

## **Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 27 January 2021**

### **Councillor Alex Rennie: Cabinet Lead for Communications**

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#### **Communities**

**Covid 19 and National Lockdown** – Over the Christmas period when the offices were closed the Local Response Centre (LRC) was operational and additional staff were called upon to ensure we were able to respond. We worked with Community First who were also on standby to support. Over the period (24/12/20 - 03/01/21) there were a total of 12 referrals for HBC. The requests were in the main food and prescription related and all were responded to and supported.

As we move into a new National Lockdown, the shared LRC will continue to be resourced, including weekends, 10-5 in line with the County Helpline, with officers from both Councils being redeployed where required to ensure residents are supported. We have officers on standby to respond to any emergency requests. While the shielding guidance has now resumed, calls to the LRC still remain well below the levels from the first peak. This will continue to be monitored by officers.

Weekly calls will be made to the foodbanks by the Communities team to ensure that foodbanks have the resources required.

Updates from the LRC and Community First are being sent to all Cllrs fortnightly and the Community Co-ordination Groups (CCOG) have been reinstated and are being held on a weekly basis.

#### **Leisure Recovery Fund**

Both Horizon and Front Lawn will be part of an application being made to the Government's Leisure Recovery Fund. The deadline has been extended so that applications can be made until 15 January. The fund aims to assist the reopening and recovery of the leisure service and prevent further closures of outsourced leisure trusts and operators.

Both Horizon and Front Lawn are assisting with the putting together of the required financial information.

#### **Artificial Cricket Pitch Installations**

Following the installation of artificial cricket wickets at both Emsworth Recreation Ground and Waterlooville Recreation Ground in July, contractor Total Play, completed the installation of the final pitch in Havant Park in September. These facilities, as funded through S106 and CIL, create an opportunity for the user clubs to enhance their offer to the community, particularly in the development and growth of their junior sections, who use

the facilities for match play and practice and provide a positive playing experience

### **Hooks Lane Rugby Pitches Re-Build**

Officers have been working in partnership with Havant Rugby Club on the feasibility of renovating the grass rugby pitches at Hooks Lane, Havant, responding to recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy which highlights the pitches as poor quality.

Pitch No.2 has been unsafe for rugby on occasions in the last season and requires major renovations beyond the scope of Norse South East's maintenance schedule.

£106 for £13,000 has been confirmed to cover contractor to complete final design and spec for grass pitch re-build. Funding for full project is unlikely to be sourced as originally hoped for a 2021 start. Therefore, it is anticipated to be pushed back by 12 months as CIL not viable this year.

The Rugby Club is also exploring the potential of Havant Hockey Club relocating to the Hooks Lane Ground. Officers are assisting with the early discussions.

### **Get up and Go**

Following latest lockdown guidance, the Get up and Go programme for inactive over 55's has had to suspend all of its face-to-face activities. Regular posts on Facebook were scheduled to encourage activity over Christmas from home.

The project officer is working in partnership with instructors to secure the delivery of classes via online platforms during the restrictions. Initial up take of these classes is higher than during the spring lockdown, which is encouraging. The project officer will continue to engage and communicate with participants of the programme through various channels to encourage positivity and physical activity during these challenging times. This will include posting daily resources and a timetable of available online activity for residents to access.

### **Hayling Island Bowls Club – Facility Development**

Planning permission has now been approved for new floodlights, although a condition has been imposed that they cannot be used during summer months.

A second funding condition required ahead of contractors starting is that HBC obtains confirmation of the lease of bowls green to club. Officers will be liaising with colleagues in estates.

Specification for artificial green and floodlighting works being drawn up for procurement with the £160,000 project expected to begin works in Spring 2021.

Officers will project manage the build phase.

### **Tennis Improvement Works**

Work to improve the tennis court provision at; Bedhampton, Emsworth and Purbrook has been completed. Officers from the Sport and Leisure team project managed the work that saw refurbishment that included; minor surfacing work, rebind and repaint and the installation of new tennis nets and posts. It is hoped that the works will encourage and improve access to good quality provision allowing residents to take part in sport and physical activity. The works also aligned to recommendations within the PPS. Officers attention now turns to the implementation of the free booking system at these three sites, this is planned to go live following the current lockdown restrictions that currently sees the courts locked and unable to be used.

