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



Readers wish a speedy recovery to Graham Searle, Chairman of the Parish Council for King's Somborne, who was badly injured in a car accident last week.

Councillors back historic proposal for Local Government Reorganisation

Test Valley borough councillors have voted to back a bold plan for local government reorganisation, which would see them join with Winchester, New Forest and East Hampshire to create a new unitary council.

At a special council and cabinet meeting on 24 September councillors considered a joint proposal document drafted by 12 of the 15 councils in Hampshire, entitled 'Close enough to be local, big enough to stay strong'. It puts forward the case to government, supported by extensive evidence, analysis and research, to create four new mainland authorities for the area grouped around the major centres of Southampton, Portsmouth, Winchester and Basingstoke. The Isle of Wight would remain its own island unitary authority.

Evidence shows that creating four new unitary councils for mainland Hampshire to replace the existing 14 councils, with the Isle of Wight remaining an independent island unitary council, would save at least £63.9 million a year, through streamlined services, reduced duplication, and more efficient governance

The proposal document has been produced in response to the [government's decision to replace the current system of councils in Hampshire](#).

Residents in Test Valley have shown their strong support for bringing together the Test Valley, New Forest, Winchester and East Hampshire council areas. These four areas have striking similarities around their communities and economies. Importantly they are very different to the larger urban conurbations found in the rest of mainland Hampshire and will allow us to provide services that are much more suited to our local communities. Our proposal to Government is based firmly on residents' views.

In line with the preferred option selected by local residents, TVBC has thrown its weight behind option one (see below), which would see it join with the three largely rural authorities in mid-Hampshire.

The option TVBC is proposing in the document meets the government's criteria for reorganisation, and financial analysis shows that it would deliver more than £63 million in recurring annual savings.



The proposed option one, which was the preferred option selected by local residents

The business case is informed by one of the largest public engagement exercises ever undertaken by local government in the region. More than 13,000 residents across Hampshire and Isle of Wight took part in the engagement, sharing their views on identity, service delivery, and what matters most to them in future council arrangements.

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

“Despite LGR (Local Government Reorganisation) not being our choice, we have worked collaboratively and constructively with councils of different political make-ups and different demographics across Hampshire. And the overwhelming majority of Hampshire authorities agree that four mainland councils offer the very best way forward for our communities. In our view, option one creates councils that make sense as they are grouped around similar communities and economies and give us a real opportunity to transform how we deliver services.

“Unfortunately, the County Council are still suggesting we should be run from Southampton. Our residents have been clear they don’t want to be joined with a large city - and Southampton agrees that wouldn’t work either. I hope the government decides not to pursue that proposal’.

“I am proud of the work we have done to make the very best of the hand we have been dealt, and I look forward to submitting our case to government.”

The submission will now be considered by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), who are expected to run a public consultation on the proposals later this year.

Update on Food Waste Collections in Test Valley

If you haven't already, you will soon be receiving your food waste caddy packs, in preparation for the new service starting on 13 October 2025.

A specialist distribution company is helping us with the rollout of food waste caddies to homes throughout the area, which is expected to be completed in the next four weeks.

Each standard household will receive a five-litre kitchen caddy, a 23-litre kerbside caddy, one roll of caddy liners, and an information leaflet explaining how the new food waste collection service works.

For households that share bins, deliveries will include a communal 140-litre grey-lidded food waste wheeled bin for the bin store, rather than a kerbside caddy.

Residents should store their caddy liners in a dry place and keep the information leaflet safe for future reference.

Meanwhile, everyone will soon receive a postcard confirming what day their food waste will be collected. You can also check any of your bin collection days online: www.testvalley.gov.uk/bins.

Please don't use your food waste caddies until the week commencing 6 October.

Why is this happening?

We are introducing this new collection service as the Environment Act requires all councils to have food waste collections in place by 1 April 2026. We are introducing it five months earlier in a positive step towards transforming recycling in the area.

Food waste caddies started being delivered to Test Valley residents last week, and will continue to happen over the next 5 weeks. A specialist company is helping us with the rollout of the caddy packs, which include a five-litre kitchen caddy, a 23-litre kerbside caddy, one roll of caddy liners, and an information leaflet explaining how the new food waste collection service works.



Postcards will soon start being sent out to all households letting them know what day their food waste will be collected on.

Residents will also be able to check the same way they check their household waste and recycling bin dates by going to www.testvalley.gov.uk/bins.

What can I put in my food waste caddy?

There are lots of items that can be placed into the food waste caddies. These include:

- all uneaten food and plate scrapings
- raw and cooked meat and fish including bones
- tea bags and coffee grounds
- fruit and vegetables including peelings (raw or cooked)
- out of date or mouldy food
- dairy products such as cheese, and much more.



