**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT**

**TO**

**ALL PARISH COUNCILS**

**IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS**

**1 DECEMBER 2021**

1. Staying warm and healthy over the winter period

As Councillors we can all play a useful role in helping our communities to stay in good health over the winter period. This is especially important as we face new strains of the virus. Thinking of Parish Newsletters, social media and local websites I wanted to share four things which HCC is advising residents to do to help stay healthy over the coming season:

i) Boost your immunity by getting the COVID-19 booster and ’flu vaccine - Residents eligible for the COVID-19 booster will be contacted by the NHS – if anyone has not been contacted within a week of reaching six months since their second jab they can call 119 or book online via the NHS National Booking Service. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Those who are eligible for a free ’flu vaccine can book an appointment through their GP surgery or local pharmacy.

ii) Keep warm: Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F). You may prefer your main living room to be slightly warmer. Vulnerable people who struggle to keep their homes warm can get help from Hampshire County Council’s Hitting the Cold Spots initiative - a county-wide project offering advice and support to people who are having trouble staying warm during the winter, including home visits, help to access funding for heating repairs and replacements and temporary heating. <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/coldspots>

In addition to the practical help available, Hampshire residents can also receive advice about tariff switching and referrals to other services for further help, including ‘safe and well’ visits and healthy living advice. The advisors will be able to talk through the best possible solutions for each caller. If you know someone who is struggling to stay warm and well this winter, please signpost them to an advisor on Freephone 0800 804 8601 (Monday – Friday, 9am to 5pm).

iii) Eat well - Food is a vital source of energy, which helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure you have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day. People should also try to keep an emergency supply of food in the house in case they can’t get out during a cold spell.

iv) Look after yourself and others - On cold days try to avoid going outside; however, if you do need to, remember to wrap up warm. If you have an older neighbour or relative, look out for them during winter to make sure they are safe and well. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.

1. Support for new “Community Pantries”

As part of a new connect4communities package, I was interested to note that HCC is offering funding for new community pantries in areas of need. I thought this was worth highlighting. See link to the Press Notice here:

https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/211126householdsupportfund

As well as being an excellent way of supporting vulnerable people, community pantries can also really help to reduce food waste so they are a very good thing. If any Parish Council wanted to set up a community pantry I would be happy to provide a County Councillor grant to purchase a fridge or food cupboard.

1. Review of 20mph policy underway

At a Full Council meeting of Hampshire County Council on 4 November, the Deputy Leader Cllr Humby announced a review of the County’s policy on implementing 20mph speed limits. This review will include scrutiny by the ETE Select Committee and will take into account the climate emergency, the obesity crisis, the emerging Local Transport Plan and developments in national best practice. We anticipate that the review will report in the first half of 2022.

1. HCC wins prestigious Green Apple award

In early November I attended the Green Apple awards and accepted an award on behalf of Hampshire County Council which is for our new materials recycling facility in Micheldever.

Our ground-breaking facility is already successfully re-processing large quantities of excavated road material for re-use across the Hampshire network, resulting in significant carbon savings and reduced reliance on external supply chains.

Green Apple Awards are hosted by The Green Organisation which was established in 1994 as an international, independent, not-for-profit and non-political environmental group, dedicated to recognising, rewarding and promoting innovative environmental best practice around the world.

1. Enhancements planned for Butser Hill

The highest point on the South Downs and one of the most visited hills in southern England will be significantly improved for walkers and wildlife, thanks to new funding of £240,000.

At 271m, Butser Hill is one of the crown jewels of the South Downs National Park, visited by over 80,000 people every year who come to enjoy its panoramic views of coast and country and the enchanting wildlife. Now a major investment by the National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council and National Grid will see a raft of improvements, including new trails, resurfacing pathways, enhancing views and restoring ancient chalk grassland.

One of the focuses of the five-year project will be the dramatic chalk scarp slope called Grandfather’s Bottom. Around 380m of path and steps also will be resurfaced. Other highlights of the work will be:

* A new walking route on Hillhampton Down, taking visitors into and around a yew wood – an iconic tree in this part of the South Downs.
* Also at Hillhampton Down, scrub will be removed to improve the chalk grassland and encourage wildflowers and butterflies, close to where visitors are walking and preventing encroachment on archaeological features.
* The municipal feel of the summit’s car park will be reduced, with a new surface installed. The makeover will blend with the surrounding downland landscape and make the car park a more pleasant environment for visitors and those who have limited mobility.
* New views will be opened up with the removal of diseased ash trees and a new arrangement of parking spaces will encourage views of the landscape away from the existing electricity pylons.
* New interpretation on site to help people better understand the area’s rich history and status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, having been a settlement during Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods.

**RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER**

**County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers**