

**COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT
TO
ALL PARISH COUNCILS
IN PETERSFIELD HANGERS**

3 MAY 2022

Due to the local elections taking place in parts of Hampshire this week, the County Council has been in purdah throughout April. As a consequence the County has not made many significant announcements over the last month.

1. Ukraine: Refugee Update

The County Council continues to work with key local partners to enable support and assistance to Ukrainian refugees (guests) arriving in Hampshire under the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. The focus remains on conducting home visits and ensuring key information is shared with guests and sponsors efficiently. The total number of visas issued to Ukrainians in Hampshire is now 1,128.

Visits to sponsors' homes continue to be arranged and undertaken at pace across the county and these visits continued over the Easter and bank holiday periods. Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) checks are undertaken by Hampshire County Council. These checks are required of all sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Collaborative safeguarding processes have also been established between Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Constabulary in support of DBS requirements.

Work is ongoing by Hampshire County Council and District and Borough authorities to develop local information for guests to complement the Government's Welcome Pack for Ukrainians arriving in the UK. On 25 April, 'Ukraine Connections' groups commenced in several Hampshire libraries. The sessions offer a welcoming space for Ukrainian guests to meet and find out more about library services, begin to meet others socially, and to find out more about life in their new, temporary home. There is also now a welcome page for Ukrainian guests with helpful links at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/ukraine/guests>

2. Street Lighting

In my role as Executive Member for Highways at HCC I visited the SSE base at Port Solent last week. Maintenance for all of Hampshire's 133,952 streetlights is undertaken from this depot. I would like to share some interesting facts which I learned during my visit as follows:

- Our contract partner for streetlighting is now called Enerveo. Last year SSE sold their infrastructure arm to a company called Aurelius which is a German investment company. The new company Enerveo will be moving out of the SSE base over the next year. They plan to seek a location in central Hampshire.
- The streetlighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract was signed in 2009 and commenced in 2010. It is a 25-year contract so we are coming up to the midway point later this year. The procurement process for the next contract term will need to commence in six years' time in 2028.
- All streetlights in Hampshire can be controlled remotely through the Mayflower system. This system employs a network of sub-masters around the county which all have SIMs and use the mobile network. These sub-masters then create a wireless network with nodes on other streetlights within 250 metres.
- This flexibility has enabled us to respond to a variety of requests. In Winchester we have reversed part-night lighting at the University's residential halls and in Basingstoke we have maintained night lighting to benefit a woman who is allergic to daylight and so can only leave her house at night.
- Due to the increase in electricity prices, our energy budget at Hampshire has gone up from £3.3m to £7m over the last ten years. This is despite substantial reductions in energy usage. In 2009, streetlighting consumed 53 gigawatts; by 2021 that was down to 21 gigawatts which is a 66% reduction. This has primarily been achieved through LED replacements, dimming and part-night lighting.
- In 2009 there were around 46,000 faults reported per year. There are now approximately 30,000 faults per year. The average repair time is 2.42 days. This repair performance makes Hampshire the fourth best county in the UK.

- Heavy bunting and heavy festive lighting should not be placed on streetlights because it can damage the column integrity. Nothing should be tied at the top or bottom of the light because it might interfere with the operation of the light. Ladders should not be placed against the column. Permission must be sought for the hanging of any items such as the flashing speed limit reminder (SLR) signs. The email address to seek permission is hampshirepfi@enerveo.com

3. Weed control trials

HCC will be undertaking a trial of alternative methods of weed control this year. This follows local campaigning on glyphosate concerns.

The trials are being based in the Petersfield area and will commence in May. Regular monitoring will then be undertaken over the following months, through to October.

The weed control methods to be used in the trials are as follows:

- Acetic Acid
- Pelargonic Acid
- Hot Foam
- Burning
- Mechanical Removal
- Electricity

On conclusion of the trials a report will be produced comparing the effectiveness, cost and suitability of the various treatments for use on the wider highway network. The findings in the report will help determine the future approach to weed control.

Environmental factors are a key concern but we must also be mindful that weeds can cause damage to the road infrastructure and they can also look very unsightly so they must be effectively controlled.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers