

A newsletter from the Borough Councillors for the Test Valley Borough Ward of Mid-Test

Cllrs Alison Johnston, Ian Jeffrey, and Tony Ward

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River clean-up

Recently, the Countryside team were joined by 20 volunteers from The Anton River Conservation Association (TARCA), who assisted with a large-scale litter pick. Keeping the River Anton clear from litter is key to preserving and enhancing the local chalk stream. The United Kingdom is home to 85% of the world's chalk streams, so it is paramount that they are protected.

If you would like to get involved in tasks like this, check out TARCA's website <https://www.antonriver-conservation.org.uk/>

In addition a couple of weeks ago, Simply Health carried out a river clean in the Town Mills area with the help and support from Environmental Services.



Support for Ukraine Website

Hampshire County Council has further updated its dedicated 'Support for Ukraine' webpages (www.hants.gov.uk/ukraine). These pages now feature sections for sponsors, guests and anyone wanting to help in other ways. Regular updates from central Government are also being added as soon as possible and signposting to useful related information is included and reviewed regularly. Latest additions include a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section to assist the public and individual sponsors, and advice and support for school and college admissions, as well as funded provision for adult learning, e.g., English language courses.

2022/23 Community Asset Fund - now open!

Not-for-profit, charitable community groups and organisations can apply to the Community Asset Fund for a grant of up to £25,000. Applicants can apply for up to 50% of the cost of a project to provide new or enhance existing, important community assets and facilities.

Before applying;

Before starting an application, it is important that groups discuss their project with;

- Their Ward Members. Contact details found here: <https://democracy.testvalley.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>
- The Community Engagement Officer for their ward. Contacts details found here: www.testvalley.gov.uk/CEOfficers
- Grants Officer, Jenny Brain email jbrain@testvalley.gov.uk

How to apply;

- Having discussed the project with Councillors and Officers, carefully read the Community Asset Fund Guidance Notes and complete an online application here www.testvalley.gov.uk/CAF

Application submission deadlines

Round	Deadlines (3pm)	Panel Meetings	Outcome Dates
1	Mon 2 May	Thu 26 May	Fri 24 June
2	Mon 25 July	Thu 25 Aug	Fri 23 Sept
3	Mon 24 Oct	Thu 24 Nov	Fri 23 Dec
4	Mon 23 Jan	Thu 23 Feb	Fri 24 Mar

For more information, please contact Jenny Brain

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Affordable Housing - How is it delivered?

In previous newsletters we have talked about what we mean by “affordable housing” and what the different tenure types mean, and we now in the last of our three articles look at how affordable housing gets delivered.

Negotiating new affordable homes through planning policy

Many of the new affordable homes in Test Valley are negotiated as part of wider developments. The Council’s adopted Local Plan contains policies which enable the Council to secure up to 40% affordable housing on new developments. The Housing Development Team works closely with developers, Registered Providers, and the Council’s planning teams to secure the relevant amount of affordable housing on new development sites, and to ensure that the tenure, type, and size of homes meets the greatest needs.

Making new affordable homes available to those in need

New affordable homes are purchased by a Registered Provider who will oversee the delivery of those homes, and take on future management of them, but the Council has nomination rights to the affordable homes. Anyone in need of an affordable home to rent should apply onto the housing register (Hampshire Home Choice), and they will then be able to bid for a rented home, subject to meeting any specific criteria. Shared ownership homes will be advertised through the Help to Buy Agent, who will guide interested applicants through the application process and signpost them to independent financial advice to assist them in securing a mortgage to purchase their shared ownership home.

Delivering new affordable homes in rural areas

The Rural Exception Site policy enables the delivery of 100% affordable housing schemes for local people on sites in rural areas where housing development would not normally be permitted. To deliver a rural exception site there must be evidence of local affordable housing need. The Council’s Housing Development Team can offer a Rural Housing Needs Survey service to Parish Councils who may wish to explore the affordable housing need in their parish.

The adopted Local Plan also contains a Community Led Housing policy, which enables local communities to bring forward proposals for small developments which may include a mix of open market and affordable housing, as well as other community benefits. As with the Rural Exception Site policy, a Community Led housing proposal must be able to demonstrate a local housing need, that the proposals are being led by the community, and that the proposal offers community benefits which could not otherwise be provided.

How much affordable housing is delivered in Test Valley?

Test Valley Borough Council sets a target to deliver 200 new affordable homes each year. Over the past 6 years the delivery has exceeded that target, and in 2020/21 there were 296 new affordable homes completed.

