



Test Valley News

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BRANCHING OUT IN THE NAME OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Tree Planting Winter 2021/22

10870 trees in total

Test Valley Borough Council

Map locations are indicative

Ten thousand trees are being planted across Test Valley this autumn and winter in a bid to help tackle climate change and improve the environment.

Their new homes will include Valley Park woodlands, Hunts Farm, Harewood Common, Anton Lakes, Swattons Field, Ox Drove and Picket Twenty urban park.

In 2019, the borough council declared a climate emergency, and sought to crack down on its CO₂ emissions by putting in place a range of new measures, including increasing its electric vehicle fleet.

Now, work is well underway up and down the borough to plant a range of species for everyone to enjoy. If the land can be found, it is hoped the same number of trees can be planted in a similar way for the next three years.

The news follows other moves to help battle climate change around Test Valley. Earlier this year, the council adopted a policy to create more urban

meadows, providing valuable habitat for insects and birds. And, in June, Andover held its first Climate Day of Action, where partners from across the town came together to make pledges to tackle climate change and share their tips on going green.

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, councillor Phil North, said: **“The changes we make now will have an impact on generations to come. So, it is absolutely crucial that we do everything in our power to tackle carbon emissions and help nature to heal, boosting biodiversity and countering climate change.**

“With the help of partners, it’s our ambition, if we can identify appropriate land, to plant a similar number of trees in each of the next three years.”

WHEELS IN MOTION FOR NEW CYCLE LANE

A new environmentally-friendly transport route between Romsey and Southampton is well on its way with major cycle lane works along Southampton Road.

The lane will be put in place on the east side of the road, from Lee Lane, running past Romsey Rapids and into the town’s bypass roundabout that helps to connect the rest of Romsey.

It will mean cycling to and from the edge of Southampton and Nursling into Romsey is safer and easier.

The £300,000 project has been funded by contributions from developers around the town through the Community Infrastructure Levy, having been advocated by former county council leader Mark Cooper, alongside former county council leader and local member, Roy Perry.

The work, which started in October, is estimated to last for four months. There will be a month’s break during Christmas to help prevent congestion over a busy time of year for travel.

Planning portfolio holder and deputy leader of Test Valley Borough Council, councillor Nick Adams-King, said:

“This has been long in the planning, so I’m really pleased that work has now begun.

“In 2019 we declared a climate emergency and improving cycling infrastructure around the borough is a key aspect of meeting our goals to reduce our carbon output in Test Valley. I appreciate there will be some disruption along what is a rather main route between Southampton and Romsey, but that is entirely the point. Such a main route deserves a designated cycling facility to enable safe, environmentally-friendly transport between Nursling and Romsey.

Councillor Cooper added: “This road is pivotal in connecting Romsey with areas to the south both in the borough, and in the city of Southampton. I’m very pleased work has commenced and I look forward to seeing the finished project early next year.”



For further information on the scheme, please contact 01264 368000 or engineering@testvalley.gov.uk

Council meetings

Members of the public can listen to the meetings live via the specific meeting's page at www.testvalley.gov.uk. Meeting details are correct at the time of printing. For more information, please visit the council's website.

November 2021

02.11.21	Southern Area Planning Committee	Romsey	5.30pm
03.11.21	General Purposes Committee	Andover	4.00pm
03.11.21	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Andover	5.30pm
10.11.21	Full Council	Upper Guildhall, Andover	5.30pm
18.11.21	Northern Area Planning Committee	Andover	5.30pm
23.11.21	Southern Area Planning Committee	Romsey	5.30pm
25.11.21	Licensing	Romsey	5.30pm

December 2021

08.12.21	Cabinet	Andover	5.30pm
09.12.21	Northern Area Planning Committee	Andover	5.30pm
14.12.21	Southern Area Planning Committee	Romsey	5.30pm
15.12.21	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Romsey	5.30pm

Different formats

Different formats of Test Valley News are available for anyone who has difficulty reading this publication. Please call the Chief Executive's office on **01264 368108**.

For your information

The aim of Test Valley News is to keep the borough's residents up to date with relevant information about the public services and facilities available to them, as well as other important local news.

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For more information see: www.testvalley.gov.uk or call the Editor on **01264 368108**.

Who to contact



You can contact the following at:
Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, SP10 3AJ
Telephone: **01264 368000**

Chief Executive	Andy Ferrier
Deputy Chief Executive	Carol Moore
Head of Legal and Democratic	Karen Dunn
Head of Finance and Revenues	Carl Whatley
Head of Housing and Environmental Health	Phil Turner
Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development	Graham Smith
Head of Planning and Building	Paul Jackson
Head of Environmental Services	Paul Wykes
Head of Community and Leisure	Dave Tasker
Head of Strategy and Innovation	James Moody

What's on in Test Valley

Here's a summary of forthcoming events around Test Valley. More information about many of these events can be found at www.testvalley.gov.uk/events.

Shows at a Glance

The Lights, Andover

Twistin' the Night Away	4 November, 7.30pm
Dire Straits Tribute Anniversary Tour	5 November, 7.30pm
Rave On: The Rise of Rock and Roll	6 November, 7.30pm
An evening with Rebecca Stephens	9 November, 7.30pm
T-Rextasy – The Greatest Hits Tour	11 November, 7.30pm
Abigail's Party	12 November, 7.30pm
The Quo Experience	13 November, 7.30pm
Sindhu Vee: Alphabet	16 November, 8pm
Flats and Sharps	17 November, 8pm
Be Bop A Lula	19 November, 7.30pm
The Phonics	20 November, 8pm
Andy Kirkpatrick: Mind Your Head – Holidays from Hell	22 November, 7.30pm
Oye Santana	26 November, 7.30pm
Wrapped Up Food and Gift Christmas Fair	5 December, 11am
Talon – Best of the Eagles	8 December, 7.30pm
The Snow Queen – Ballet Theatre UK	10 December, 2pm & 7pm
The Best of Queen	11 December, 7.30pm
Christmas Memories	16 December, 2pm
The Zoots – Sounds of the 80s	17 December, 7.30pm
The Best of Frankie Valli	18 December, 7.30pm
Humbled by The Pantoons	21 & 22 December, 7pm
Santa's Best Ever Christmas	December 23, 10.30am & 1.30pm

The Plaza, Romsey

Romsey Comedy Club	6 November, 7.30pm
Rabbit...	16 – 20 November, 7.30pm
Seasons Greetings	7 – 11 December, 7.30pm
Michelmersh Silver Band Christmas Show	13 & 14 December, 7.30pm

Events information

For events at The Lights: Book online at www.thelights.org.uk or contact the box office on **01264 368368**.

For events at The Plaza: Please call the booking office on **01794 512987**.

NEW OFFICE SPACE IN THE HEART OF THE TOWN CENTRE



Flexible office space in the heart of Andover is now open for business for companies to use.

Launched by IncuHive Group Limited, the space, on the fourth and fifth floor of Chantry House, has been given a completely new lease of life to offer office space in the town centre.

The project is supported by Test Valley Borough Council, which owns the building, together with funding from the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership. IncuHive, the organisation who launched the project, will be managing the flexible office space.

Earlier this year, the council secured funding of more than £200k from the LEP to deliver the scheme with IncuHive. The facility, which is open for business, is aimed at small businesses including start-ups and individuals who have been working from home as a

result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is expected to reduce the need for office workers to undertake long commutes by providing equally well-equipped and better located accommodation, avoiding the need to travel to major cities.

It is also hoped that the facility will help boost the town's economic recovery from the pandemic by driving up footfall in the High Street. It marks another step in the journey towards the future of Andover's town centre, which will see more of a mix of work, living and leisure uses.

Rob Dunford, Director – Business Delivery for the LEP, said:

"I'm delighted we have been able to support this pilot project as part of our economic recovery plan and it was great to attend the ribbon cutting to see the new location for myself."



Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Phil North, alongside Mayor Mark Cooper and Steve Northam of IncuHive.

EVENTS GALORE FOR ANDOVER AS COUNCIL ANNOUNCES CULTURAL REGENERATION PLANS

From magnificent markets to fabulous food festivals and exceptional entertainment, Andover is set to be abuzz with spectacular events and activities over the coming years as part of Test Valley Borough Council's ongoing commitment to regenerate the town centre.

The proposals, which were approved at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday 29 September, will see the authority invest more than £200k in town centre events over an initial 18-month period. They will work closely with the BID and other partners to drive up footfall to support businesses and encourage economic recovery post-pandemic, while crucially paving the way for the upcoming town centre regeneration following the

adoption of the masterplan in 2020. TVBC appointed HemingwayDesign, who also worked on the masterplan project, to bring forward a range of ideas to start to regenerate the town centre before building work begins to redevelop the area.

Their recommendations focus on high quality events for the town, which appeal to a range of audiences and are free wherever possible. They also encourage providing opportunities for local businesses and suppliers to learn and grow, and ensuring events offer a really fantastic experience for those attending.

The council plans to make use of space across the town centre, including the High Street, Town Mills riverside park, Chantry Centre and beyond.



Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, councillor Phil North, said:

"This is such an exciting time for the town and I can't wait for us to work with our partners, including the BID, to bring these events to life."

"While regeneration is undoubtedly about physical changes it's also important that we focus on cultural regeneration. It's crucial that we recognise how people feel when they visit Andover and how they use the town, as that will be key to creating a vibrant town centre."

"We want to encourage people to stay in the town centre for longer, so we're keen to create events that transition from day to night. We are looking to build on the success of the artisan markets and design a programme of fantastic food and drink fairs and festivals, drawing in top quality traders."

"It's going to be a really busy couple of years ahead but we hope that these amazing events will really help to set the tone for the Andover of the future."

NIGHTINGALE LODGE OPEN FOR BUSINESS



A brand new Extra Care scheme is set to welcome its first residents in the next few weeks.

Nightingale Lodge in Romsey, will be home to those over the age of 55 with extra care needs after being developed by Places for People, together with Test Valley Borough Council and Hampshire County Council.

Now, the development is nearing completion and is ready to welcome its first residents to the town.

The scheme, located on the corner of Winchester Road and Cupernham Lane, offers extra care accommodation with 24-hour care and support on site. The development is aimed at those over the age of 55 who have either existing care or support needs, or who anticipate needing support in the near future.

Thirty-seven of the apartments will be made available for affordable rent and 17 for purchase through a shared ownership scheme.

Extra Care provides people with their own individual apartment, coupled with access to communal and shared spaces, in modern, high-quality, attractive buildings, and close to local facilities.

Housing and environmental health portfolio holder at Test Valley Borough Council, councillor Phil Bundy, said: *“This ambitious project will bring a high standard of homes to Romsey and will help us establish a great community and ultimately be a great asset for the town. We are pleased that many of the apartments will be offered as affordable rented homes making them accessible to a wider range of customers.”*

Councillor Liz Fairhurst, Hampshire County Council’s Executive Lead Member for Adult Services and Public Health said: *“I am delighted that this fantastic scheme for older people in Romsey with care and support needs, is now complete and ready to welcome new residents.”*

“Nightingale Lodge is a wonderful accommodation option for those wishing to maintain their independence but with the added security and reassurance of 24/7 care being available on site, should they need it.”

“This collaborative project has delivered an outstanding affordable housing development for local people, and with further schemes in the pipeline as part of the County Council’s planned £45million investment programme, other communities can look forward to benefitting from similar developments in the future.”

TEST VALLEY AGREES DEAL TO HELP PROTECT HABITATS IN THE SOLENT



Test Valley Borough Council is moving forward with a new policy to help protect internationally designated habitats in the Solent.

The council has purchased ‘credits’ from countryside land in the south of the borough to help mitigate any increase in nutrients in the Solent from new development. Excessive nutrients in the water are having an adverse impact on habitats and species alike.

Over the past two years, following advice from Natural England, planning applications for residential development and overnight accommodation submitted to the council have required mitigation for any potential impact from the additional levels of nitrates they would generate from wastewater and land use change.

Now, TVBC has purchased credits from Roke Manor Ltd in relation to land at Roke Manor Farm, resulting from the cessation of nitrate inputs from the previous agricultural use. This means that applicants will be able to participate in the council’s scheme, and have these credits allocated to them, mitigating against nitrogen increases that their application would produce. This in turn, will ensure future development is nitrate neutral in terms of its overall impact. For larger schemes, developers have the option of purchasing credits directly from Roke Manor Ltd.

The new policy means applicants can work with the council on a simpler basis and have a ready-made solution to achieve nutrient neutrality. The council has worked alongside Roke Manor Ltd and Natural England to agree a management plan that will ensure the proposal’s success.

Portfolio holder for planning, councillor Nick Adams-King, said:

“We’re really grateful for the joined up working of Roke Manor Ltd and Natural England in seeing this come to life. The past two years have been difficult in ensuring our planning process balances out any increase in nitrate levels in the Solent, which is something we need to achieve in order to protect the environment in delivering new homes to meet our housing need.”

Ollie Mitchell from Roke Manor Ltd, said:

“We are delighted to have worked with Test Valley Borough Council and Natural England to design and secure land at Roke Manor Farm as strategic nitrogen mitigation land, and look forward to working with the council and applicants alike to support residential development in the Test Valley and mitigate nitrogen impacts on the important habitats of the Solent.”

Allison Potts from Natural England, said:

“We support the work Test Valley Borough Council has done to secure the credits from the Roke Manor site to protect the Solent from increases in nitrates. We are excited to see it develop into a wonderful place for wildlife and a great environmental asset for the borough and its residents.”

NEW GREEN SPACE FOR COMMUNITY TO ENJOY

Test Valley Borough Council has agreed to purchase land near Upper Clatford to transform it for the public to enjoy as part of its pledge to tackle climate change.

The council has purchased part of Bury Hill, which is situated to the west of the village and was an iron age hill fort. Currently agricultural land, the council has agreed a purchase for part of the area and will work towards opening it up for the community to use as recreational green space and countryside.

The funding for the land has come from contributions from developers who have invested in Andover, through what's known as a Section 106 agreement.

The council will begin working towards opening it up for the public to enjoy in the near future, once the purchase has been officially completed.

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Phil North, said:

"This is our latest step in our battle against climate change, and the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted just how important green space is to our communities. My hope is that generations to come can enjoy this wonderful area of countryside and make the most of what the borough has to offer.

"Our planet has to be at the forefront of our minds, and of course if the topic of discussion over the next few weeks at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Scotland. In Test Valley, we are doing all we can to support these international efforts to reduce our carbon output, open up more green space, and work together to fight climate change."

PORTFOLIO CHANGES FOR TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Test Valley Borough Council's cabinet positions are being reshuffled to emphasise the authority's commitment to tackling climate change and enhancing the local environment.

As part of the changes, a new dedicated position will be created with the portfolio of climate emergency and countryside, which will be carried out by councillor Alison Johnston. Under the portfolio will be sustainability, biodiversity and open spaces, encapsulating all work being carried out as part of the council's climate emergency.

In further alterations, deputy leader, councillor Nick Adams-King, will lead on recycling, environmental services and parking, councillor Phil Bundy will head up planning, and councillor Tracey Tasker will take on the portfolio for housing and environmental health, including diversity and inclusion.

Businesses and the community will come into one under the portfolio

of community, leisure and tourism with councillor David Drew, while councillor Ian Jeffrey will lead a democracy and governance portfolio.

Current finance portfolio holder councillor Maureen Flood will remain in the position, with the portfolio being renamed to finance and resources. Leader, councillor Phil North, will also remain in his current portfolio in looking after the corporate plan, communications and local strategic partnerships.

The leader and deputy leader will continue to head up strategic regeneration and partnerships for the north and south of the borough respectively. An announcement will be made by the leader, councillor Phil North, on October 27 of the decision.

