

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

1 FEBRUARY 2022

1. Government response to Landscapes Review

I usually put National Park items at the end of my report; but this month something very important has happened so I am putting it at the front! The Government published its response to the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes on 15 January 2022. The response can be read at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response/landscapes-review-national-parks-and-aonbs-government-response>

Of particular interest to Parish Councillors in Petersfield Hangers Division is a long section in the Government response relating to the protection of Green Lanes in National Parks. I was very pleased about it and hope you will also be pleased. I have included it in full below:

Some country public rights of way and unsealed unclassified roads known as ‘green lanes’ allow for the legal recreational use of motor vehicles. Whilst many users make use of these rights in a responsible way, we have become increasingly aware of damage and disturbance caused by excessive use of off-road motor vehicles on some unsealed routes. This can result in impacts on local wildlife, the special qualities of an area e.g., tranquillity, and make the route less accessible for other users such as those on foot, bicycles, horseback, or in vehicles used by disabled people. In protected landscapes, these impacts could undermine the statutory purposes of the area.

We are also aware that these unsealed routes often provide essential vehicular access for local residents and businesses, and recognise that many people enjoy using motor vehicles responsibly on green lanes without causing damage or disturbance. Vulnerable groups such as disabled or elderly people are also likely to be particularly reliant on vehicular access in rural areas including via community transport.

We therefore would like to explore the options available for protecting our green lanes while maintaining most public and private access rights, particularly for residents or businesses. This could be achieved by giving greater discretion for National Park Authorities and local highway authorities to use existing powers to restrict use on a case-by-case basis. Alternatively, the government could consider restricting the use of certain motor vehicles on unsealed roads through legislation, but only if this could carefully balance the needs of all users including motorised vehicle users, horse riders, cyclists and walkers, whilst also protecting private access rights.

The response goes on to say that the Government will consider giving National Park Authorities enhanced powers to make Traffic Regulation Orders and Public Space Protection Orders. This would be welcome.

I believe that the Government plans to strengthen the statutory purposes and create a National Landscapes Partnership are also to be welcomed.

There is now a public consultation on the response which runs until 9 April. I would encourage Parish Councillors to consider making collective PC responses as well as individual responses to the Government. We have an opportunity here to highlight the damage done to our byways by vehicles and to encourage the government to make good on its intention to give NPAs more powers to protect green lanes. You can respond to the consultation at this link:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/future-landscapes-strategy/government-response-to-the-landscapes-review/>

2. BOATs

Following on from the above, Members of the National Park Authority discussed BOATs at a workshop on 27 January. This was an important milestone. The specific problems in East Hampshire (chalky lanes, population density) have been understood and acknowledged. The relevance of this issue to the SDNPA's statutory purposes (to conserve the park and to safeguard access) have been explained. The relevance to the duty to communities has also been appreciated.

I spoke about BOATs in the morning because I had to depart for a Decision Day but I believe my contribution had an impact. The key points I made were the SDNPA can act: it has the power to make TROs and it has the right skills to ensure that the correct admin procedures are followed and that the signage and

gate features installed are appropriate to the setting. I also explained why the County Council does not have the resources to fix this issue due to funding demand pressures in social care and children's services and inflation.

The outcome of the workshop was that a paper would come to a public meeting of the SDNPA either in March or May. I look forward to having a full, transparent discussion on this issue with other Members and will report back again after that.

3. Motorbike Noise and Nuisance Parish Forum – reporting back

On 13 January Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones hosted a Parish Forum to set out the plans to tackle motorbike noise on roads in East Hampshire. Thank you to all who attended. The two key measures to report on are;

- Two sets of Average Speed Cameras will be placed on the A272 and A32 at the approach to the Meon Hut.
- During the Summer season, prominent signs saying “Meon Valley – Keep Noise to a Minimum” will be displayed along the length of the A272 and A32.

In addition, the police will be undertaking enforcement across East Hants using new tactics such as unmarked police bikes with cameras to record offending. There will also be publicity campaigns on social media to improve compliance.

It is hoped that this package of measures will start to reduce the attractiveness of the area to inconsiderate bikers and will encourage more responsible driving by those bikers that do continue to come here. At the meeting it was agreed that District Councillors will explore the use of Public Space Protection Orders to tackle noisy bikers in our area. We will be taking this forward.

4. Non-crete bollards

I was surprised and pleased by the national coverage for my non-crete bollards initiative. Instead of ghastly concrete, the bollards are made from an eco-friendly sugarcane-based plastic. This reduces carbon emissions involved in concrete production. Carbon is also captured by the sugarcane as it grows. This is a UK first and it was picked up by the Times, the Telegraph, Daily Mail and BBC. We are trialling the bollards across Hampshire.

5. Mast in Hawkley

The new EE mobile phone mast in Hawkley has been commissioned. I believe that this has improved mobile phone coverage in the Hangers area for both the EE and O2 networks. It also means that mobile broadband over the 4G network may become a good option for those rural houses awaiting better fibre broadband.

6. Highway Code Changes

The changes to the Highway Code, which came into effect last Friday, are good news for our area. Many of our country lanes are regularly used by pedestrians and cyclists. It is welcome that these road users will now be at the top of the hierarchy and motorists will be obliged to give way to them. To avoid confusion and confrontation it is important that motorists understand the changes and adjust their driving habits.

Parish Councils may wish to consider publicising the changes to the Highway Code in their newsletters to raise awareness. The full changes can be read here.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

7. Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations

Hampshire County Council is putting in place plans to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year. These will provide opportunities for residents across the county to participate, including through schools, libraries, care homes, and outdoor sites. The primary focus is during the extended bank holiday weekend of Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June 2022. Two initiatives I would like to highlight are:

- The Queen's Green Canopy in Hampshire – a £0.5million initiative to support tree planting in line with the County Council's wider climate action plan. Advice, guidance, and practical support will be made available to assist schools, organisations, and communities to plant successfully – with the right tree in the right place across Hampshire, and during the planting season (October-March). Activity will include a new woodland at River Hamble Country Park. Commemorative trees will also be planted at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

- Licoricia statue in Winchester – a life-size bronze statue of Licoricia, an influential medieval Jewish woman, will be unveiled outside The Winchester Arc (formally Winchester Discovery Centre) on 10 February marking the start of Hampshire’s Platinum Jubilee programme. This will be a major interfaith event, a key theme of the Jubilee. The County Council is supporting the Licoricia of Winchester Appeal Trust to develop educational materials about Winchester’s medieval Jewish community, its role in society and its royal connections, and to promote religious tolerance and understanding.

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County Councillor for Petersfield Hangers