

Update from Hampshire County Council – February 2026



More than 100,000 illegal vapes and tobacco products seized by Hampshire County Council in 2025, marking record haul

A record 116,000 illegal vapes and tobacco products, valued at £138,000, were seized by Hampshire County Council's Trading Standards team last year – part of ongoing efforts to protect communities from unsafe and unlawful products

Trading Standards officers conduct regular inspections, often alongside Hampshire Police, and undertake test purchasing with young volunteers, to detect unlawful sales and protect responsible businesses.

Illegal vapes and tobacco aren't just a problem because they break the law - they often contain unknown ingredients and higher levels of nicotine, posing serious risks to people's health. Trading Standards works closely with the County Council's public health team, including sharing intelligence on the sources of illegal products and where they are being sold.

Traders found selling to underage customers or stocking illegal products can face investigation and potential criminal prosecution. Adults who buy these products on behalf of someone underage, also risk a fine.

More information about Hampshire County Council Trading Standards can be found at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/business/tradingstandards>.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20263101TradingStandardsVapes>

Hampshire County Council outlines congestion-reducing 'lane rental' proposal in submission to Government

Proposals that could lead to the introduction of a new lane rental scheme aimed at reducing delays on 500 of Hampshire's busiest main roads during peak times, are being submitted to Government

The introduction of a lane rental scheme would enable the County Council to charge a daily fee of up to £2,500 for the duration of roadworks, including any delays, on more than 750km (nearly 500 miles) of Hampshire's roads. If approved by the Department for Transport, the scheme could be introduced later this year. The goal is to reduce traffic disruption on Hampshire's busy road network, by providing financial incentives for organisations to carefully plan and execute their works so that they cause minimum disruption.

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The County Council agreed in January 2025 to progress plans for a lane rental scheme, which would complement the existing road permitting system. A final proposal on how the scheme would operate includes which roads are considered to be the busiest.

Lane rental schemes are already in place in several parts of the UK, and they must comply with national legislation. Charges can only be applied to the most highly trafficked roads managed by the highway authority and under current legislation, the County Council would be permitted to charge up to £2,500 per day - the maximum allowed.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20262001LaneRentalSubmission>

Get winter savvy with help and advice at your local library

With temperatures dropping and budgets stretched following the recent festive period, Hampshire County Council's libraries remain on hand to provide helpful advice about energy bills and the cost of living

Funded by the Government's [Household Support Fund](#), the authority's 'Warm and Welcome' events have already enabled more than 500 library visitors to access critical support and guidance from over 130 local organisations and charities. This includes information on managing the costs of food and fuel, as well as advice on parenting, home safety, mental health and much more.

Sixteen events have already taken place in libraries across the county this winter, with a further seven due to run on the following dates. All events are free to attend, with no prior appointment required, including:

- **Romsey Library** – 16 January, 1pm-4pm

Visit the Hampshire libraries website for [details of other upcoming events](#).

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260112warmlibraries>

Hampshire helps thousands of adults to live safely at home

As 2026 begins, tens of thousands of Hampshire residents are starting the year where they most want to be, at home – feeling safe, supported, and living independently

Hampshire County Council is caring for more adults than ever before in the comfort of their own homes, enabling people to live independently at home for longer. According to latest figures, over 40,000 residents in Hampshire now benefit from a range of tailored support – from telecare to Meals on Wheels, and from respite care to help recovering following a stay in hospital.

This commitment to keeping people safe and independent is a cornerstone of the County Council's new [Strategic Plan](#), the Local Authority's blueprint for serving Hampshire through to 2028.

Technology Enabled Care (TEC) – Hampshire is leading the way in care innovation. From falls detectors and GPS trackers to smart speakers, TEC helps people live safely at home. Over 14,300 residents now use TEC, and more than 47,000 have benefited over the past 12 years, making Hampshire one of the UK's largest providers

Meals on Wheels - delivering 120,000 meals annually, combining nutritious food with welfare checks to help prevent hospital admissions and reduce reliance on carers

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Carers Support Service – nearly 6,000 referrals in nine months, offering vital help to those caring for loved ones. One carer described the service as “the light at the end of the tunnel”

Occupational therapy and reablement – with a 99% satisfaction rate these services help people regain independence and reduce longer term social care costs

Extra Care – 974 self-contained apartments designed to support independent living whilst offering the security of care and support on-site, and reducing the need for more expensive residential care

For anyone starting to plan for later life, a good place to start is [Connect to Support Hampshire](#), the County Council’s trusted online hub for advice and local resources. With over 425,000 visits to the website last year, it’s the go-to place for information about staying independent and finding support in your community.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/News/20260109morepeoplelivingindependentlyathome>

Man sentenced after dumping household waste in Kings Somborne

A man has been ordered to complete unpaid work and pay more than £1,000 after admitting to dumping household waste along a rural lane in Kings Somborne.

Around 26 May 2024, the council received reports about a fly-tip across a number of locations on Eldon Road, which consisted of bagged and loose household waste.

Evidence within the waste led officers to a resident who informed the council she had paid Leighton Smith, 22, of Southampton, to remove her rubbish.

Appearing at Southampton Magistrates Court on 21 January 2026, Smith received a 12-month community order, requiring him to complete ten rehabilitation activity requirement days and 80 hours of unpaid work. He must also pay £950 in costs and a £114 victim surcharge, totalling £1,064.

Residents can report fly tipping online at www.testvalley.gov.uk/fly-tipping.

<https://testvalley.gov.uk/news/2026/jan/man-sentenced-after-dumping-household-waste-in-kings-somborne>

Man fined for fly-tipping bathroom waste near Andover

A man has been ordered to pay over £1,700 after admitting to fly-tipping bathroom fittings and household waste in Privet Lane near Andover.

Around 19 April 2024, Christian Godwin, 29, from Newbury, was hired to fit a new toilet, cistern and basin at a home in Aldershot and dispose of the old ones.

The waste, which included a toilet, cistern, sink, as well as wood, polythene, plumbing fittings, cardboard boxes and packaging, was later found dumped in Privet Lane, near Andover.

Appearing at Basingstoke Magistrates' Court on 20 January 2026, Mr Godwin pleaded guilty and was ordered to pay a £520 fine, a £208 victim surcharge and £1,000 in costs.

<https://testvalley.gov.uk/news/2026/jan/man-fined-for-fly-tipping-bathroom-waste-near-andover>

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Council to explore landscape protection potential for Test Valley chalk streams

Test Valley Borough Council is to investigate whether Test Valley's chalk streams could become a National Landscape, previously known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Early feasibility work will help the local authority understand whether areas might be suitable for designation.

The work will focus on protecting the River Test, its tributaries and other chalk streams across Test Valley and beyond.

A National Landscape designation is made by Natural England and is one of the highest forms of landscape protection in the country. It recognises the natural, cultural and historic importance of an area and helps protect places from pressures such as overdevelopment, climate change and habitat loss.

National Landscape status strengthens long-term conservation, supports nature recovery, and helps communities thrive in a sustainable way.

Initial investigations will also determine what other potential protection designations could be pursued, such as green infrastructure planning or Local Nature Recovery strategies, if National Landscape status is unattainable.

"The rolling chalk hills, ancient woodlands, historic villages and the River Test create a landscape rich in wildlife, heritage and character. These qualities make the area distinctive and valued by residents, visitors and communities across the region.

"While achieving National Landscape status isn't easy, we believe this is worth pursuing, and it would also be worth knowing what other avenues could be explored to make sure it's protected for the future. It would help safeguard what makes our borough special, while supporting the needs of our communities."

"Protecting our chalk streams has been a priority for Test Valley Borough Council for many years and if we can achieve this status it would be a game-changer, giving stronger protection to this unique ecosystem.

David Drew

Test Valley Central Division, HCC
Harewood ward, TVBC