WORK TO TRANSFORM ANDOVER ATHLETICS TRACK REACHES FINISH LINE



The newly refurbished Andover athletics track is ready for runners after a host of guests marked the official opening.

Test Valley Borough Council, in partnership with Andover Athletics Club and Andover Triathlon Club, held an open session at the brand new track to encourage the public to have a go at various running, jumping and throwing events to showcase the range of facilities available on site.

Rising sporting superstar and GB athlete Holly Mills, who started her journey at Andover Athletics Club, and is now representing Great Britain in pentathlon and heptathlon events across the globe, welcomed visitors and encouraged everyone to get involved.

Test Valley Borough Council's community and leisure portfolio holder, councillor Ian Jeffrey, who will be opening the event on Thursday, said:

"We cannot wait to welcome people back to the Andover athletics track and showcase all of the changes we've made over the past six months.

"There is a real focus on sport in the media at the moment, thanks to Team GB's incredible performance at the Olympics and Paralympics and the amazing success of tennis player, Emma Raducanu, at the US Open. We want to do all we can to support the superstars of the future and ensure they have access to some really fantastic facilities across the borough."

For booking inquiries, please visit: pitchbooking.com/partners/testvalley, or contact the council's pitch bookings team at pitchbookings@testvalley.gov.uk

CONSULTATION INTO BOUNDARIES OF ROMSEY

Test Valley Borough Council has agreed to carry out a Community Governance Review in Romsey to look into extending the boundaries of the town itself.

Following a request from Romsey Town Council, the borough authority will conduct the review into the boundaries following the existing and planned development both east and north east of the town. The review will consider and decide what, if any, changes

should be made to the boundaries.

A consultation will form part of the review and run in two phases. The first begins from November 12 and will run until 28 January 2022, with details available on the council's website and social media in the coming weeks.

PROTECTING OUR BOROUGH'S COUNTRYSIDE

During the coronavirus pandemic, green spaces, nature and countryside were some of the most important parts of our communities.

Despite being vital outlets for walking, cycling and enjoying the outdoors, some decided that the countryside and rural lanes were the perfect place to fly-tip.

That's why Test Valley Borough Council is continuing to show zero tolerance to anyone who fly-tips, or neglects to check their waste is being disposed of properly. In September alone, almost £6,000 was paid out by those who either fly-tipped or saw their waste dumped on the side of the road.

Melvit Bilgic, 35, of Wolversdene Road in Andover paid 'a man with a van' to remove excess waste from a property in Bourne Court in August 2020. However, it was found along a bridleway in Newtown Road, Awbridge.

That left Mr Bilgic with a total outlay of £4,740.87 and a criminal record after

he failed to produce a note detailing the transfer of waste to the person who was supposed to get rid of it.

A man has also been placed on an electronic tag over Christmas after fly-tipping cardboard and household waste along Highwood Lane in Romsey last May.

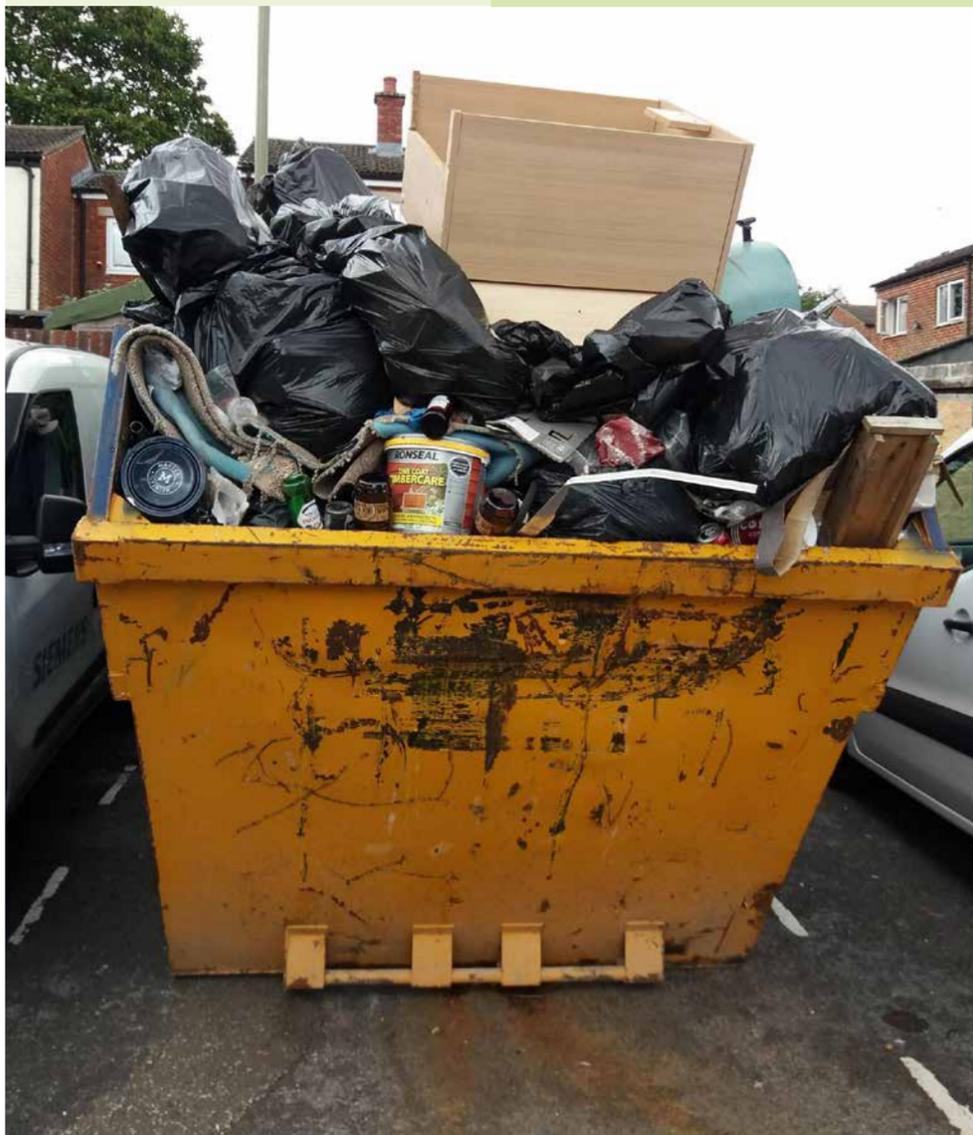
Dominic Lane, 23, of Chandler's Ford, told the court that the waste 'had just fallen off' his vehicle.

