

WHITELEY & SHEDFIELD GREEN NEWS



County Councillor Malcolm Wallace (right), with Central Meon Valley District Councillors Suzanne White and Danny Lee

LOCAL SERVICES SAVED FROM COUNCIL CUTS TIPS & SCHOOL CROSSING PATROLS SAVED; PASSENGER TRANSPORT CUT



Cllr Malcolm speaking against the cuts at the Cabinet decision meeting .

Like many local authorities across the UK, Hampshire County Council is grappling with budget constraints. After exhausting savings options, the council has been forced to reduce services to the minimum legally required level.

Earlier this year, a public consultation, 'Hampshire Future Services', outlined 13 potential service cuts. Following consideration, the Council has made decisions about which cuts will be implemented. Thanks to the efforts of Cllr Malcolm Wallace and other council members, several crucial services, including the Bishop's Waltham tip and school crossing patrols, have been preserved.

Commenting on the final decisions, Cllr Malcolm stated, "The council faces a difficult situation. Many

proposed cuts would have disproportionately impacted our rural communities and vulnerable residents. I'm pleased that we've been able to prevent cuts in several key areas. However, the reduction in passenger transport funding is a further blow to our already struggling bus services."

GOOD NEWS ABOUT WATER VOLES ON THE RIVER MEON BUT STILL MORE WORK TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE RIVER HEALTH

A recent survey by the South Downs National Park has found that water voles are thriving on the River Meon. Water vole activity was found across 27 sites on the river. This survey comes just over a decade since the reintroduction of water voles to the River Meon. Cllr Suzanne joined conservation volunteers to carry out a water vole survey recently in Droxford. She says: "We were pleased to find evidence of water vole activity in four places on this stretch of the river. Water voles are important for healthy river ecosystems but continue to be the UK's fastest declining mammal. It is, therefore, very encouraging to see them doing well on our river here."



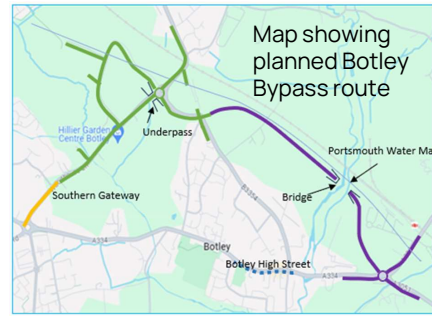
Cllr Suzanne with River Meon volunteers carrying out a water vole survey

CHAMPIONING OUR MEON VALLEY BUSINESSES

The Meon Valley councillors recognise the vital role of our rural economy in providing local jobs and supporting a thriving business community. Cllr Suzanne says: “We have been assisting local businesses and organisations in grant funding applications. One example is the Hampshire Market Garden in Hambledon, who were successful in their application for a grant for a polytunnel to be able to expand their vegetable box delivery service. We are continuing to support a variety of other local businesses by linking them up with Council initiatives.”



PLANS FOR BOTLEY BYPASS MOVING AHEAD



The final tranche of funding for the new road around Botley has now been confirmed and detailed planning is underway. This final stage will include a

roundabout at the A334 / A3051 junction (the Pinkmead Farm junction) and a new section of road to the north of Botley, including a new bridge to cross the River Hamble. Construction is due to start in spring 2025 and be completed in summer 2027.

Cllr Malcolm says: “This scheme will help with the traffic pollution and noise through Botley village. It will also benefit other local residents and businesses by easing congestion.” He adds: “It’s encouraging that new cycleways and footpaths are planned as part of this project. This will go some way to support active travel, but many more sustainable travel options are needed to reduce the number of vehicles on our local roads.”

HEAT THE PERSON, IMPROVE HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY OR BOTH?

As energy bills soar, living costs rise, and climate change intensifies, making smart choices about personal comfort and home energy efficiency is paramount. Cllr Danny Lee, speaking at the Winchester University’s Green Week, says “Sustainable living and environmental stewardship are vital for a comfortable and affordable life within the planet’s limits.” For advice on home energy, keeping warm this winter and energy bills, see -

environmentcentre.com/home-energy/

Eligible households can get funding for energy efficiency improvements including insulation measures, see- tinyurl.com/WinchesterWarmerHomes and/or tinyurl.com/InsulationSupport

For other tips and help to keep warm see - tinyurl.com/Warm-person



Cllr Lee speaking at the Winchester Green Week event

WINCHESTER GREENS WORKING HARD FOR YOU IN WHITELEY & THE MEON VALLEY

HOW TO CONTACT US

We want to hear what matters to you and to help where we can, so please do get in touch.

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WORKING HARD FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY