

## Cllr. Jackie Porter County Report for your Council in May 22

**Ukrainian families:** So much is available for families coming to the UK- but it's often still a struggle for individuals to get the specific help they need. HCC has set up a direct query line specifically for councillors to answer these questions. So far, it is proving effective. If you are hosting a family, please contact me and I can seek a quick answer. Following my question, HCC is working with stagecoach to provide free travel for Ukrainian families.



**Household Support Fund:** the fund for food, heating and fuel is now extended to all ages. Please contact your school, Citizens Advice for access to this fund. You may also like to check if you are entitled to benefits. Go to the [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) website and search for 'benefits calculator' or search on my website for links.

**Warm Homes scheme:** If you live in private housing, and have an income of less than £30,000, you may be entitled to funds from the Warm Homes scheme to improve the insulation in your home. Please see my website for details- search 'Warm Homes scheme'

**Grants for projects:** The County Councillor grant scheme is now open. I have a limited fund to distribute so you are strongly advised to talk to me first about your idea. Funding can be from £100 to £1000.

**Walk to school week:** I hope your family and neighbours took part in Walk to School week in May. If a small change to the route could have made your journey easier, please let me know. The Bishop's Sutton to Alresford path assessment has been made but the costs are astronomical. The A33 paths are overgrown too. Is your route used by many others? If it is well used, the path may be kept clear by feet walking along it, but report any difficulties on your route, and let me know of any ideas for future park & stride locations. I have a number of other projects which are ongoing: it would be useful to have separate meetings with you on these.

**Glass recycling:** Post lockdown, many of the public glass bins are reporting as full quicker than expected, even though most households have access to a Winchester Council doorstep collection. The County Council has withdrawn glass recycling at the HWRC's, adding to this problem. A local pub owner describes public delivering wine bottles to his onsite container as the 'walk of shame'! I have taken up the matter with city and county to ask them about capacity, and to look again at the HWRC booking scheme. Residents are still saying it is unnecessary.

**Broadband:** I continue to use HCC's select committee process to challenge the very slow roll out of the Gigabit broadband scheme. Openreach cancelled their appearance in March, and are now coming to HCC in June. Thank you to our Community Fibre Partnership organisers who are continuing to press the case for faster broadband for your area- they truly are your local heroes!

**Elections:** Finally, thank you for voting in the local elections this year. I was elected as a city councillor again, and am Cabinet Member for Place and the Local Plan, but I will continue to concentrate on County matters in this report, reporting on the Local Plan separately..

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## Winchester Council June 2022



### **Cabinet changes**

A re-shuffle of cabinet positions, some fresh minds and a new leader of the council, there is a chance to learn from past events and circumstances. This combined with a reinforced mandate from the voters gives the administration a chance to make improve the working and decision making of the council. There are fresh challenges to overcome.

### **20's Plenty**

There seems to be general support for 20 mph restrictions on resdeitnail roads, however Parish and Town Councils have yet to make known their wish that HCC move forward this. Quite understandably you are reluctant to make this request until you have an idea of the support from your communities. We have therefore asked that Parish and Town Councils are emailed by residents if they want to nominate roads where they feel a 20 mph restriction would be beneficial.

### **The Cost of Living**

The cost-of-living crisis effects the economics of local councils as much as it does businesses and households. Our contractors are affected as are all our staff and the costs we incur directly. Inflation at such high levels is outside the experience of many of those now in the world of business. Budgets will be under pressure from these risks and we are watchful.

### **£150 for council tax bands A-D**

Where council tax is paid by direct debit these payments have been made, however as of late March there were still 6,000 pay-outs to be made. We are making progress with this but there have been a variety of impediments. If you know of somebody who has yet to receive this money, please ask them to contact us.

### **On-street parking:**

The Ping Pong Poll held in Alresford found that most feel that 1-hour free parking is the minimum necessary to retain our independent shops. Join our campaign here [www.winld.org.uk/1hr-free](http://www.winld.org.uk/1hr-free)

### **Recycling and the Tip:**

There is a well-hidden DEFRA consultation on tip access and the disposal of DIY waste. It closes on 4th July, you will need a cup of something restorative.