The fly-tip has resulted in Mr Lane being placed on a tag, banning him from leaving his address from 7pm until 7am, for 16 weeks, while being made to pay a total of £753.

Environmental portfolio holder, councillor Alison Johnston, said:

"Fly-tipping is never acceptable and in the case of Mr Bilgic, this act of selfishness has now been punished with a sizeable cost, as well as the criminal record to go along with it. It should be clear to everyone by now that waste needs to be handled, and managed, responsibly. Everyone has a duty of care, and our covert cameras are out there for those who don't follow the law."

"Our officers are always on hand to offer advice and information about waste disposal, so there really isn't an excuse."



Top tips to recycle right



- 1 Make sure to squeeze the air out of your plastic bottles and pop the top back on, as bottle tops are still recyclable too!
- 2 Glass bottles and jars and textiles can be recycled at a Local Recycling Centre – there are more than 100. Batteries can be recycled at many retail outlets and public buildings.
- 3 Paper, cardboard, tins & cans, aerosols and plastic bottles can all be put in your brown bin. Remember clean, dry and loose! To remove and dispose of the wrong items in your recycling bin costs Hampshire County Council £1.2m each year.
- 4 While companies try to do their best in telling customers if their product's packaging can be recycled, please only include the items above, and not what the packaging is telling you.
- 5 We are here to help! Just give the team a call on 01264 368000 or 01794 527700 (or email us on recyclingstars@testvalley.gov.uk) if you want to know anything!

MOT Testing at Test Valley!



We provide MOT testing for your car or van (up to 3500kg)



MOT Testing Facility Address:

Environmental Service,
Test Valley Borough Council, Portway Depot,
Macadam Way, Andover SP10 3XW

For more information or to book a test:

Email: mot@testvalley.gov.uk

Call: 01264 368000

Test Valley Borough Council

CHANTRY CENTRE SITE UP AND RUNNING AS CURTAIN COMES DOWN ON THEATRE VACCINATION VENUE

A vacant shop in the Chantry Centre is now operating as a Covid-19 vaccination site as The Lights theatre prepares to welcome audiences for the festive season.

The unit, located near the garden area, is now playing host to an army of doctors, nurses and volunteers as they continue their fight against Covid-19.

The move comes as The Lights, which

has seen tens of thousands of people receive their jabs at the venue since December last year, welcomes guests for shows this autumn.

Test Valley Borough Council, which runs the theatre, worked together with NHS colleagues to ready the new vaccination site at the Chantry Centre and ensure the transfer was carried out smoothly.

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, councillor Phil North, said:

“The Lights has done an absolutely fantastic job of hosting our incredible NHS colleagues and volunteers since December last year. This has been, without doubt, its most important role to date and everyone involved in the organising and running of the clinics at the theatre should be incredibly proud of what has been achieved and the lives they have helped to save.

“I am pleased that we have been able to offer another great, central location in the form of the Chantry Centre to enable that work to

continue, while allowing The Lights to begin welcoming back audiences.”

Dr Ben Sharpe, clinical lead for the Andover vaccination site, said:

“Everyone at The Lights has been fantastic over the past few months and we are incredibly grateful to all of the staff, volunteers and partner organisations who have made it such a success.

“As our work continues to protect as many people as possible from the threat of Covid-19, we are very much looking forward to continuing to welcome residents to our location at the Chantry Centre.”

AL FRESCO FOR FREE – COUNCIL AGREES TO WAIVE TABLES AND CHAIRS LICENSING FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Test Valley businesses applying to create outdoor seating areas can continue to do so for free, after council chiefs agreed to waive the fee for the licensing of tables and chairs on the highway for at least a further 12 months.

Test Valley Borough Council first paused charging for the licence in 2020 to support eateries reopening following lockdown.

There is also now a simpler application form and consultation process, which means that the authority can turn around licensing decisions in a couple of weeks.

Businesses can apply via the council’s website, at www.testvalley.gov.uk/PavementLicence2020



Leader of the council, Phil North, said: *“Creating vibrant, outdoor spaces for people to eat, drink and socialise is a key focus of the Andover masterplan. Helping businesses by making it easier for them to apply for this licence, while crucially removing the cost, very much supports that ambition.*

“We also know that since the pandemic some customers feel safer sat outside where there is more space, so this has multiple benefits in addition to promoting a continental style café culture.

