

A newsletter from the Borough Councillors for the Test Valley Borough Ward of Mid-Test
Councillors Alison Johnston, Ian Jeffrey, and Stewart MacDonald



Valley Park Community Association's Community Kettle

A community group in Valley Park, which was sparked into life by a small Cost of Living grant, has gone from strength to strength and now has an average of 40 residents attending each week.

This event started as a warm hub (after receiving a grant from TVBC which funded the initial start up costs) however the trustees quickly realised that it was loneliness that they should be combatting rather than the cost of living. They rebranded as the 'Community Kettle' and started to provide a space for anyone to attend on Tuesdays between 12-2pm, originally providing teas and cakes. However, this quickly progressed to include monthly talks from experts that have covered topics from home and cyber security to maintaining the local woodlands. Using their monthly magazine, posters, website updates, Facebook and word of mouth they have managed to build on the number of attendees steadily, and



it now covers its own costs.

From this event the association have seen an increase in the number of people volunteering for other events. As well as accounts from many of the attendees who described the event as the "highlight of their week",

resulting in the reduction of loneliness.

The Community Kettle was initiated by the Community Association, who themselves benefited from a Councillor Community Grant from Councillors Celia and Alan Dowden in September 2023.

Cllrs Alan and Celia Dowden said. "Communities need and benefit from a central organisation. The Valley Park Community Association provides a range of valuable information, through The Voice newsletter. It organises speakers and events for residents to enjoy. As local Councillors we have taken part in these events and regularly supported the Valley Park Association with grant funding to enable this valuable resource to continue its role within our community."

Community Asset Fund - round one

A total of five Community Asset Fund applications were considered in round one and the grants panel reached the following decisions:

Applicant	Project	Awarded
Over Wallop Parish Council	Sports Pavilion car park extension, sanitaryware, kitchen and white goods, flooring and finishes for the new sports pavilion.	£25,000.00
Abbey United Reformed Church, Romsey	Church Community Hall roof repairs, in preparation for a future solar panel installation project, to improve the energy efficiency of the facility	£9,900.00
Romsey Riverwalk Restoration CIC	Causeway Improvement project, improving the surface for pedestrian, wheelchair, buggy, bike & vehicle access	£23,333.03
Andover New Street Football & Social Club	Replacement of all current Flood Lighting columns with new ones, capable of powering LED Lights to enable play in the hours of darkness to continue	£25,000.00
Knightwood BMX Club	The purchase and installation of a mechanical 'Start Gate' for use by club members during hours that the club are open	£18,165.00
ROUND 1 - TOTAL AWARDED		£101,398.03
BALANCE AVAILABLE		£198,601.97

OPEN for applications in 2024/25

CAF grant applications can be for 50% of the overall project cost up to a maximum of £25,000. All applications must demonstrate the need for and the community benefit of a project as well as provide strong evidence of community support and suitable financial accounts. The next deadlines are as follows:

Round	Deadline	Panel meeting	Outcome
2	Mon 9 Sep 2024 (23:00)	Mon 14 Oct 2024	Fri 15 Nov 2024
3	Mon 13 Jan 2025 (23:00)	Wed 12 Feb 2025	Fri 14 Mar 2025

Full details and online application form can be found here: www.testvalley.gov.uk/CAF

For more information please contact [Jenny Brain](#).

New Changing Places facility opens on Andover High Street

Test Valley Borough Council's new Changing Places toilet (CPT) in Andover High Street is now open.

Located on 71 High Street in Andover, adjacent to the British Heart Foundation shop and the Blue Onion Café, the CPT provides fully accessible toilets that include a height adjustable changing bench, a hoisting system, and a toilet with enough space on both sides to allow wheelchair transfers or assistance from carers.

To individuals with more complex disabilities these toilets can be life-changing, enabling them and their carers can get out and about in the confidence that suitable toilet facilities exist nearby.

The new facility joins three existing CPTs in Andover, including one at the Unity offices by the bus station, one at Purple Oak in the Wellington Centre and another at Andover Leisure Centre.

As well as the new CPT being in a central location, it is also open late into the evening. You can only access it using a RADAR key. If you're disabled and want to apply for a RADAR key, you can visit the TVBC offices, or apply online at www.testvalley.gov.uk/radarkeys

The facility was funded by a government grant, and Muscular Dystrophy UK provided advice and technical help.

