

District Councillor Annual Report

Facts and Figures

Winchester district covers an area of 250 square miles, with a population of approximately 118,000* residents. 33 per cent* (39,000) of district residents live within the town area of Winchester.

Winchester City Council Achievements

Local Response Centre helpline:

Has received nearly 1,000 calls and continues to be a vital resource for residents throughout our district who need a helping hand when they are self-isolating or vulnerable.

The Community grants team and Mayor's Office has:

- Distributed over £70,000 in grants to support community projects such as food banks to help local people.
- Given our 113 Local Hero Awards in direct response to community nominations for COVID-19 responses from individuals and groups across the district.

Our Economy and Tourism teams are:

- Helping local businesses to get online using the advice from specialist company, Digital Islands, and are busy developing an online High Street to maximise the presence of those looking to sell online.
- Supporting safe shopping through our Ambassadors and Marshals programme.
- And the Parking service has seen changes too:
- RingGo pay-by-phone parking (at no extra charge to customers) means that our residents no longer need to handle cash or touch keypads in our car parks.
- Electronic vehicle charging points (EVCPs) are being rolled out across the district (supported by Environmental Health) and in partnership with Hampshire County Council.

Our Revenues & Benefits team have :

- Distributing over £3.5 million in financial support to over 1,300 retail, hospitality and leisure businesses which were required to close due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
- Supporting the national trace and test efforts by using council tax records to trace people who are identified by the NHS COVID-19 app as a contact but cannot be traced nationally or by the county. This is in addition to the great work they are already doing in distributing vital grants.
- Dealing with an increase in benefits claims.

Environmental Health and Licensing:

- Teams are visiting retailers of all sizes - from supermarkets to corner stores - to ensure COVID-19 Secure measures are in place including messages

around 'shopping alone', 'wearing a mask', 'one-way flow' - all to keep infection rates down in our district.

- Supporting taxi drivers in providing safe transportation.
- Our Estates and Facilities teams have been making the most of our assets:
- Organising HM Courts and Tribunal Service's move to facilitate the use of Winchester Guildhall as a 'Nightingale Court' which has already seen 178 cases (and counting...).
- By working in partnership with other agencies and authorities, we've ensured that the A31 kept flowing when the new regulations came into force following our departure from the European Union.

The Strategic Planning team has implemented the consultation for our Local Plan which will have a big impact on the direction of our development work in reflecting the feedback and requirements of our communities.

The Environmental Services team has ensured the continued collection of refuse and recycling throughout COVID-19 tiers and restrictions as well as successfully transitioning to a new contract with a consumer-facing campaign on garden waste. We can all share in the celebration of the sale of over 10,000 brown bins which is generating income to support an improved waste collection service with a strong focus on a more environmentally-friendly service including increased recycling - which aligns with one of our main priorities under the climate emergency action plan.

The Planning team has worked with Winchester Town Forum to produce a new ten-year vision for the city. A wide-ranging consultation saw Ecology, Movement, Homes, Lifetimes and Culture emerge as the key themes and they are now working to translate the vision into actions for the next ten years.

Our Head of Programme and Project Office is on track for a late May opening of the Winchester Sport & Leisure Park - despite the challenges of COVID-19. These new facilities will enhance the health and wellbeing offering to residents in our district as well as adding to the attraction to our neighbouring areas.

Environmental and Carbon Neutrality Goals

- From the 1 April 2020 the council's operational buildings have been supplied by 'green tariff' electricity provided from sustainable sources, including wind and solar power. This had the immediate impact of reducing our carbon emissions by 19% with longer term plans to 'on-board' other sites and further reduce our carbon emissions by 40%
- Installation of 849 square metres of photovoltaic (PV) panels on the new Winchester Sport & Leisure Centre that can generate at least 140,000 kilowatts of green energy a year and feed energy back into the grid if excess power is generated.
- A sustained move to home working for staff in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and measures such as video conferencing adopted to make this approach sustainable for the future.
- Over trees planted during 2020/21

- The installation of 33 new electric vehicle (EV) charging points on council land.
- New cycle lockers installed at park & ride sites to encourage cycling.
- Adaption of a new Procurement and Contract Management Strategy 2020-25 which requires a minimum of 10% allocated to environmental and social value factors included in the evaluation criteria for tenders.
- Winchester's first Climate Conference took place in October 2020
- A number of successful grant applications to deliver carbon reduction works in collaboration with partners, including an air source heat pump for the giraffe enclosure at Marwell Zoo
- Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) approved by Cabinet in January 2021
- Major new flood defence installed at Durngate protect the City from Flooding.

Cllr Bell, Laming and Williams