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/consultation-on-diy-waste-and-call-for-evidence>

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### **Businesses raise urgent concerns**

An application for parking bay suspension on broad street for 6th, 7th and 8th June was received. As soon as this came to my notice I contacted Winchester City Council to establish who had ensured that the local businesses were fully informed. This had not taken place. I contacted the businesses in person to establish how they felt and inform them of the application in full. They had not been informed correctly. As a result I have spent 3 days liaising with WCC and the film production manager. The location manager will be re-visiting the plan and application in light of the strongly opposed parking suspension. Their main concerns obviously is the loss of income as a direct result. Based on the last filming in the Town at the station, businesses lost an enormous amount and right now most can not face another loss like that. We hope to have some more news at the end of the week or early next. In the meantime I have requested that the application is refused or put on hold until the businesses are happy.

**On -Street parking** - Hampshire County Council have confirmed to The Alresford Chamber of Commerce and myself, that consultation will take place before decisions are made. The Chamber has been actively engaged in feeding back their survey from residents and businesses after Winchester City Council (WCC) attempted parking meters in Alresford. Whilst businesses recognise that things will potentially change in order to get enforcement in the town as WCC are not investing in this and the lack of enforcement has been frustrating for many residents and businesses. I have always opposed parking metres and its not an easy situation with Car parks managed by WCC and on-street by Hampshire. Enforcement obviously needs to be funded and a balance needs to be carefully managed.

### **Safety concerns raised by residents**

With an official complaint last year made by residents who could not get out of their homes with wheelchairs, due to the long grass, this was raised again as cuts were missed in March and April in some areas. As a result I had ensured that this was temporarily addressed until action could be taken. I have called for a meeting in Alresford of lead officers from Winchester City Council to discuss things and show them the issues. I have asked our New Alresford Town Council Chair to also attend. I will update with the outcome at my next report. I am please that some cutting to address these missed areas is now starting. After



requesting a site meeting, I am please that the issue of sidelines and safety is understood and that action to address the areas missed is starting.

**Problems of water tankers refilling** - Residents raised concerns about water tankers filling up in inappropriate junctions within the valley. I have sent these photos and registrations to Hampshire County Council roads team. **UPDATE** - I have received a reply and apology that with limited places to stop it is difficult, but that a reminder to be safer and more considerate has gone out to the team.

**Abusive threatening behaviour** - I was contacted about a white flatbed lorry with highways stickers on the back , raiding skips and accessing gardens, driving on grass and shouting abuse and threatening behaviour to residents who approached them. I forwarded the pictures sent to me, along with the registration to Hampshire roads team who have confirmed that the vehicle is not one of theirs. Please keep an eye open for this vehicle. It has been reported to the police and the neighbourhood watch. ( HD21 OHX )

**Rural Crime** I was delighted that our Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones, could attend one of my street surgeries. It gave me the opportunity to discuss rural crime within our area.

#### **UKRAINIAN ASSISTANCE - update**

- I have written over 5 letters to key Directors and others of StagecoachBus over the last months to ask about a free 6 month free travel. As many of our more rural areas have empty seats, it's not costing Stagecoach any more. I would like to thank Estelle and James Bentham and others in our ward who have worked so hard on this as well.
- **UPDATE** - I am please to be informed that Hampshire County Council have agreed free travel for Ukrainian refugees this summer. Free bus pass travel within the wider hampshire area for refugees arriving in the county as part of the government's Homes for Ukrainian scheme over the summer.
- I was the only WCC councillor to attend the first Ukrainian refugee guest and host meeting in Winchester. I spent a lot of time ensuring pathways to employment and communication of vacancies within our local groups. Linking in the Alresford Chamber of Commerce locally and Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, and other business groups (eg Winchester BID) We have managed to successfully find employment for most.