Local ward councillors, Cllr Jan Budzynski, Cllr Iris Andersen and Cllr Debbie Cattell, cut the ribbon to open the new facility on Friday 19 July.

Leader of the council, Councillor Phil North, said: "We know from speaking with residents and carers who use Changing Places toilets, what a huge difference they make to those with complex disabilities. And it is fantastic that Andover now has four of these facilities. I am grateful to everyone involved in the project for all their hard work and support."



Lee Roberts, business support manager from Purple Oak Support who attended the opening, added: "Having a changing places toilet in the centre of town will make such a difference to people with disabilities and incontinence support needs. It will ensure disabled people can enjoy what the town has to offer late into the evenings, knowing there are toilet facilities available to meet their needs. We know this will have such a positive impact on the people we support and open up so many more opportunities for them in the local community."

When considering locating the new CPT in the High Street, engagement with local groups, including the Enablement Network, received really positive feedback. Comments included the opportunity to increase footfall to town centre events and positive benefits to the disabled community.

There are various public toilet facilities in the town centre, including in the Chantry Centre opposite Boswells and by the bus station. There are also several businesses signed up to the council's Community Toilet Scheme, which means you can use their facilities without having to make a purchase. These include Grilled Cheese Café, Café Bridge, Costa Coffee and White Hart pub.

Bell ringers appeal answered by council funds



Local councillors have awarded £1,000 to the bell ringers of St Peter's Church in East Tytherley to refurbish the lighting in their ringing room and belfry.

Find out more and look at how similar grants could help your organisation or business on our website.

The bell ringers of St Peter's Church in East Tytherley have been awarded £1000 from the Test Valley Council Councillor Community Grants fund to refurbish the lighting in their ringing room and belfry.

The building, known locally as 'the church in the field' due to its rural location, is a listed building and the main space and ringing room are the only community spaces in East Tytherley, which no longer has a village hall. The current lighting is very old with an emergency light that takes a few seconds to come on in the event of a power cut... not unknown in this remote location!

Work started earlier in Spring, when the Lockerley and East Tytherley ringers met with Mid-test Councillor Stewart MacDonald to check on progress. (pictured)

Jen Churchill, one of the bellringers group, said: "The lighting improvement in the tower will bring a far more pleasant experience for people using it for meetings and gatherings.

"The steeple keepers are also very pleased that they will soon be able to climb around the belfry with adequate lighting when servicing the bells. We would all like to express our thanks and gratitude to the council for their generosity."

Cllr MacDonald said: "I am delighted to support this important initiative in East Tytherley. With no other community buildings in the parish, St Peter's is at the heart of the East Tytherley community.

"This is yet another example of how the Test Valley Community Councillor grant scheme can make a real difference at a very local level. We have recently supported initiatives across Mid

Test including West Tytherley village store, defibrillator installation at Middle Wallop, Computer Cafe at King's Somborne, Wallop Village shop and the Christmas lights in Stockbridge, to name but a few." Find out more [on our Community grants pages](#).

Romsey Abbey Wildflower Meadow



Councillor Community Grants are awarded across the Test Valley region and could benefit your local group, club or organisation.

Back in May the Countryside Team along with Environmental Services began the process of transforming the North Church Yard at Romsey Abbey into a vibrant wildflower meadow.

After several years as part of the Urban Meadows project the meadow at the North Church Yard failed to improve in diversity on its own.

The team laid a product known as Meadowscape Pro on top of the existing meadow area. The product is made up of mulch mixed with wildflower seed, giving the seed the best start to begin to grow. Three months on and the Church yard has become a colour rich, diverse wildflower meadow, buzzing with life.

At the end of the summer the meadow will be cut and collected to allow for fresh growth the following year. At this time any areas that have not established will be reseeded with a complimentary mix to ensure success the following season.

For more information please contact Charlotte Rimmer, Senior Countryside Officer on Ex 8811 or crimmer@testvalley.gov.uk

Community grant awarded to Andover Bowling Club



"...this wheelchair has been a real lifeline for me." 🦽

Our recent community grant, awarded to Andover Bowling Club, made the local ITV News recently.

It's a great example of how our place-based approach is working to deliver real

improvements for people in our communities.

A veteran bowls player from Hampshire says he's been given a new lease of life because of a specialist wheelchair.

Jack Norris, 89, has been a member at [Andover Bowling Club](#) since 2016, having previously played in Canada and the United States. He was considering giving up his life-long hobby due to his limited mobility, until the new equipment changed his game completely.

The specialist wheelchair has been paid for by a community grant from Test Valley Borough Council and a local organisation called The Sofa Club.



The arm rests on the specialist wheelchair rotate to give the user the ability to bowl the ball.

Jack said: "I wasn't going to bowl at all this year, because of my stability of being on the mat and I thought I was going to fall, and I didn't think it was fair to the other team members, but I was told they had this wheelchair and I'll tell you, this wheelchair has been a lifeline for me, and I don't know how long I've got to live, but it's given me more years of good bowling. There are arms, which rotate round, so you've got one side that's free, so whoever is using it can swing their arm and deliver the bowl without any encumbrance on their movement.'

"It means they can play regularly, and then they don't feel as though they can only play half a game. They can actually play sitting down and play the whole game.

Cllr Iris Andersen, Test Valley Borough Council, said: "This is an essential grant to help communities. It's absolutely wonderful to see the impact that the person can be in that wheelchair, can use it.

Water safety devices upgraded after spate of vandalism



We've rolled out new water safety devices at Anton Lakes. Test Valley Borough Council is set to upgrade water safety devices across its sites following a rise in vandalism and misuse of life rings.

Officers currently waste the equivalent of four days a month being called out to collect life rings that have been thrown into ponds and lakes at the

council's nature reserves and parks.

And, critically, with missing safety equipment posing a risk to life, the authority has taken advice from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and will be rolling out new Throw Line Housing Stations across the borough, beginning with a pilot at Anton Lakes.

Each station contains a throw line, which users can access in an emergency by dialling 999 and providing the precise location reference displayed on the unit. The call handler will give them a code to unlock the throw line, which can be used repeatedly.

Rikki Noble, Test Valley Station Manager at Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue said: " If someone is in trouble in the water, the best way to help is by staying calm, staying on land, and remembering Call, Tell, Throw: call 999 for the emergency services, tell the struggling person to float on their back, throw them something that floats.

"These new water safety stations will help people by providing vital lifesaving equipment and giving them clear instructions so they understand what to do in an emergency. They will also help us to easily identify the location and reach anyone in need as quickly as possible.

Cllr Terese Swain, Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Tourism, said:

"Lakes on Test Valley Borough Council land aren't for swimming or paddling, but accidents happen, and these safety devices are there for anyone needing urgent, lifesaving help.

"In 2022, 266 people drowned accidentally in the UK and more of these drowning incidents took place in inland waterways than the sea

If you see a life ring that is out of place you can report it to the council on by emailing leisure@testvalley.gov.uk or calling 01264 368000 and asking to speak to the Countryside team.

Funding available for rural businesses



Do you run a rural business in Test Valley or know someone who does? If so, the government is offering grants of £5k to £25k for up to 50 per cent of the capital project costs for small and medium sized rural businesses, so please get in touch with us if you have a project you're looking to fund.

Typically, the grants can fund equipment, machinery and building work with planning permission already in place. Projects must be completed by the end of March 2025, with all invoices submitted before this date.

The latest funded projects include:

A small-scale investment at a farm looking to diversify income streams. The grant will cover the conversion of an old agriculture barn into commercial office space.

Support for a gin distillery to diversify by creating a new spiced rum.

Please apply as soon as possible - grants will be assessed on a monthly basis until the funding pot is exhausted.

Further information and an application form can be found here: [Rural England Prosperity Fund | Test Valley Borough Council](#).

Or send an email to Jackie Hewson, economic development officer, at jhewson@testvalley.gov.uk. Please include your idea and postcode, so we can check eligibility.

Mayor's Summer Update

The Mayor of Test Valley, Councillor Ian Jeffrey, and Mayoress, Mrs Maura Jeffrey have embraced the beginning of their civic year by attending concerts, school, Scout, church, community and charity events in the borough.

The Mayor represented TVBC at special D-Day 80th Anniversary events in Longstock and Appleshaw. The Test Valley Civic Service on 6 June, which further marked the occasion, was well attended and positively received, as was the Beacon Lighting occasion in Charlton; held at dusk it was most poignant.

Councillor Jeffrey recorded an incoming Mayor's message for the Andover Talking Newspaper in their Beech Hurst recording studio for hard of hearing residents to access.

