

A newsletter from the Borough Councillors for the Test Valley Borough Ward of Mid-Test
Councillors Alison Johnston, Ian Jeffrey, and Stewart MacDonald



Council tax support scheme consultation

We are asking for feedback on a proposed council tax support scheme for the 2025/26 financial year.

Council tax support is available to assist low-income and vulnerable households with the cost of their bill. We are considering changes to our council tax support scheme for working-age residents from April 2025.

We would like your feedback on the proposed changes.

New Test Valley pottery studio awarded a council grant



A new pottery studio based in Andover has been awarded a business incentive grant of £750.

Kate Scott has opened 'Primal Pottery' at the Fairground Craft Centre in Weyhill. Her new business centres around pottery classes and unique handmade pottery gifts. Kate runs lessons in the daytime and on Thursday evenings with her pottery wheel classes proving to be very popular. She sells her pottery wares at Hampshire Open Studios and various events and fetes throughout the borough.

Kate said, "It is great to receive a council grant to support my new business venture. I am putting the grant money towards a new pottery wheel which will make a huge difference."

Charlton and the Pentons ward Councillor Linda Lashbrook said: "It is fantastic to be able to give Primal Pottery a helping hand to get set up and offer pottery classes in the borough. The business incentive grants are a great opportunity for new business ventures in Test Valley."

Business Incentive Grants are for new businesses located in Test Valley and must be applied for before you start your business. They will be paid once you have been up and running for 6 months.

Anyone starting a business can find out more and download an application form at: <https://www.testvalley.gov.uk/business/businessgrantsandsupport/grantsandfunding/businessincentivegrant>

Grant helping alleviate hygiene poverty in Romsey



Money from TVBC is providing essential household and personal hygiene products to over 750 local families and individuals.

A £1,000 Cost of Living grant, coupled with a £1,000 Councillor Community grant from the Cupernham ward councillors, were awarded to the Romsey Hygiene Bank, a grassroots charity working to raise awareness of and help relieve hygiene poverty throughout the Romsey area.

The money has been used to buy essential and much-needed personal hygiene items such as shampoo, hair conditioner, shower gel and deodorant for adults and nappies, nappy cream, baby/children's shampoo, baby and children's body wash and bubble bath for babies and children. The charity has also been able to purchase essential household hygiene products including toilet rolls, washing up liquid and laundry detergent.

Hygiene Poverty is defined as being unable to access or afford the personal and household hygiene products needed to keep individuals, families and homes feeling clean. Hygiene Poverty is often hidden and very oppressive. It blocks routes out of poverty by restricting access to education, employment and healthcare opportunities. The most notable impact of hygiene poverty is a detrimental impact on mental health.

Cupernham Ward Councillors Councillor Kohli and Councillor Gwynne attended a collection day for the Hygiene Bank at Waitrose in Romsey.

Cllr Rohit Kohli said: "The shame and stigma associated with hygiene poverty often prevents people from asking for help. Children who live in families who suffer from hygiene poverty lose confidence and can be bullied."

Cllr Neil Gwynne added: "We're delighted to be able to help and to enable a better supply of readily available personal and household hygiene products at food banks, pantries, schools and other community organisations in the Romsey area."

Working under the umbrella of national charity [The Hygiene Bank](#), the Romsey team works alongside community partners such as Romsey Food Bank and Baby Necessities to distribute items to those in need.

Feedback from community partners in Romsey show that the council grants have helped more than 500 individuals via the Romsey Food Bank and at least another 250 families and mums-to-be through Baby Necessities.

The Romsey Hygiene Bank currently has two donation boxes in Boots and Waitrose in Romsey where people can donate personal and household hygiene items. They are looking to add more to meet the needs of the population.

If you would like to host a friends and family or workplace product collection and or fundraise on behalf of The Hygiene Bank, Romsey, or help in any other way please email romsey@thehygienebank.com or send a message via Instagram @thb_romsey - they would be delighted to hear from you.

Unity hosts family fun day with support from Cupernham ward councillors



Unity, with the support of a £1,000 Councillor Community Grant from the Cupernham ward councillors, recently hosted a family fun day at Woodley Village Hall in Romsey.

