

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

1 JUNE 2022

1. New Leader for Hampshire County Council

On 19 May 2022 the County Council elected Cllr Rob Humby as the new leader of HCC. Cllr Humby said:

“It is truly an honour to be the new leader of Hampshire County Council – I am Hampshire through and through, and am passionate about doing the best for the people and businesses that make Hampshire great.”

In the reshuffle I have moved to a new role as Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs. This means I am Cabinet Lead for Parish and Town Council relations, which I am very pleased about. I am also responsible for the Countryside Service, Country Parks, the Registration Service, the Scientific Service and the Library Service.

2. Grants available to help with cost of living

HCC is urging local groups to apply for grants that will help them support those in most need in their communities. A total of £300,000 is being made available for projects that will help families and individuals facing food and fuel poverty, particularly in rural areas, between now and September 2022. The deadline for applying for a community grant is 29 July 2022. Organisations wishing to find out more should go to the [connect4communities website](#) for the full guidance and application form.

The rising cost of living is a challenge for most people, but it is especially difficult for low-income families with children, as well as pensioners, who might be struggling with food and utility bills. The latest community grants are funded by the £7.12million Household Support Fund, provided to Local Authorities by the

Department for Work and Pensions to support vulnerable households, especially with the cost of food and energy bills.

In addition to the grants, the County Council is using the funding to develop a suite of supportive measures that aim to help residents who are struggling financially. These include:

- Food vouchers for individuals receiving pension credit or council tax support distributed through district and borough councils.
- Funding for schools, colleges and early years settings to provide discretionary grants to vulnerable households with children.
- Additional funding and support for [Community Pantries](#).
- Support via the local [Citizens Advice](#) for households struggling to meet the cost of their utility bills.
- Emergency housing support from district and borough councils.

I am really glad that HCC is doing everything it can to help people through this challenging inflationary period. I know that Parish Councils will want to consider whether there is a scheme which they can develop to access these funds for the benefit of their Parishioners.

3. [Ukraine: Refugee Update](#)

The County Council has announced free bus pass travel for all Ukrainian refugees across Hampshire this Summer. The Local Authority is in the process of finalising arrangements with the county's three major bus operators - Stagecoach, First Bus and Bluestar – with the scheme due to launch shortly. Full details of the scheme will be shared with Homes for Ukraine sponsors and guests in due course.

Communities can now apply for grants of up to £5,000 from Hampshire County Council for projects that will help Ukrainian arrivals to access the support they need. Applications for grant funding can be made by Parish and Town Councils, or any constituted community organisation. There is a need for English language tuition programmes and this would be especially useful in this area.

More information is available on Hampshire County Council's website [Leaders Community Grants | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#) or by contacting ccbsgrants@hants.gov.uk.

4. Hampshire Record office awarded listed status

Hampshire's Record Office in Winchester is one of six landmark sites across the UK that have been awarded listed status by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the advice of Historic England to commemorate Her Majesty The Queen's 70-year reign. The award-winning building, designed by the County Council, was opened by Queen Elizabeth II in 1993.

Hampshire Record Office is the newest of the six extraordinary sites across the country that have been [listed in honour of their connection to Her Majesty The Queen](#), and in recognition of their architectural merits. The Record Office was designed by the County Council's in-house architect's team, led in those days by the eminent County Architect Sir Colin Stansfield Smith, to include pioneering techniques that supported the preservation of fragile documents, whilst offering a welcoming and practical space for visitors.

Hampshire Record Office is the home of 1,000 years of history and comprises Hampshire Archives and Local Studies and Wessex Film and Sound Archive. It is a service that is open to anyone - whether undertaking research into their family genealogy or pursuing academic work. The archives are a unique collection of stories from the past, including letters by Florence Nightingale and Jane Austen. You can find out more including opening hours, events, and collections by visiting: www.hants.gov.uk/archives

5. "Our South Downs" – a new business initiative from SDNPA

Our South Downs has been created to provide an innovative network where businesses and organisations can connect with each other, share services and products, and work together towards sustainability.

The initiative has been launched by the South Downs National Park Authority's Enterprise Team and is open – and free to join – to all businesses in and around the National Park.

The initiative has a number of key elements to help businesses:

- Launching this autumn, businesses will be able to join an internationally-recognised "Green South Downs" certification scheme that champions

sustainability. The National Park is partnering with Green Tourism, which helps businesses adopt greener ways to operate, such as reducing single-use plastics, reducing carbon footprint, making it easy for employees to recycle and creating a green outdoor space to boost biodiversity. This will be open to both tourism and non-tourism businesses.

- Free business mentoring session from the Association of Business Mentors.
- Members can access a free downloadable toolkit of business resources provided by Sussex Innovation Centre.
- A regularly-updated online portal with information for businesses to help with planning, tourism and land-based schemes, as well as search for and connect with other like-minded businesses.
- Advice and support around maximising energy efficiency and creating stronger supply chains.
- Information on new funding opportunities when they become available.
- Discounted venue hire at sites run by the National Park Authority.

I hope that local businesses in and around Petersfield (including farms, shops and restaurants) will consider joining this free scheme. To find out more about joining Our South Downs visit the brand-new website at oursouthdowns.co.uk

I have finished my five-year stint as a Member of the SDNPA. The new HCC nominee is Cllr Debbie Curnow-Ford who is the Councillor for Liphook, Headley and Grayshott. I will continue to report to you on SDNPA matters and I will maintain close links with the SDNPA Members and Officers in my new role.

RUSSELL OPPENHEIMER
County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers