

Hampshire County Councillor Update November 2025

County Council to consult on changes to School and Post-16 Transport Policies

These two consultations are being [published on the County Council's website](#) today, Monday, 3 November and will run until Sunday, 7 December. Feedback from the consultations will be presented for consideration at a Decision Day in early 2026, when a final decision will be made.

Most of the County Council's proposed changes to the two policies are designed to make them easier to understand and to provide greater clarity around the way both services are delivered. Alongside these changes to policy wording, the County Council is also proposing to withdraw the formal offer of a **Spare Capacity Seats Scheme** in its School Transport Policy. This is a discretionary scheme which allows spare seats on contracted vehicles to be offered on a temporary, chargeable basis to children who are not eligible for free School Transport.

The current offer of a Spare Capacity Seats Scheme creates an expectation that spare seats can be provided. However, this cannot be fulfilled if the available seats on a given vehicle are all in use by eligible children. Once allocated, spare seats may later be withdrawn if needed for an eligible child, or if the number of spare seats reduces due to an operational change. There is therefore a lack of clarity on whether spare seats can be made available.

Should the policy changes ultimately be agreed, the County Council may still allocate spare seats to non-eligible children in exceptional circumstances. Regardless of any decisions, the authority will continue to meet its legal duties relating to School Transport. If you have views on these issues, I would encourage you to respond to the consultations.

County Councillor Grants

The County Councillor Grant scheme is operating once more, with a lesser amount of £5,000 and new criteria as follows:

Hampshire County Councillor Grants – Updated Criteria (September 2025)

Following a comprehensive review, Hampshire County Council has revised its County Councillor Grants Scheme to reflect budget constraints and improve effectiveness. Key changes include:

- **Reduced Allocation:** Each County Councillor now has an annual grant budget of £5,000, down from £8,000.

- **Eligibility Restrictions:**

- o Grants are only available to organisations, not individuals.

- o Organisations cannot apply for the same project in consecutive years.

- o Applications must demonstrate community benefit, especially if from religious or statutory bodies.

- **Funding Limits:**

- o A maximum of £1,000 per project is now in place.

- o Grants for seasonal or time-specific events must be awarded before the event date.

- **Transparency and Branding:**

- o All funded projects must acknowledge County Council support in promotional materials.

- **Application Assessment:**

- o Previous grant awards (from the last two years) will be considered during evaluation.

o Preference may be given to organisations without access to other funding sources.

These changes aim to ensure the scheme remains fair, transparent, and aligned with the Council's strategic priorities while managing financial pressures.

Parish Council Bus Shelter Grant Scheme

Hampshire County Council has launched a new grant scheme to help Parish Councils replace or refurbish bus shelters – making them more attractive, visible, and welcoming for passengers.

Funded through the Department for Transport's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) 2025/26 Bus Grant, this scheme is all about improving local infrastructure and encouraging more people to use public transport.

Who can apply? Parish Councils that own and maintain existing bus shelters.

How much is available? Up to £15,000 per shelter site – for either refurbishment or installation of a new shelter at an existing site.

When to apply? Applications are open now and must be submitted by 28 February 2026. Awards will be made on a rolling basis from early 2026.

Parish Councils will need to provide quotes from commercial suppliers as part of their application.

For more details, including the application form and guidance, visit Hampshire County Council's website or contact the Passenger Transport Team at: passenger.transport.enquiries@hants.gov.uk

This is a great opportunity to improve local facilities and make bus travel more appealing for residents.

Poetry Group at Petersfield Library

This free community event takes place at the library in The Town Square every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 2pm to 4:30pm. This friendly group is open to anyone who would like to share their enjoyment of poetry with others.

I would like to encourage Parish Councils to help publicise this regular community event in local channels and social media as it may be of interest to residents.

2026 County Council Elections

The Times has reported that leaders of the Devolution Priority Programme areas are calling for a further postponement of County Council elections, currently scheduled for May next year. You can read the article here: <https://www.thetimes.com/.../0a601557-49fe-4c0a-b9de...>

To be absolutely clear: The leader of HCC has not requested any delay to elections, nor had conversations with Government about one. It is therefore disappointing that the article suggested that he had asked for further postponement. HCC's leader has not, and will not, ask for an election postponement.

Ultimately, this is a decision for the Government. Last year's delay was to enable devolution, which is now substantially complete. It was the Labour Government that subsequently imposed Local Government Reorganisation. This is their project, their timeline, and their decision as to whether they can deliver what they want with or without elections.

Highways Information

MAJOR M27 CLOSURE – PLAN AHEAD THIS CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR

If you're travelling over the festive period, please take note of the dates for the closure of the motorway between Southampton and Portsmouth:

The **M27** will be fully closed in both directions between Junctions 9 (Whiteley) and 11 (Fareham) from **8pm** on 24 December 2025 until 4am on Sunday 4 January 2026.

This closure is essential to install a brand-new four-lane underpass using an innovative engineering technique that avoids months of disruption later. But it does mean **serious delays are expected** if you don't plan ahead.

What you need to know:

- Full closure J9–J11 in both directions.
- Diversion via the A27 (expect heavy traffic, especially 10am–4pm daily).
- Exit available: westbound at J11 (Fareham/Gosport) and eastbound at J9 (Whiteley/Park Gate).
- No westbound entry at J11 (towards Southampton/A32) and no eastbound entry at J9 (towards Portsmouth).

If arranging Christmas and New Year travel please plan your journeys in advance:

Travel outside peak hours

Use alternative routes

Ask yourself if the journey is essential

For updates and full details, visit the official Christmas closure webpage: https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/M27-junction-10/christmas-closure?utm_source=SAPHybris&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=5342&utm_term=M27%20J10%20-%20Motorway%20Closure%20Update___Link&utm_content=EN

Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues are here:

Potholes: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/potholes>

Tree/hedge problems: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/treehedge>

Flooding/drainage issues: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/flooding>

Pavement problems: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/paving>

Broken or missing signs: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/brokensigns>

Faulty street lights: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/streetlight>

Faded or missing road markings: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/highways/report-a-problem/road-markings>

Problems with rights of way: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem>

When reporting an issue, you'll be sent an email confirming a reference number for the report. If you would like me to follow this up for you then do please forward that message to me and I will chase for you.

General Updates from HCC:

Statutory consultation to be requested on proposed merger of Havant primary and secondary schools

Residents in Havant could soon have another opportunity to share their views on the possible merger of Park Community School (secondary) with the Federation of Riders Infant and Junior Schools in Leigh Park. Statutory consultation to be requested on proposed merger of Havant primary and secondary schools | Hampshire County Council

Remember, Remember – stay safe this Halloween and Bonfire Night

With Halloween and Bonfire Night just around the corner, Hampshire County Council's Trading Standards team has issued seasonal safety tips to help everyone to 'play it safe' and enjoy the festivities responsibly Remember, Remember – stay safe this Halloween and Bonfire Night | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire County Council backs residents to quit smoking this Stoptober – free support available

Quitting smoking isn't easy, but you don't have to do it alone. Hampshire County Council is encouraging residents to take part in Stoptober, the national campaign that helps thousands of people each year start living smokefree Hampshire County Council backs residents to quit smoking this Stoptober – free support available | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire County Council's Children's Services recognised in national awards

One of Hampshire County Council's Children's Services teams has been recognised as 'Team of the Year' at the national Social Worker of the Year Awards Hampshire County Council's Children's Services recognised in national awards | Hampshire County Council

Upgrades to Basingstoke Discovery Centre to support residents this winter

Basingstoke residents will soon enjoy an even warmer welcome at their local library thanks to refurbishment works taking place at Basingstoke Discovery Centre next month A warm welcome for all – upgrades to Basingstoke Discovery Centre to support residents this winter | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire County Council continues to grow SEND provision with more specialist places and inclusive support

Hampshire County Council is continuing its long-term investment in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision, with plans well underway to deliver 1,000 additional specialist school places between 2025 and 2030. This includes a mix of new places in both dedicated special schools and Resourced Provisions (RPs), which are specialist environments based within mainstream schools Hampshire County Council continues to grow SEND provision with more specialist places and inclusive support | Hampshire County Council

Foster Care – a stepping stone on the journey back home

Could you be part of a child's journey back home to their family? Foster care – a stepping-stone on the journey back home | Hampshire County Council