### **Play Investment Programme 2020 – 2021 (Phase 1)**

Officers have obtained quotes for works at three sites with officers evaluating these shortly, and contractors subsequently appointed. Local Ward Councillors will be informed of any planned work within their ward. Improvements will be made to play areas that did not receive investment as part of the 2019 – 2020 programme, and will focus on improving play areas, replacing provision that is coming to the end of its usable life and improving fencing and gates where needed. This work is classed as phase 1, with phase 2 following later this financial year.

### **Emsworth Play Area Refurbishment – Verity's Gift (Partnership work)**

Officers have supported and worked collaboratively with local charity Verity's Gift (VG) in their aspirations to improve the play provision at Emsworth Park.

VG have been successful in securing £45,000 CIL money from their 2019 application and fundraising the additional £45,000 match funding required.

This means that the project is fully funded, and officers can begin the work to see aspirations for the play area realised. There have been 280 responses to the resident survey, influencing detail within specification for play equipment, which has been drawn up together with VG.

Works are anticipated to be undertaken in Spring 2021.

### **Havant Community Lottery**

In October, there were six new registered Good Causes they include bringing the total to 104. Ticket sales are increasing, we are currently selling 1,528 our target is 1,250 – I have recently myself signed-up a direct debit and would encourage all other Councillors to do the same. Over £96,000 has been raised for local Good Causes through the Havant Community Lottery since the launch in April 2018.

### **Armed Forces**

We have confirmation that Havant Borough Council is eligible to apply for a silver ERS (Employers Recognition Scheme) award, we currently have a

bronze award. The ERS encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the Armed Forces community, and align their values with the Armed Forces Covenant. We are in the process of completing the application.

The Havant Borough Council Armed Forces Covenant and action plan is in the process of being updated, led by Cllr Thain-Smith as our Armed Forces Champion. A re-signing event will take place with all signatories present (probably virtually) on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021.

## **Events**

A review of events was undertaken due to the changing Covid 19 restrictions regarding permission to hold an event on council-owned land. Discussions took place with Estates and Environmental Health resulting in a report for the Executive Board and Cabinet.

The decision was made not to permit events to take place on council owned land until further notice.

This information has been shared on both the Havant Borough website as well as via the What's On Facebook page and sent out via the Havant Borough Community Newsletter.

## **Changes to the team**

Nicki Conyard is taking a much-deserved phased retirement and therefore will be moving to a new role focussed on the Sport and Leisure side of the portfolio. Following a restructure, Jacqui Evans will be taking over as interim Community Manager for both Havant and East Hampshire. While Nicki is staying with the council, and we get to retain her wealth of knowledge and skills for a while longer, I wanted to place on record our thanks for all her outstanding work as Havant's Community Manager.

## **Communications**

### **Coronavirus Information**

There has been a continual focus on updating the latest Coronavirus information on the website and making sure it is easy to access. There was a particular focus promoting information when Havant entered 'tier four' and now the national lockdown restrictions. This has gone out via website, e-newsletters and social media.

### **Serving You**

The annual publication of Serving You was distributed to every household in the Borough. This included a pull-out on recycling and waste collection

services as well as public information on Coronavirus and messages from the Leader and Mayor.

## **Website and social media Q3 report**

### **Website information**

**Q3 1 October – 31 December 2019**      **Q3 1 October – 31 December 2020**

<b>197,457</b> website visits	<b>268,391</b> website visits
<b>151,514</b> people who visited the website	<b>212,183</b> people who visited the website
<b>478,175</b> website pages viewed	<b>499,047</b> website pages viewed

When compared to the same quarter from last year (2019), the number of website visits have increased by 35% (70,934).

### **Where do users look at the website from?**

The HBC website was mainly viewed from Havant (23%) and Portsmouth (18%) in Q3.