Mottisfont House and Gardens

celebrated the 50th anniversary of their Rose Garden on 12 June with Councillor Jeffrey giving a Welcome to Test Valley speech for guests.

The annual Armed Forces Day Flag Raising Ceremonies

were held on 24 June in Andover and Romsey. People gathered to watch the flags being blessed by the Mayor's Chaplains before raised to fly for one week. Councillor Jeffrey also supported the Armed Forces Day event held in Vigo Park, Andover on Saturday 29 June, meeting many local residents and watched an incredible display by the Parachute Regiment Red Devils.

Romsey Beggars Fair

celebrated its 30th Anniversary this year. Councillor Jeffrey opened the stage in the Memorial Park and the occasion was another well attended and enjoyable event filled with music and art.

The Andover Junior Graduations

were successful again this year and saw Councillor Jeffrey giving speeches and hundreds of congratulatory fist bumps to excited year six pupils watched by proud parents and teachers from local schools.

Mr Mayor has been ably represented, at some events by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Linda Lashbrook and past Mayors Councillor Alan Dowden and Councillor Mark Cooper - Councillor Jeffrey thanks them for their support.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance

Councillor Jeffrey is pleased to launch his Mayor's Appeal with the announcement of his first chosen charity, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance, further charities will be nominated in due course.

Green Flag Awards

The Council is thrilled to confirm that three of its local green spaces have once again been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award. This international mark of quality is a testament to the exceptional management and upkeep of Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve in Andover, Valley Park Woodlands Local Nature Reserve, and War Memorial Park in Romsey.

The Green Flag Award recognises green spaces that are safe, well-managed, and maintained with the involvement of local communities. It also highlights excellent environmental management practices, including biodiversity support, water reuse, and reduced pesticide use.

The Council is very proud of its green spaces which are well used by communities. These three parks have consistently achieved the coveted green flag status for more than ten years

and the news that they have achieved it once again this year is testament to the hard work and dedication of the council teams and volunteers that care for them.

Fancy a change of career?

Whether you like to be in the office or out and about, there are lots of different job opportunities at Test Valley Borough Council.

Current vacancies:

Policy Officer

Are you are looking to kick-start your career in local government or develop your established skills in a policy and partnership environment?

We are passionate about supporting and developing our team members and offer an environment where you are empowered to use your initiative, learn from others and have the chance to fulfil your potential.

This role is based at Beech Hurst in Andover. **Application closing date: 1 September 2024**

OTHER NEWS

Animal foster crisis - can you help?

Rescue centres nationally are in crisis with far more dogs needing homes than can be housed. This is why rescue centres are looking for fosterers to look after dogs until they can find a new home.

Last week, our Animal Welfare Officer, Rod Mason, had three Huskies, two French Bulldogs and 29 assorted breeds, along with a couple of tiny kittens that needed help.

Dogs Trust had just over 600 pleas for help for the first six months of 2023. This year that number has doubled to over 1,200.

The lockdown dogs, cost of living and skyrocketing vet bills are culminating in the perfect storm for unwanted dogs.

If you think you may be able to foster a dog until it finds a home do get in touch with one of the local charities. They desperately need your help!

The main charities locally are: Dogs Trust Salisbury, Hungerford National Animal Welfare Trust. Dogs Trust Newbury. Blue Cross Southampton.

A Defibrillator Near You

Defibrillators for public use are located at:

- Stockbridge Fire Station (available 24 hours)
- Longstock Village Hall (available 24 hours)
- Leckford Estate Office (restricted hours)
- Leckford Farm Shop (restricted hours)
- Up Somborne - Rookley Farm (24 hours)
- King's Somborne Village Hall
- King's Somborne - The Crown Inn (available 24 hours on front wall of pub)
- Over Wallop - the White Hart pub, Pinchbecks Garage and the Army Flying Museum.
- Nether Wallop -Village Hall and the Pavilion on the playing fields.
- Ashley Farm (available 24 hours)
- Broughton - Village Hall, Doctor's surgery, Sports Pavilion.



Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered but for anyone who would like prior understanding of how to use one, see:

<https://www.aeddonate.org.uk/events/>

In the event of an emergency, after dialling 999 to report the incident, the phone operative should give the access code for the cabinet, to the person/first aider using the device.

Contact

If there are any issues in this copy that you would like to discuss, or any items of news that you would like to be considered in a future copy please contact any of the Borough councillors.



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