“And although many people will begin to head indoors to escape the colder weather over the coming weeks, extending this for 12 months means that those looking to apply in spring or summer next year will still benefit.”

TOWN MILLS OPENING

The first major step in the regeneration of Andover’s town centre is open for the public to enjoy after Town Mills riverside park was officially unveiled in the summer.

The new riverside development was a joint project between Test Valley Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and Andover Vision. Completed earlier this year, the summer marked its official unveiling, with families making the most of the summer sunshine in the park, nestled on the banks of the River Anton.

The park offers a peaceful setting for those wishing to enjoy the space at their leisure and play, picnic and relax in the heart of the town.



Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Phil North, said:

“It’s the first phase in the wider regeneration of Andover town centre, with huge plans on the horizon to extend the river corridor, to redevelop the Chantry Centre and create a wellbeing quarter.

“I hope the success here at Town Mills will also add momentum to wider conversations about how we can all come together – with the help of the private sector – to help deliver further phases.

“This is a really exciting time for Andover, and with the help of our partner organisations, I know we will be able to regenerate the town centre further, for the benefit of residents and businesses.”



Harrow Way
Community School
Learning for life, success for all



Harrow Way is widely acknowledged as a very successful school dedicated to the achievement and well-being of all its students. Ofsted recognised us as a ‘good school’, a judgement of which we are understandably proud.

Our commitment to achieving exemplary standards has been recognised and praised by the Teacher Development Trust, which awarded the school its prestigious Silver Award.

We are also a CAS (Computing at School) Lead School, a Centre of Excellence for Geography and a Music Mark School. Harrow Way also has the ‘Big Award’ which recognises the work we have done around anti-bullying.

Our exciting and innovative curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities for students to succeed. Harrow Way is a popular, thriving establishment successfully serving the needs of the wider community as well as the school population.

Come and discover what makes this school so special and join in our success. Visitors to the school are always welcome.



NATIONAL AWARD FOR COUNCIL PLEDGE TO ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

A pledge by Test Valley Borough Council to offer further support to military personnel, their families and veterans in the borough has received a national award.

Earlier this year, TVBC boosted its support for the armed forces through the council's Armed Forces Community Covenant. Now, that covenant, and the dedications it includes, has been given a bronze award from the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

In December 2019, the council's scrutiny committee requested a review of the authority's commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant. They set up a dedicated panel to undertake the work, led by the council's Armed Forces champion, councillor Nick Matthews.

Having revisited challenges faced by Armed Forces personnel and their families, they looked at what TVBC had already put in place and found that, although the council was meeting its promises, there were opportunities for further improvement. They included enhancing communication with partner organisations, and leading on a more inclusive approach to support the Armed Forces community.

Armed Forces champion, councillor Nick Matthews, said:

"I am both thrilled and indeed honoured that TVBC have been recognised with this award. We have a large military footprint within Test Valley, and not only do we house more than 1,000 service families, we have a huge veterans community who have settled in the area after their service.

"Our comprehensive covenant review determined that TVBC was fulfilling its obligations to our military and veterans, but also identified areas that can be improved and introduced, including the forming of the new Civilian and Military Forum (CMF) and a dedicated military webpage created on our website. We will not sit still and our new CMF team continue to work hard on improving services and support for our important military and veteran communities. Our next milestone – silver!"

TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL SCOOP NATIONAL AWARD FOR TACKLING LOAN SHARKS

Test Valley Borough Council has won a national award in recognition of its efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of using loan sharks.

The Council has been recognised by the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) for their initiatives tackling loan sharks in the borough and making communities safer.

The IMLT investigates and prosecutes illegal money lenders while supporting those who have borrowed money from a loan shark.

Test Valley Borough Council have worked in partnership to spread the anti-loan shark warning, with the latest project being a Partner Recognition accreditation from the IMLT.

The new accreditation programme recognises and rewards partners that work alongside IMLT to raise awareness of loan sharks, and their impact on local communities, and to create safer spaces for people to live and work.

Test Valley Borough Council have

undertaken a range of training and projects to help address loan shark activity, including specific training for its frontline staff in identifying the signs of loan sharks and how to help those who may be victims, or at risk. The council has also promoted the work of the IMLT across the district to both residents and amongst partner agencies, as well as offering local resources for their investigations.

Loan sharks are increasingly using social media platforms to advertise their illegal loans and target potential victims.

A recent campaign by IMLT, called **#SharkFreeSurfing**, ran across the Stop Loan Sharks and Test Valley Borough Council social media platforms, with the aim of encouraging not just victims, but the wider community to report online illegal money lending activity.

If you think you may be a victim of illegal money lending or know someone affected, call the Stop Loan Sharks 24/7 Helpline on **0300 555 2222**. You can also email the team at reportaloanshark@stoploan sharks.gov.uk or complete an online form at www.stoploan sharks.co.uk.

BOOSTING BUSINESSES ACROSS THE BOROUGH

Thousands of pounds has been awarded in grants to support businesses up and down the borough over the last few months.

From gardening companies to climate change organisations, Test Valley Borough Council's different grant opportunities have seen financial boosts awarded to a number of businesses.

Earlier this year, Absolar Solutions Ltd, based at the University of Southampton Science Park was given a £750 business incentive grant for their state-of-the-art software that assesses the current carbon output of their buildings and offers solutions to minimise environmental impact.

Dr Phil Wu and Nic Cory, who set up the company, now plan to start selling

their packages to local authorities and other organisations.

In Romsey, weight loss business Cambridge Vix Limited has been awarded a £1,000 Independent Retailer Grant. Vix Milani, who owns the company based on Bell Street, has promoted the One to One Diet by Cambridge Diet Plan for the past 15 years, since successfully losing weight herself. She decided to leave the corporate world and her IT training job, to turn her then-hobby into a full-time business.

A further £750 Business Incentive Grant... and then remove the words 'Business Incentive Grant' from the end of that para so it finishes with 'a keen green-fingered gardener.'

Her company, Garden Gem, is now blooming after Gemma turned her garden design company into her full time role.



Gemma said: ***"I'm delighted to be working in horticulture full time and running my own business is a dream come true! Since lockdown, people have realised how important their gardens are to them and business has been blooming!"***

"I'm really lucky to be working outside in beautiful Test Valley helping my customers turn their garden dreams into reality. I am so

grateful for this grant which will help pay for a garden design course I have just started at Sparsholt College."

Ward member, councillor David Drew, added: ***"It's brilliant to see Gemma branching out, doing what she loves to do, and beginning an entirely new career out of it. I'm pleased that we have been able to support her in this venture and wish her lots of luck."***

GUILDHALL RETURNS TO ITS FORMER GLORY



Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Phil North, visiting the work taking place to the Guildhall.

Andover's Guildhall has now returned to its former glory after months of restoration works to the Grade II listed building came to an end.

Earlier this year, work began to restore the stone exterior of the building that sits at the top of the High Street after Test Valley Borough Council appointed Stonewest to undertake the repairs.

Now, having had a thorough clean and essential painstaking stone work completed, the scaffolding has been removed this month, after the finishing touches were carried out. The repair and maintenance is the first work to be done to the historic building in 30 years.

New Bath stone has been put in place in various locations, windows have been repaired and cleaned, and careful, sensitive repairs to corners, carvings and pillars have been completed on the building, which was first built in 1825.

As well as the history of Andover's famous building, TVBC has a legal duty to maintain the listed building.

Leader of Test Valley Borough Council, Phil North, said: *"It's really fascinating to see the careful considerate work that has been done to one of the town's most important and recognisable buildings. While many of us see the scaffolding go up and simply wait for it to come down, the intricate work carried out behind the netting is both impressive and essential."*

"Whilst we'd initially hoped it would be completed sooner - there has been some unforeseen additional works that have had to be undertaken along the way. After all, this is the building's first significant restoration since 1991. The town's Guildhall has sat at the heart of the High Street now for decades, and it is vital that, as its owners, we pay it the respect it deserves in ensuring it has a future for generations to come."

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TIPS THIS WINTER

Test Valley Borough Council is committed to minimising its impact on the environment and cutting carbon emissions. For more information and advice on what we are doing locally and how you can get involved please visit: www.testvalley.gov.uk

CLIMATE EMERGENCY – HELPING BUSINESSES ADAPT

Test Valley Borough Council is one of four Hampshire district councils that is taking part in the Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE) programme. Launched in September 2021, and supported by the European Regional Development Fund, it provides a free business support programme. The aim is to help businesses to become more competitive and profitable while protecting the environment and encouraging low carbon solutions. This scheme is scheduled to run for two years and is intended to support businesses to reduce their carbon footprint, through a combination of grants for businesses of up to £10,000 as well as training workshops and fully funded events.

Targeted business support is on offer for companies who offer 'green' or low carbon goods and services. For more information or to apply please visit LoCASE: <https://locase.co.uk/> or email econdev@testvalley.gov.uk

HITTING THE COLD SPOTS

Are you struggling to heat your home? Expensive bills? Broken boiler? Cold homes not only make life uncomfortable but can also lead to serious health problems in the very young, vulnerable and elderly people, such as respiratory diseases, asthma, depression, heart disease or stroke.

Hitting the Cold Spots is a Hampshire wide scheme, run by the Environment Centre they provide free, independent support and advice on how you can keep your home warm. For more information phone **0800 804 8601** or visit: www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/coldspots

FREE ENERGY SAVING ADVICE

The Environment Centre are an independent charity that aims to reduce carbon emissions, encourage sustainability, improve air quality and provide affordable warmth. They help local residents in Hampshire by providing free impartial, energy saving advice to help residents save money and keep warm. Please visit: environmentcentre.com/advice-and-support/ or phone **0800 804 8601**.

HELP WITH INSULATING YOUR HOME

Improving the insulation in your home is another way of keeping warm and reducing your energy bills. Test Valley Borough Council is working with partner organisations to help improve insulation in the most inefficient properties for those on low incomes. If you would like to find out if you may be eligible for support then please contact the Private Sector Housing team at: phousing@testvalley.gov.uk, or call **01264 368000**.

WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME

Some energy suppliers offer certain customers on low incomes £140 off their electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme through central government. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October and March that is paid directly from the government to your utility company. Find out more at Warm Home Discount Scheme: www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER

Priority Services Register is a free support service offered by energy suppliers and network operators. It is to help people in vulnerable situations. Each keeps their own register. You need to contact your energy supplier or network operator to get on the register.