### **Most viewed website pages**

The most viewed website pages in Q3 were:

1. Bin collections (including coronavirus updates) – **47,340**
2. Search and comment on planning applications – **20,776**
3. Modern.gov (councillor information on website) – **20,252**
4. Contact the council – **15,423**
5. Council tax (including coronavirus updates) – **14,265**
6. Weekly planning lists – **13,044**
7. Planning services – **10,181**
8. Garden waste – **8,806**
9. Bin collection FAQs – **7,212**
10. Where I live (mapping tool) – **7,410**
11. Paying your council tax – **6,368**

### **Coronavirus website update**

The coronavirus information on the website has had 102,415 - page views (correct as of Friday 8 January 2021). There were 13,952 - page views in Q3.

We have set up three webpages dedicated to coronavirus information - council service updates, support for businesses and support for residents.

These pages are updated daily and are in a prominent location on the homepage.

Several new business support grants are now live on the website including:

- Local restrictions support grant (for open and closed businesses)
- Additional restrictions grants
- Christmas support payment for wet-led pubs

More information about these grants, including how to apply for them can be found on the website: <https://www.havant.gov.uk/business-support>.

### **Accessibility update**

New accessibility regulations came into force in September 2020 which ensure the website can be used by as many people as possible.

We use a tool called Site Improve to help monitor our accessibility compliance. The last test was carried out on Wednesday 6 January and the council website scored 94/100.

### **E-newsletters**

In Q3, we gained 1,581 new subscribers. We now have a total of 11,564. Compared to the same period last year, we gained 323 new subscribers.

85 bulletins were sent with an engagement rate of 82.8%.

The national average engagement rate for local government is 62%.

### **Social media update**

As the pandemic has continued and cases have risen, Q3 has been a very busy period – especially with tier changes in the week leading up to Christmas 2020. We have been sharing a broad range of messages about tier changes and guidelines and public health messaging, alongside business support and Christmas messaging. Ensuring the content is kept up to date has been crucial.

This quarter also included one paid-for campaign promoting the second round of the ‘Coronavirus and YOU’ survey.

### **Coronavirus and YOU survey results**

The second round of the ‘Coronavirus and YOU’ survey was run in December 2020 for approximately three weeks and a key aim was to reach a younger audience.

£300 was spent on Facebook and Instagram promotion (£150 for those under the age of 35 and £150 for those over 35). The results of the paid for promotion for round 1 and round 2 are compared below:

	<b>Round 1: Under 35</b>	<b>Round 2: Under 35</b>	<b>Round 1: All ages</b>	<b>Round 2: Over 35</b>
<b>Link clicks</b>	329	471 (+ 43%)	767	1,696 (+ 121%)

<b>Reach*</b>	17,072	13,084	9,180	14,331
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\*Reach is the number of accounts that saw the content

As you can see, the number of click-throughs in the second round of the survey increased in both age categories – by more than 100% in the over 35 paid-for promotion.

### **Facebook**

467 new likes – which is more than double compared to Q2 - giving us a total of 4.492. Our posts reached 405.8k accounts (9% higher than Q2).

Our top post was Havant borough's move to tier three which was posted about on 17 December. This post reached 16.9k account and received 2.7k engagements (including 306 reactions, comments and shares).

### **Twitter**

66 new followers meaning we are now on 3,742.

Our top tweet was about Havant borough being under tier four restrictions which was posted on 21 December. The post reached more than 2.5k accounts.

### **Instagram**

Our Instagram account increased by 161 in Q3 and now has 911 followers.

Using the 'story' feature has become a key way of making sure our posts are seen by our audience, as well as sharing posts from other organisations such as Hampshire County Council, the NHS and central government.

### **Nextdoor**

In December 2020 we launched our Havant Borough Council profile on Nextdoor -another social network. This platform is based around communities sharing information and advice with each other.

As a public sector organisation, we automatically gain access to all of those who use the platform and are registered as living within the borough – each user must input their postcode when they join.

Our audience is made up of 11,502 members which equates to 17% of 56,159 households.

A further benefit of this platform is that public sector messages are prioritised and appear at the top of a member's newsfeed when they log-in. This has been very helpful for us with all the recent tier and lockdown changes, to ensure that our message is being seen by a wider range of residents.