

Borough Councillor Report

Cllr Maureen Flood and Cllr Susanne Hasselmann

April 2026

Local government reorganisation decision announced – most of Test Valley set to become part of a new Mid-Hampshire council

On Wednesday 25 March 2026 the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP announced the new unitary authorities for the county of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Test Valley Borough Council is set to join Winchester, New Forest and East Hampshire to create a new Mid-Hampshire unitary council, but its communities in Chilworth, Nursling, Rownhams and Valley Park will join the South West Hampshire unitary council with Southampton and Eastleigh.

The new unitary authorities will replace the existing borough, district and city councils, and Hampshire County Council, to create a single layer of councils responsible for all services in their area.

Based on the model for five unitary councils which Test Valley fought for, the government will create the following new unitary councils that will go live on 1 April 2028:

- Northern Hampshire unitary authority – Basingstoke, Hart and Rushmoor
- Mid-Hampshire unitary authority – Test Valley (less Chilworth, Nursling, Rownhams and Valley Park), Winchester, New Forest (less New Forest Waterside parishes) and East Hampshire
- South West Hampshire unitary authority – Eastleigh, Southampton plus Chilworth, Nursling, Rownhams and Valley Park and New Forest Waterside parishes
- South East Hampshire unitary authority – Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport and Fareham
- Isle of Wight unitary authority

All councils will now work together to build the new unitaries and prepare for the shadow council elections in May 2027. The Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council will lead the transition implementation team with important decisions to be made over the next 12 to 24 months. Part of this process is to decide the number of councillors who will look after communities and the local governance structures.

The shadow authorities are temporary councils that will plan and prepare the new unitary council before it officially starts work on 1 April 2028 when all other existing county, city, borough and district councils will cease to exist.

Climate change grant

The Climate Change grant will be launching for a second year on 1 April 2026 and is available only to community groups and other not-for-profit organisations for core works to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions of their assets and / or deliver projects to improve community resilience to climate change. Please note businesses are not eligible for this grant.

The types of work that could be funded are outlined in Section 3 of the website – ['What is an eligible project'](#).

This year, the grant will be split into two application windows:

- The first 6 months, until 30 September 2026, is open only to applicants who did not receive a climate change grant in 2025/26.
- The second 6 months, from 1 October, is open to all eligible organisations.

Applicants are able to apply for a grant of up to £10,000 towards a project. Match funding of 20% of the total cost of the project will be required for grants of £5,000 or more. A minimum of £250 will be set for grant applications.

We encourage all eligible organisations to apply for the grant and are asking Councillors to promote the grant in their areas.

For further information please follow [Climate Change Grant | Test Valley Borough Council](#), which will provide step by step guidance, planning requirements, and FAQs.

Community Councillor Grant re-opened

The Community Councillor grant has now re-opened for applications.

Not-for-profit, charitable community groups and organisations can apply to the Councillor Community Grant Scheme for a grant up to two-thirds of the cost of their project or activity, up to a maximum of £1,000.

The Test Valley Borough Councillors Community Grant Scheme aims to support local people to establish their own priorities and deliver local solutions to local issues. It also aims to encourage community led initiatives, supported by Borough Councillors who can play an active part in helping their communities deliver their ambitions.

Who can apply?

- Not-for-profit community groups
- Charitable organisations

- Voluntary groups
- Incorporated clubs and societies
- Parish or Town Councils
- Schools, in relation to their wider community role
- Borough Councillors (where there is no external sponsoring organisation)

If your type of organisation is not listed above, please do get in touch to check if you are eligible.

What is an eligible community project?

Community projects which address a need within your community, such as;

- addressing climate change or positively supporting the environment and sustainability
- increasing inclusivity and access for all
- Creating new or improving existing community assets
- New community resources
- Community led-events
- Public art within your community

If your community project is not listed above, please do get in touch to check if it is eligible.

How far in advance of an event, project or spending cut-off date should I apply?

All applications must be submitted, sufficiently in advance of the event, project, or spending cut-off date, for which you are seeking funding. You are recommended to apply at least 1 month before the funds are needed. This should allow reasonable time for your application to be assessed and processed, but in some cases, if an application requires additional information before it can be assessed, then this could result in a further delay.

If funding is required with less notice than 1 month, you must speak to the Community Engagement Officer for the relevant ward, to discuss how we might be able to best support the application. Contact details for your Community Engagement Officers can be found here: www.testvalley.gov.uk/ceofficers

How much can be applied for?

- Up to two-thirds of the cost of a project or activity
- The maximum amount that can be applied for is £1,000

How do I apply?

- Discuss your proposal with your local Borough Councillor(s) and Community Engagement Officer for your ward

- Click the link below to visit the Council's online grant system and begin your application.

APPLY FOR A COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY GRANT

Community Delivery Fund

The Community Delivery Fund continues to support local groups to improve community spaces. The first three projects in Awbridge, Ampfield and Goodworth Clatford show how the fund helps communities protect important buildings, upgrade well-used facilities and develop long term plans with confidence.

The fund is designed to be more than a traditional grant scheme. It brings communities and the council together early on, helping groups build strong, evidence led cases for investment and opening the door to other funding opportunities. The aim is to create improvements that are community led, have lasting impact and leave a long term legacy for people across Test Valley.

In Anna ward Goodworth Clatford Village Club has been awarded more than £69,000 to replace windows and external doors and refurbish the interior, making the venue warmer, safer and more welcoming. The project follows strong community support, with 180 responses from 332 households, and will help widen participation and strengthen the club's long-term finances.

For more information on this fund, please contact your Borough Councillor.

Tails Exploring Trails at Bury Hill Meadows

In February TVBC's Animal Welfare Officers piloted a 'Tails Exploring Trails'. The purpose of this dog and dog owner engagement event was to take attendees on a tour of a nature reserve, chatting about how dogs and nature can coexist, giving tips for how the coexistence can happen, information regarding the nature at the reserves and dog on dog behaviour tips. This initial pilot was a success, with some very positive feedback from attendees.

The animal welfare team is now organising a tour at Bury Hill Meadows which is open to 8 people, on a first come, first served basis.



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