For example they will provide you with advance notice of planned power cuts, help with meter reading services, etc.

For more information please visit the Ofgem website.

TRUST URGES ANDOVER RESIDENTS TO CALL NHS 111 BEFORE ATTENDING MINOR INJURIES CLINIC AT LOCAL HOSPITAL

HAMPSHIRE Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is reminding local residents in Andover to keep using the NHS 111 booking service before attending the Minor Injuries Clinic (MIC) at Andover War Memorial Hospital.

The clinic does not accept walk-ins, instead, patients must access NHS 111 either online or by phone for an assessment as to whether they need an appointment. If so, patients will be given a time slot to attend the local hospital. Members of the public cannot directly book an appointment with the clinic.

The service has been up and running since October 2020 and has recently increased the number of appointment time slots available. A range of expert staff are on hand at the clinic who can now see more patients that need same day medical care.

The clinic is open from 8.30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Outside of these times, members of the public can continue to access care and advice via

NHS 111 online and – in an emergency – call 999.

Treatment at the clinic includes treating minor head, facial and eye injuries, foreign body removal, fractures, bites, minor burns, wound assessment and closure, with an X-ray facility on site if required Monday to Friday from 9pm to 5pm, excluding bank holidays.

Members of the public who access NHS 111 may also be directed to their local pharmacist or GP. Urgent and emergency cases will continue to be directed to the emergency department in either Basingstoke or Winchester.

Patients who attend the unit without an appointment will be asked to book a time slot with NHS 111 and return to the unit at their reserved time.



Clinical matron at the MIC, Bernadette Hampton, said:

“Our service is run by a specialist team who are working incredibly hard to provide outstanding care and continue to keep patients safe. However, we have seen a rise in the number of walk-ins to the clinic,

which in turn increases demand on staff, and this results in longer waiting times for patients to be seen.

“We need the help of the local community to make sure they are accessing the right services in the right way so that we can continue to be there for everyone who needs us.”

FUNDING TO PROVIDE NEW HOUSES FOR THOSE IN NEED

Test Valley Borough Council has been granted close to £1m thanks to a successful bid in partnership with Two Saints, Vivid and Aster which will help those at risk of rough sleeping to have a place to call home.

A total of ten properties throughout Test Valley will be purchased by Aster and Vivid using the money, with specialist support provided to tenants by Two Saints.

During the national lockdown in spring last year, the council was able to provide temporary accommodation to the few individuals sleeping on the streets at the time, along with several people who

were otherwise living in unsustainable shared housing arrangements. Now, with these extra properties available through the funding, longer-term housing can be offered.

The grant allocation totals £913,125 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme.



For more information about StreetLink, please visit www.streetlink.org.uk/. If you or someone you know is worried about their housing situation, please contact our housing options team as soon as possible on **01264 368000**.

Portfolio holder for housing and environmental health, councillor Phil Bundy, said:

"During the pandemic, we worked exceptionally hard to understand and support those who wanted to come in from the streets, and to work with other people with complex needs who were otherwise unsuitably housed."

"Securing temporary accommodation was a big step, but this new grant award is a huge milestone and will complement our existing investment in front line services."

"Our thanks go to Vivid, Aster and Two Saints for their work alongside us on this bid, and the effort that will now go in to changing lives for

good. We are always committed to doing everything we can to help those who need it. Providing ten further properties in the borough for people at risk of, or who may be experiencing homelessness, helps us as we move closer to our aim to end rough sleeping and provide suitable accommodation solutions for our

most vulnerable residents.

"We would ask our residents to notify us if they see anyone who may be sleeping rough, via the national StreetLink service. We work with a network of partner organisations locally to deliver rapid rehousing support for anyone who may be sleeping rough in the area."



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Kay Jerrams, Home Manager

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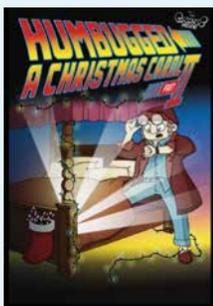
THE LIGHTS IS READY FOR CHRISTMAS!

After a period of darkness The Lights theatre, Andover is shining brightly again and brimming with winter excitement.

Firm favourites, The Pantaloons, are back with **Humbugged**, a brand new adventure that's half supernatural time-travel heist and half seasonal sequel to the classic Dickens tale, on 21 and 22 December.

Other spectacular seasonal shows include Neil Sands and his old-time music hall-style variety show, **Christmas Memories**; beautiful ballet with The **Snow Queen** from Ballet Theatre UK and **Santa's Best Ever Christmas** for the little ones - join Father Christmas and friends in this brand new, festive, musical, interactive

adventure to make 2021 Santa's Best Ever Christmas! With music and songs, and every child receives a specially wrapped present from Santa after the most Christmassy, Christmas show ever! Suitable for families with children aged two to seven years of age.



The bumper programme of shows for the autumn/winter and beyond can be perused at leisure between the pages of The Lights new season brochure, perhaps over coffee and a slice of cake in the re-opened and refurbished café bar. Alternatively all shows can be viewed and booked online at www.thelights.org.uk where details can also be found about the venue's commitment to the See It Safely industry standard kite mark on the **Be Covid-19** safe page www.thelights.org.uk/visiting/covid-19

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