Keep an eye out for Golden Tickets

To celebrate the rollout, we have hidden 20 golden tickets inside randomly selected caddy packs. Lucky winners can choose from a range of exciting prizes, including a £50 gift voucher for The Lights, and a three-month premium membership for Andover Leisure Centre, Romsey Rapids, and Knightwood Leisure Centre.

For more information about the service, and how to redeem a winning voucher, visit www.testvalley.gov.uk/foodwaste.



What vehicles are being used to collect the waste?

We have a fleet of 7.5 tonne specialist food waste collection vehicles. They're able to access the wide range of rural and urban properties across the borough. All of our fleet run on HVO - Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil - a renewable fuel with reduced greenhouse emissions of up to 95%



Our new fleet of food waste collection vehicles

Council motion – Rights of Rivers

At its meeting on 23 July 2025, the council resolved to formally recognise the Rights of Rivers, drawing inspiration from the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers.

The Council has written to the Environment Agency in line with the motion with regards to what measures they have, or intends to have, to enhance protections for our freshwater ecosystems and whether the EA can produce data more frequently than currently.

Other News

Scenic walks to explore in Test Valley



October is the perfect time to lace up your boots and explore the scenic landscapes of Test Valley. You'll find everything from gentle riverside strolls to historic trails like the Test Way and Clarendon Way.

Test Valley is bursting with trails that showcase its rural beauty and historic charm. It is a great location for a weekend walking get away to explore the beautiful countryside, with a selection of walks to choose from of all distances.

Favourite circular walks

- **Braishfield Circular** (4.5miles), a gentle loop through quiet lanes and open countryside.
- **Romsey Riverside Walk** (3.25miles), meander past historic buildings and riverside views.
- **King's Somborne** (3miles), thatched cottages, rolling hills and timeless village vibes.
- **Facombe** (2.8miles), a grassy descent rewards you with sweeping views of the valley.
- **Wildhern** (2.5miles), short and sweet, with wide skies and farmland views.
- **Abbotts Ann** (4miles), a tranquil walk with views of the River Anton and traditional flint cottages.

Long-distance trails for adventure

If you love a long-distance adventure there are two iconic routes:

- **The Test Way**, following the River Test, this trail meanders through meadows, woodlands and charming villages.
- **Clarendon Way**, linking Salisbury and Winchester, this historic route offers panoramic views and a rich sense of heritage.



River Test at Longstock

Walk through history



Test Valley isn't just beautiful, it's ancient and is also home to Danebury Hillfort, an Iron Age site with breath-taking views and a sense of timelessness.

Andover and Romsey town centres also have heritage trails where you can walk back in time learning about the history of the town centres.

Cycle in Test Valley

As the summer warmth lingers and the countryside begins to glow with autumn hues, it's the perfect time to explore Test Valley by Bike. From peaceful paths to rolling country lanes, the region offers routes for every rider. Read more.



October is a cyclist's dream in Test Valley:

- Mild temperatures and crisp air make for comfortable riding.
- Fewer crowds mean quieter roads and more peaceful trails.
- Stunning scenery, amber trees, misty mornings and rolling hills.
- Plus, with over 500 miles of rights of way and designated cycle routes, there's something for every level of rider.

Six top cycling routes in Test Valley

Here are some of the most popular and picturesque bike routes to explore this autumn:

Vernham Dean Route (23 miles)

A scenic loop through charming villages and open countryside. Ideal for intermediate riders seeking tranquility and rural beauty.

This is a hilly and strenuous cycle route which is 23 miles long. It is mainly hard flint and gravel tracks and passes through several picturesque villages north of Ibthorpe, in the northwest of Hampshire. There are spectacular views across Faccombe Down.

Danebury route (24 miles)

A strenuous 24 miles that takes in some of Hampshire's finest scenery. This cycle route joins easy sections of the Test Way with the steeper gradients of the Broughton Downs. A wide variety of villages provide additional interest including Stockbridge, Longstock and The Wallops. Cycle past the iconic Danebury Hillfort and enjoy panoramic views of the valley. A perfect blend of history and nature.

Test Way family route (5 miles)

A disused railway track runs between Stonymarsh and Stockbridge. It has a safe and flat surface for cycling and this makes it particularly suitable for families with children. The track is up to 5 miles each way.



Whitchurch route (23 miles)

A 23 mile challenging trail covering many of the places that were an inspiration for Richard Adams' 'Watership Down'. Explore historic market towns, quiet lanes and scenic farmland. Great for a leisurely half-day ride with plenty of photo opportunities.

National Cycle route 246 (31 miles)

A longer, well-marked route for experienced cyclists. Expect varied terrain, beautiful countryside and rewarding views.

