that the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has received following the Secretary of State's invitation to councils in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth & Southampton to submit proposals for unitary local government for their areas. You can find full details of the consultation, including a privacy statement, at: [Local government reorganisation in Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton - GOV.UK](#)

### **Man given suspended prison sentence for fly-tipping tyres on road in Test Valley**

A man has been sentenced after dumping tyres on Station Road in Nursling.

On 28 October 2024 covert cameras captured a vehicle stopping at a layby on Station Road. The footage showed the rear doors opening and six tyres, including a tractor tyre and one from a heavy goods vehicle, being dumped across the carriageway, posing a serious risk to other road users.

Following a vehicle registration check, officers were led to Nigel Cross, 59, from Southampton.

Mr Cross appeared at Southampton Magistrates' Court on 27 November 2025, where he pleaded guilty. He received a four-month prison sentence, suspended for 18 months, and was

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ordered to complete 200 hours of unpaid work. Cross must also pay £877.50 in costs and a £154 victim surcharge, totalling £1,031.50.

Councillor David Drew, Portfolio holder for Recycling and Environmental Services at Test Valley Borough Council, said: “Not only does a fly-tip like this blight our communities, but it also puts people at serious risk and is completely irresponsible. It is lucky nobody got hurt on this occasion. I’m delighted with this result, and we’ll continue to work hard to tackle this behaviour and hold offenders to account.”

Residents can report fly-tipping to the council online at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/fly-tipping](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/fly-tipping).

<https://testvalley.gov.uk/news/2025/dec/man-given-suspended-prison-sentence-for-fly-tipping-tyres-on-road-in-test-valley>

### **Test Valley Borough Council praised for strong leadership and approach to transformation in peer team progress review**

Test Valley Borough Council has been given a clean bill of health and praised for its strong leadership and approach to transformation in a follow-up to its Local Government Association peer review that took place in 2024.

A corporate peer challenge team made up of senior cross-party councillors and experienced officers visited TVBC in November 2024, spending a week undertaking a comprehensive review of key finance, performance and governance information across its services, as well as speaking to more than 100 people including staff, councillors and external partners.

They described TVBC as a “high-performing council that delivers effectively for its residents, with a commendable community-first approach and a strong sense of pride throughout the organisation.”

They also put forward nine recommendations, which included building on the success of councillors working well in their communities, using performance and data to help improve and evaluate the impact and value for residents, and investing in its workforce.

Two peer team representatives returned in October 2025 to undertake a progress check. In their update report, which is available at [www.testvalley.gov.uk/CorporatePeerChallenge](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/CorporatePeerChallenge), they said that positive progress had been made against each of the recommendations. They highlighted the council’s strategic leadership, positive approach to change, particularly in the context of local government reorganisation, and strong community engagement.

<https://testvalley.gov.uk/news/2025/dec/test-valley-borough-council-praised-for-strong-leadership-and-approach-to-transformation-in-peer-team-progress-review>

### **Free Christmas tree drop-off points across Test Valley**

Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) is once again making it easy to recycle real Christmas trees once the festive season is over.

From Saturday 27 December 2025 to Monday 12 January 2026, free collection points will be open across the borough. Simply bring an undecorated, real tree to one of the sites listed below, and the local authority will take care of the rest.

The trees will be treated like garden waste and taken for composting.

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The drop-off locations are:

- Enham Arch Retail Park, Andover
- Dobbies Garden Centre, Andover
- Hillier Garden Centre, Weyhill
- Augusta Park Community Centre, Andover
- Alma Road Car Park, Romsey
- Knightwood Leisure Centre, Valley Park
- B&Q, Nursling
- West Wellow Village Hall
- Hillier Garden Centre, Braishfield

These sites are for real Christmas trees only. Please follow the instructions at each location and place the tree in the designated area.

Councillor David Drew, portfolio holder for Recycling and Environmental Services, said: “We’re pleased to offer this service again this festive season. It makes clearing up after Christmas easier for residents who aren’t signed up to garden waste collections, and ensures trees are recycled into something useful.”

If residents are signed up to TVBC’s kerbside garden waste collection service, their tree can be put out alongside their green bin or sack when collections restart in the new year. Only trees taller than six feet should be cut in half.

For more details, visit [www.testvalley.gov.uk/waste](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/waste).

*David Drew*

Test Valley Central Division, HCC  
Harewood ward, TVBC