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Highways Information

New Forest wildfire and the A31 closure



A vehicle fire near Poulner Hill on 9 August spread into the central reservation and surrounding New Forest heathland. The A31 was closed in both directions between the M27 and Ringwood while firefighters tackled the incident and National Highways assessed and repaired the road.

More than 120 firefighters were involved during the response. A five-mile water pipeline supplied around 1,300 litres of water a minute, while police drones helped crews monitor hotspots and flare-ups. Residents and motorists were repeatedly asked to keep access clear, avoid narrow Forest lanes and follow the official diversion via the A326, A35, A3060 and A338.

After almost two weeks, the A31 reopened. National Highways resurfaced the carriageway, installed 800 metres of new safety barrier and replaced 1,500 metres of boundary fencing. Temporary speed and lane restrictions remained while fire-damaged structures were protected and the emergency compound was cleared.

The reopening was a major relief for residents, businesses and motorists. My sincere thanks go to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service, the crews who came from across the country, National Highways, Forestry England, the police, council teams, commoners, volunteers and everyone who supported the response. More than 100 hectares were affected, and the recovery of heathland, habitats and ancient trees will take many years.

In order to avoid a similar disaster in Petersfield Hangers I did ask officers to temporarily close the BOAT's in our area to motorized vehicles however HCC Officers felt there was no risk and this request was refused. I will be working with Officers further to see if future pro-active programme can be put in place for future summers to reduce risks in our area.

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, please forward that message to me and I will chase it for you.

Children and Young People

A new three-year plan for SEND support

Hampshire County Council and NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight have developed a new three-year plan with parent and carer forums, schools, education settings, health and social-care professionals and voluntary organisations. The aim is that every child receives the right support at the right time, wherever they live in Hampshire.

The plan includes:

- Earlier access to locally based specialists, including educational psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and specialist teachers.
- More SEND provision in mainstream schools and greater consistency from early years through to age 25.
- Investment in local provision so more children can attend school in their own communities.
- A stronger voice for children, parents and carers in shaping services and resolving issues earlier.

Government funding of £9 million will help launch the new Experts at Hand service, giving education settings faster access to specialist support and advice. The plan is an important starting point, but success must be measured by the real experiences and outcomes of children and families.

Read more: https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260624sendreformplan

Results-day support through Hampshire Futures

I wished everyone receiving A-level and GCSE results well and shared Hampshire Futures advice for anyone whose results were not what they expected. A disappointing set of grades does not close off the future: careers advice, employment, apprenticeships and alternative routes remain available, and Plan B is still a plan.

Careers information: https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/hampshirefutures

Waste and Recycling Safety

Please recycle batteries and vapes safely

A recent fire in a Test Valley refuse-collection vehicle is believed to have been caused by a vape placed in household waste. Nobody was injured, but Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service had to attend. Lithium-ion batteries can ignite when crushed during collection, putting crews at risk and damaging vehicles.

- Never put batteries, vapes, mobile phones, laptops or other electrical items in household bins.
- Recycle batteries at participating supermarkets, retailers or Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- Take vapes to participating retailers or Household Waste Recycling Centres.
- Take phones, laptops and other electrical items to a Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Find local recycling options: https://www.hants.gov.uk/wasteandrecycling

Local Services and Business

Business-rates relief for pubs and live music venues

Eligible pubs and live music venues can receive 15% business-rates relief from 1 April 2026. EHDC has tried to identify and apply the relief automatically, but any business that believes it qualifies and cannot see the relief on its bill should check the criteria and apply. The Government has also announced 20% relief from 1 April 2027, with detailed eligibility expected in the next Budget.

Check eligibility and apply: https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/land/business-rates/reliefs/pubs-and-live-music-venues-relief

General Updates from HCC:

Explore the best of Hampshire on board the bus this summer with free travel for 5–15-year-olds

Children aged 5-15 travelling on local bus services can travel free throughout August, making it easier and more affordable for families to enjoy days out in Hampshire, visit friends and relatives, or simply get around during the summer holidays

Explore the best of Hampshire on board the bus this summer with free travel for 5–15-year-olds | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire students receiving exam results offered free advice and support on next steps

Our level 2 and 3 exam results helpline is ready to take calls

Hampshire students receiving exam results offered free advice and support on next steps | Hampshire County Council

Help available for Hampshire households facing urgent costs

Hampshire residents who are struggling with urgent household costs are being encouraged to check what support may be available through the Crisis and Resilience Fund

Help available for Hampshire households facing urgent costs | Hampshire County Council

Queen Elizabeth Country Park celebrates 50 years with summer festivities

Queen Elizabeth Country Park near Petersfield is marking its 50th anniversary with an exciting programme of events this summer, including the opening of a brand-new children's play area

Queen Elizabeth Country Park celebrates 50 years with summer festivities | Hampshire County Council

Funding available for local organisations helping Hampshire residents with money worries

Community and voluntary organisations across Hampshire are being encouraged to apply for funding to help residents build financial resilience and reduce the risk of future crisis

Funding available for local organisations helping Hampshire residents with money worries | Hampshire County Council

Hampshire GCSE students praised for their achievements as results day support continues

Students across Hampshire receiving their GCSE results are being congratulated for their hard work and determination, as Hampshire County Council continues to offer free advice and support to help young people plan their next steps

Hampshire GCSE students praised for their achievements as results day support continues | Hampshire County Council