There are stunning views from Woodcott Down and Ladle Hill. These contrast with the picturesque Hampshire villages of St. Starting from Timsbury, north of Romsey and its connection with **National Route 24**, the route runs along the old railway line once known as the "Sprat & Winkle" line.

Continuing northwards, following the River Test and along "The Test Way" for some of the way, the route travels through Horsebridge, Stockbridge, Leckford, Fullerton and Andover town centre.

North of Andover the route follows a mixture of traffic-free paths and quiet lanes with some much more challenging terrain. This section passes through the villages of St Mary Bourne, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Faccombe and Inkpen Common.

The northern end of the route links to **National Route 4** at the picturesque village of Kintbury in Berkshire. Mary Bourne and Binley.

King Alfred's Way (Test Valley section)

King Alfred's Way is a 350km/217-mile circular off-road adventure route through 10,000 years of history, connecting some of England's most iconic sites.

Despite being easily accessible from cities in the south of England, you'll feel like you've escaped from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. Think white horses on chalk hillsides and wide-open views across rolling waves of countryside.

The name of the trail is inspired by Alfred the Great.

The trail starts and ends at King Alfred's statue in Winchester, where he is buried. Using parts of the Ridgeway and South Downs Way, the trail is ideal for gravel bikes – or mountain bikes during the wetter months – and can be ridden over a few days as a bike packing trip.

It also connects with the Thames Path and the North Downs Way riders' route, so you can combine multiple routes into a longer ride.

King Alfred's Way forms a crucial part of Cycling UK's goal to create a network of long-distance off-road routes across the length and breadth of Great Britain, through fascinating places and inspiring landscapes.



One of the joys of cycling in Test Valley is the abundance of cosy cafes, traditional pubs, and welcoming B&Bs along the way.

Stop for a slice of cake in Stockbridge, enjoy a riverside lunch in Romsey, or plan a weekend ride with an overnight stay in Andover.

Whether you're chasing golden light or simply escaping the daily grind, autumn cycling in Test Valley offers the perfect blend of adventure, serenity and seasonal charm.

Landscape Works due to start at Former Magistrates Court, Romsey

Landscape improvements around the offices of the Former Magistrates Court, Romsey will be happening over the next few weeks.

New railings and associated planting works will be carried out by EW Landscapes with works starting on 8 September 2025.

Works are due to last 3 weeks and will reduce the impact of current pedestrian use of the area beneath the trees, extending the health of the trees and providing a more attractive setting with shrub and bulb planting included.

Health Walk Leaders needed

The council are after some more volunteer Health Walk Leaders. These walks are more than just a stroll, they are a way to support community wellbeing, reduce isolation and promote physical and mental health. Leaders have found the experience deeply rewarding. If you or someone you know would enjoy leading a short, friendly walk and making a real difference, please contact [Fen Holland](mailto:Fen.Holland@testvalley.gov.uk) [fholland@testvalley.gov.uk](mailto:Fen.Holland@testvalley.gov.uk)

Youth Sports Week

In August TVBC saw the launch of Youth Sports Week, a new initiative where the sports development team worked in partnership with local sports clubs with an aim to connect children and young people with local sporting opportunities, along with building their confidence to try something new, and make new friends. Over 100 children attended during the week where a range of inclusive sports sessions in cricket, hockey, BMX, gymnastics and tennis were delivered.

Feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive, and the team are already exploring ways to build on the momentum for future initiative. Planning is already underway for Youth Sports Week 2026, with ambitions to make it even bigger and better.

How to desensitise your dog to loud noises before fireworks season

You may think it's too early to be thinking about fireworks season, but if you have a four-legged friend who is scared of loud bangs and sudden noises now is the time to start desensitising them so they are ready for it in a couple of months' time.

TVBC's Animal Welfare Officers are sharing tips on how to help your dog feel safe and calm - including the Sounds Scary program from [Dogs Trust](#). For more information visit www.testvalley.gov.uk/SoundTherapyForDogs.

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.

Broughton Village Hall

Mottisfont Social Club

Ashley- Ashley Farm (24 hours)

Lockerley - Outside the main door at the Lockerley and East Dean Memorial Hall. SO51 0JG

Lockerley - Outside the door of Lockerley Stores on Lockerley Green. SO51 0JN

Instructions for use are given when the device is commandeered.

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.



Councillor
Alison Johnston
01794 500610
clrajohnston@testvalley.gov.uk



Councillor
Ian Jeffrey
01794 388872
clrijeffrey@testvalley.gov.uk



Councillor
Stewart MacDonald 07803
594872
cllrsmacdonald@testvalley.gov.uk