The fun day offered a variety of engaging activities for all ages including arts and crafts, planting seeds, and pottery sessions. Each family was also given the chance to select an affordable recipe to cook together, fostering an appreciation for home-cooked meals and healthy eating.

A highlight of the event was the Travelling Pantry, which allowed children to choose items to take home, helping to restock cupboards after the summer holidays. This initiative also served as a fun and educational experience, encouraging children to try new foods.

Valley Leisure supported the event by providing sporting activities and offering free swimming sessions and soft play days to families.

The event also provided families with meal packs, demonstrating how easy it is to prepare nutritious meals from scratch at home.

Unity's Family Fun Day was made possible through funding from the Councillors Community Grant Scheme and the Romsey Town Council Fund, enabling Unity to continue supporting the community during these challenging times.

Free AI workshop for small businesses in Test Valley

We are offering a free AI workshop for small businesses in Test Valley. The workshops will help with understanding of how to implement AI tools into a business with the potential to streamline operations, enhance customer experiences and drive growth. This free workshop will be led by Luke Williams, Head of AI at Interage.

He will provide an introduction to AI, explain some of the jargon, show you the risks of bias, showcase the forthcoming power of AI video, provide practical tips on prompt writing, introduce 'Custom GPTs', identify real-world use-cases and outline quick wins that your company can make. He'll also talk you through the safety, legal and ethical considerations that AI presents.

Crosfield Hall, Romsey, Wednesday 23 October 9am to 12pm

A shiny start for local window cleaning business awarded council grant



A new window cleaning company called The Village Window Cleaner based in East Wellow has been awarded a business incentive grant of £750.

Jordan Harris, the owner of the company said, "It is great to receive a council grant to support my new business venture. We really wanted to cater for the under-served, more rural areas and we have been lucky to have grown a fantastic customer base. The grant will help us grow and develop our services to cater for our customers, both old and new."

Blackwater ward Councillor Nick Adams-King said: "Supporting businesses is key for the growth and vitality of our communities. The Business Incentive Grants are designed to give new businesses like The Village Window Cleaner the boost they need to succeed. It's wonderful to see Jordan Harris's business thriving."

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OTHER NEWS

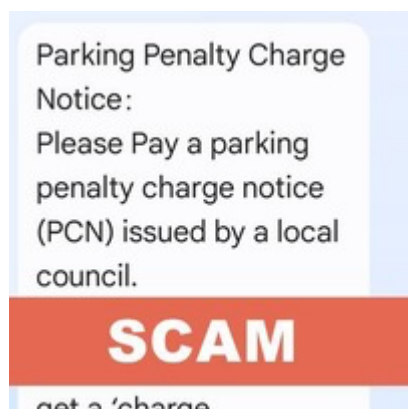
Pick up after your pooch



We're reminding dog owners to please pick up after their dogs after a spate of dog waste issues have been reported at Bury Hill Meadows and other council-owned sites. The flags in the pictures show a recent survey of the number of faeces at the Bury Hill site. Apart from being smelly and unattractive, and something that no one wants to have to clean off their shoes, it can also have implications for the environment and for our Health.

Dog poo can also carry lots of different bacteria E. Coli, Salmonella, and parvovirus as well as roundworm eggs, which can cause blindness in children. Whilst rare, contact with dog excrement can cause toxocariasis - a nasty infection that can lead to dizziness, nausea, asthma and even blindness or seizures.

Beware of fake parking fine text messages



We are alerting residents and the public to a scam involving fake text messages about parking fines. These messages are fraudulent and part of a wider national scam.

The council does not issue Parking Penalty Charge Notices via text messages, genuine fines are sent by post.

Apple Day at Houghton Lodge Gardens

Ancient Apples, Fascinating Folklore, and Delectable Delights: It's Apple Day at Houghton Lodge Gardens

Houghton Lodge Gardens' popular Apple Day is back for another year of fruitful festivities on **Sunday 29 September** from 11am to 4pm. The gardens will transform into an apple-lover's paradise, offering a delightful blend of education, entertainment and tradition.

There are over 32 apple tree varieties at Houghton Lodge Gardens, including the world-record-holding espaliered pear tree 'Beurre Diel', Apple Day is a celebration of many ancient Apple enthusiasts, rejoice! Houghton Lodge Gardens' popular Apple Day is back for another year of fruitful festivities on **Sunday 29th September from 11 am to 4 pm**. Nestled in the picturesque Test Valley, Apple Day is a celebration of many ancient varieties that can no longer be found in shops and supermarkets

Engage with renowned horticulturist Mr. Chris Bird, M.Hort (RHS) of Sparsholt College, and his team as they share their expertise on apple tree growing, cultivation, pruning, and identification. Not sure if you have a 'cooker or an eater' in your garden? Bring your mystery apples for expert analysis and learn the true identity of your own garden's harvest. There will also be the chance to view and taste the many different varieties and participate in an ancient wassail ceremony, toasting the trees in the orchard for a bountiful future harvest.

For young adventurers, a magical Golden Apple lies hidden in the gardens. Uncover the 'Wish Trail' clues hidden within the gardens to find the rarest apple of all-find it and make a wish.



Hampshire's own Michael O'Leary will return along with his captivating folktales to entertain and delight visitors. Michael has written several books of tales from Hampshire and Sussex, and in 'Hampshire Folk Tales for Children' he tells of his terrible experience at the hands (branches) of the Apple Tree Man - from a time when he worked in Hampshire's Meon Valley. Mike's unique storytelling is always fun as he captures the imaginations of anyone lucky enough to hear them!

Visitors to Apple Day will also enjoy the vibrant energy of the Red Stags Morris dancers as they perform their unique style of Border Morris dancing. Their colourful costumes and rhythmic beats will create a festive spectacle, inviting you to tap your feet and celebrate the harvest season.

Treat your taste buds to apple-infused delights in The Glass House tearoom along with Houghton Lodge's very own apple juice which will feature in a special drinks menu.

As well as these exciting activities, visitors will also be able to wander around the gardens. There's the new Oriental garden, woodland grotto, Long Border, Peacock gardens with its topiary birds and walled kitchen garden, where you will find apples and pears. Meet friendly alpacas and sheep as you explore the meadows and riverside walk along the famous River Test.

For those seeking a deeper dive into history, exclusive House Tours offer a glimpse into the rich heritage of the Busk family's 18th-century Cottage Orn . See the beauty of the exquisite rooms and listen to the stories and history that have been part of this house since it was built in 1793 (Additional tickets required.) Tours are pre-bookable and will take place at 9am, 10am, 11am and 12noon and include entry to the gardens. For prices and to book visit www.houghtonlodge.co.uk

Gardens open at 10am and all things apple commence from 11am - 4pm. Storytelling with Michael will take place between those times. Red Stag Morris will be performing in the walled garden at 12:30pm and 2pm. Enjoy FREE ENTRY to The Glass House tearoom and to speak to Sparsholt College. The normal entry price to the garden applies. Admission tickets can be booked online at www.houghtonlodge.co.uk.



Autumn season takes flight at the Army Flying Museum

The Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop is already gearing up for a busy Autumn Season, with lots of events programmed in for its visitors. Choose from talks, concerts, a fantastic space themed for October half term, through to the Christmas Fair and Santa's 'Flying Visit'. [Find out more.](#)

A Defibrillator Near You

Defibrillators for public use are located at:

Stockbridge Fire Station (available 24 hours)
Longstock Village Hall (available 24 hours)
Leckford Estate Office (restricted hours)
Leckford Farm Shop (restricted hours)
Up Somborne - Rookley Farm (24 hours)
King's Somborne Village Hall
King's Somborne - The Crown Inn (available 24 hours on front wall of pub)
Over Wallop - the White Hart pub, Pinchbecks Garage and the Army Flying Museum.



**Nether Wallop -Village Hall and the Pavilion on the playing fields.
Ashley Farm (available 24 hours)
Broughton - Village Hall, Doctor's surgery, Sports Pavilion.**

Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered but for anyone who would like prior understanding of how to use one, see:

<https://www.aeddonate.org.uk/events/>

In the event of an emergency, after dialling 999 to report the incident, the phone operative should give the access code for the cabinet, to the person/first aider using the device.

Contact

If there are any issues in this copy that you would like to discuss, or any items of news that you would like to be considered in a future copy please contact any of the Borough councillors.



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