Future Articles

Our next articles for Parish Magazines will be on recycling - do you have questions on this you would like to answer - let us know

Playing Pitch Strategy & Sports Facilities Update Paper

Test Valley Borough Council

February 2022



The Leisure Service has released an annual update of the current sports strategies (The Playing Pitch Strategy, and the Sports Facilities Strategy, known internally as the PPS and SFS) which aim to reflect on what's been achieved since 2020, and to bring a handful of priorities back to the forefront of the plans for the year ahead. Although written by Test Valley officers, it is adopted and approved by a steering group which is made up of the following organisations:

- Sport England
- The Football Association
- England Hockey
- England and Wales Cricket Board
- Rugby Football Association

The key priorities we will be focusing on over the coming year are.

- To adopt and open Ganger Farm.
- To adopt and open Picket Piece.
- To support the completion of the project to floodlight the BMX track in Andover.
- To work through the feasibility and site options appraisal stages of improving artificial pitch provision in Andover.
- To re-engage with schools to look at how we can support the enhancement of community access.

In addition, we are working in partnership with steering group members to achieve the following.

- To support Parishes to deliver actions identified in the 2020 PPS and SFS.
- To re-engage with core sports clubs listed in the PPS/SFS to review their long-term plans and support the delivery of actions listed in the PPS and SFS.
- To work together to continue to support clubs, organisations, and groups as they recover from the effects of Covid 19 restrictions.

If you have any questions, or would like to support the delivery of an identified action in your area, please contact the Sport and Recreation team.

To access the updated Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports Facilities Update Paper please [click here](#).

Council proposes almost £300k for community projects

Test Valley Borough Council has announced plans to grant almost £300k of funding for three local community projects.

At a cabinet meeting on 30 March, council chiefs approved awarding £240k for an extension to St Mary's GP surgery to create additional consulting rooms and increase staffing, £13k to improve the pedestrian route from Viney Avenue to Cupernham School, and almost £30k for an orchard trail in Valley Park. The recommendations for funding will go to a future full council meeting for final approval.

The money comes from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which the council charges on new developments across the borough that meet certain criteria. Those looking to provide new infrastructure, facilities or services can then bid for a share of the levy money.

Local projects can bid for CIL funding between April 1 and June 30 each year.

Planning Portfolio Holder, Councillor Phil Bundy, said: "While new development is critical for our local communities, ensuring that we have the right facilities and structures in place to support that growth is just as vital.

"I am very much looking forward to seeing these projects come to fruition and would like to thank all those who submitted an application for funding."

To check the local CIL criteria, including which developments are liable to pay the levy and which projects are eligible to bid for funding, visit www.testvalley.gov.uk/cil

Linking up voluntary offers of support to assist Ukrainian refugees

Test Valley Borough Council and its community services partner, Unity, are working together to link volunteers, hosts and Ukrainian refugees in the area.

They are already in contact with a number of formal and informal groups who have come together to plan how to support Ukrainian refugees in their local communities. And they are appealing to others who have done the same to get in touch with Unity so they can identify opportunities to provide additional support and information.

They are also asking people across the borough who may be able to volunteer as translators, drivers to take people to local amenities, or have other specific skills that might be helpful, to register with Unity who will be able to coordinate these offers of help locally.

In particular, they are putting a call out to Ukrainian nationals already living in the area who might be able to offer more general support and assistance to refugees while they are settling in.

Anyone who thinks they might have the right skills and wants to find out more about how to volunteer can contact Unity on 0330 4004 116 or email Greg.alexander@unityonline.org.uk

Important Meeting in King's Somborne



King's Somborne Parish Council

Neighbourhood Development Plan Parish Meeting

Have your say on the emerging
King's Somborne Neighbourhood Plan preferred housing site allocations

Friday 13th May at 7.30pm

King's Somborne Village Hall

On Friday 13th May at 19:30 the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group will be providing an update on the housing site selection process with their planning consultant and seeking informal feedback from the community on the Parish Council's preferred housing sites.

Please join us for an update and discussion about the sites and the neighbourhood plan process more generally and have your say before formal consultation on the draft plan takes place in the summer.

For seating purposes, please notify Liz Manship of your intended attendance.
Liz Manship Clerk to King's Somborne Parish Council clerk@king'ssomborne-pc.gov.uk

Energy Bills Rebate

Following [the government announcement](#) on 3 February 2022, households in England which are in Council Tax bands A to D will receive a £150 rebate.

Eligibility

The Energy Bill Rebate is available to all households in Council Tax bands A to D (or are in Band E and qualify for the disabled band reduction) and consists of a one-off payment of £150 to eligible households.

If you are unsure of your council tax band, this can be found on your latest council tax bill or by visiting: [Check your Council Tax Band](#)

You must be liable for the Council Tax bill at the property to be eligible for the rebate. You will be eligible if you receive 100% Council Tax Support or are exempt because your property is occupied only:

- By students or school/college leavers,
- By person(s) aged under 18 years,
- By severely mentally impaired persons
- In the case of annexes, by dependant relatives.

Empty homes or second homes are not eligible for the rebate.

Only one £150 payment will be made per household, regardless of the number of occupants or liable council taxpayers and is to support all members of the household.

To read the full guidance, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-council-tax-rebate-2022-23-billing-authority-guidance/>

Payment

If you are eligible, and you pay your Council Tax by Direct Debit, we expect to start making the payments in the next two weeks. You do not need to take any action.

If you sign up to pay your Council Tax by Direct Debit, this will make it easier for us to pay your £150 rebate if you are eligible. [You can sign up for Direct Debit here.](#)

If you do not pay your Council Tax by Direct Debit, we will write to you to advise how you can apply. We aim to start writing to Council Tax payers by the end of April and further information about this will be published on this webpage at that time.

Please note that the Council will never cold-call you to request your bank details.

Discretionary Scheme

The Council will also have a discretionary scheme to provide support to vulnerable residents in properties in Bands E to H. Our agreed discretionary scheme will be published on this website once determined.

Please note the Local Taxation team is currently receiving a high volume of calls. We would ask that you please do not telephone us regarding the energy rebate - all updates will be shown on the web site, and there is no further information we can provide on the telephone.

Prison time for serial fly-tipper

A man has been sentenced to 15 months in prison after fly-tipping asbestos in Romsey that caused a road to be closed off for two days.

Mitchell Cooper, of Hillyfields, Nursling, was given the sentence at Southampton Crown Court on Friday. As well as the time behind bars, he is now subject to a criminal behaviour order for the period of three years.

Just last year, Cooper was fined £20,000 for a series of fly-tips across Romsey and North Baddesley. That sentencing, which totalled more than £23,000 when costs were added on, took place in January 2021. But, just one month prior, Cooper had fly-tipped 3.5 tonnes of hazardous asbestos in the middle of Lee Drove in Romsey, which landed him at crown court on Friday.

The asbestos was dumped within a large green container, tipped off the back of the vehicle that Cooper was driving on 18 December 2020. As well as the hazardous material, car parts and wood were also found strewn across the road.

Cooper had difficulty tipping the truck enough to dump the container into the road, but eventually it was found deposited for around 100m along the road.

All of this was caught on one of the borough council's covert cameras, which are regularly moved to catch people committing waste-related offences.

Specialists then had to be brought in to clear the dangerous waste, closing the road off for two days in the process.



Community service for man who fly-tipped outside National Grid



A man has been made to pay almost £1,000 and ordered to carry out 120 hours' community service after fly-tipping waste at the entrance to the National Grid site in Lockerley.

Anthony Lange, of Butlers Close, Lockerley, pleaded guilty to fly-tipping and failing to attend an interview after an investigation by Test Valley Borough Council.

Last July, Mr Lange dumped the waste at the site entrance during the day, with workers at the National Grid then discovering the fly-tip when they went to leave at the end of their working day.

After starting an investigation, TVBC officers sent a letter to Mr Lange's address to attend an interview, which he failed to do. He appeared at Southampton Magistrates Court on Tuesday to be sentenced after admitting the offences.

In his defence, Mr Lange added that he had tried to go to the tip, but the queue was very long, and so stopped and dumped it, instead.

He was ordered to pay £900 in costs, a £95 victim surcharge and 120 hours' unpaid work



Paw-some new business gets council grant

Sally Carter was barking up the right tree when she applied for a Business Incentive Grant from Test Valley Borough Council.

After launching her new dog walking and sitting service, Dog Tails, Sally was able to claim the £750 grant from the council to help launch her business in Andover.

Sally said: "I'm thrilled to launch Dog Tails. I love dogs and really enjoy going out for long walks and exploring the local area. I was really pleased to learn about the grant available from Test Valley Borough Council.

"Starting a new business is an expensive venture, but this £750 grant has provided a great boost."

Mid Test ward councillor Ian Jeffrey presented the grant to Sally. He said: "Business Incentive Grants are perfect for businesses like Sally's. I am very pleased that we have another business opening in Andover, and that the council can help."

The council's Business Incentive Grants are available to anyone looking to set up their own business in Test Valley. Anyone who successfully applies for the grant will receive £750 if their business is still going strong six months later.

These funds have become available to the community as a consequence of the council's prudent investments, financial management and the use of the New Homes Bonus.

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