

CORONAVIRUS
STAY HOME
FOR YOUR FAMILY

**DON'T PUT THEIR LIFE
IN DANGER.**



ABOUT WINCHESTER SPECIAL EDITION - COVID-19

A message from the
Leader of the council



Cllr Lucille Thompson
Leader of Winchester City Council

Lucille Thompson

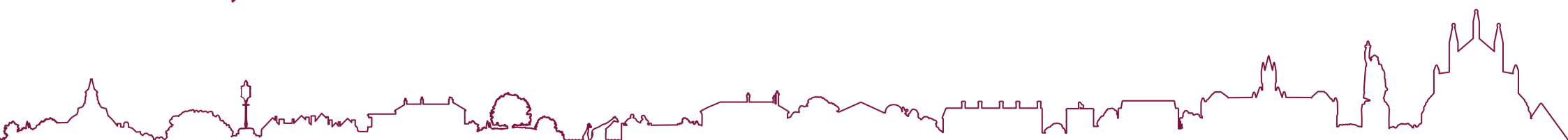
We know this is a challenging time for everyone across Winchester district.

Whatever your personal circumstances, I hope this update from us helps you feel connected to what is going on to help our communities ahead of a safe return to a new normality when this extraordinary time is over.

The Government has asked us to stay home, except for essential trips, for another three weeks. This lockdown already had a significant impact on how we live and interact and I want to repeat our commitment to be here to support you as the situation continues. The city council is providing advice, supporting households and business, and making sure the essential services keep going. We're offering all our residents the practical assistance they need over this period - and we expect to continue this beyond the period of greatest social distancing as people find their feet. Our focus is helping those who need it most, and this includes being there for those experiencing unprecedented financial difficulties.

We are all playing an important part in tackling this challenge. I pay special tribute to all of you who are going the extra mile to support those who are most in need. The community spirit that I see everywhere is what will ensure we can emerge from these unsettling times into brighter days.

This special edition of About Winchester sets out in detail how we are here supporting you.



COVID-19 support

Hantshelp4vulnerable

If you or someone you know is in need of support, a helping hand is available by calling **0333 370 4000** seven days a week, from 9am-5pm. It's important to use this number as it has direct contact with all the right organisations to get you the help you need as soon as possible. To date, since the phone lines opened on 1 April 2020, over 3,500 calls have been received.

Local Response Centre

Your request may be passed to Winchester City Council's Local Response Centre which has been set up to respond to requests for help such as the delivery of shopping, the collection of prescriptions, or offering a friendly voice on the end of the phone for a wide range of things you may want to discuss. We may also put you directly in touch with the support group most local to you if they are best positioned to help you.

Online advice

We have dedicated website pages for all current COVID-19 information [here](#) including any support and advice in addition to any changes in council services. This also has links to the latest national information.



Help nearer to home

You may wish to get in touch directly with one of the fabulous voluntary organisations that have sprung into action across our district. We have all the information for known voluntary groups on our website – see groups across the district [here](#) and for wards in the city the information is [here](#).

If you know of a group that would like to be publicised then email us at support@winchester.gov.uk and we'll make sure that a single point of contact is included in these listings.

Citizens Advice Bureau

The team at Citizens Advice Bureau have been busy adapting their service so their 100-strong group of volunteers can continue to support you by phone, email, webchat and a new Call Back service which allows local residents to call a new phone number and leave a message. If you call you will be asked to provide your name, phone number and brief description of your query and a trained adviser will call you back as soon as possible. Here's how to get in touch:

General advice:

- Local Call Back Service: **01489 890 940** or **01962 848 003** (Mon to Fri)
- Regional Adviceline: **03444 111 306** Operating: Mon-Fri 9.30am-5pm, and Sat 10am-12pm)
- Universal Credit Help to Claim: **0800 144 8 444** (Operating Mon – Fri 8.00am – 6.00pm)
- Consumer Issues: **0808 2231133** (operating 9am to 5pm)
- Email: advice@winchesterdistrictcab.org.uk
- Websites: click [here](#) for the website and [here](#) for specialised support from Hampshire MacMillan Citizens Advice Service for those living with cancer and looking for information on benefits, finance, housing and employment.



Winchester and Meon Valley Food Banks

Can you spare any store cupboard essentials for people in need across our district? The Winchester and Meon Valley Food Banks are appealing for donations to support their vital work supporting local people to feed their families.

The Winchester Rotary Club is helping out by dusting off Santa's Sleigh to make door-to-door collections in various locations around Winchester over the next two weeks (his elves are operating this while he self isolates). You can find out more information on the routes and dates [here](#).

You can donate a range of everyday food items such as tinned/dried, household cleaning products, nappies and dog/cat food. The charities keeps a list of products they are most in need on their website. See www.winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk and www.meonvalleyfoodbank.co.uk.

You can also drop off donations to the following places across the district for **Winchester Basics Bank**:

- A temporary sorting site at the Vineyard Church, Bar End Industrial Estate open between Tuesday - Friday between 10 - 3pm
- Collection points at Sainsbury's branches in Badger Farm or Middle Brook Street, Winchester; Tesco at Winnall; Co-op in Alresford; Waitrose Stockbridge Road, Weeke.
- A collection point inside the Discovery Centre, Winchester.

And these locations accept donations for **Meon Valley Food Bank**:

- Budgens in Bishops Waltham
- Southern Co-operative Wickham
- Bishops Waltham Youth Hall (Tuedays 10 - 3pm)

Community support grants

If you are pulling together a local group - or struggling to resource the support you offer within your local community you may wish to see if there is any grant funding appropriate [here](#).



Contacting Winchester City Council

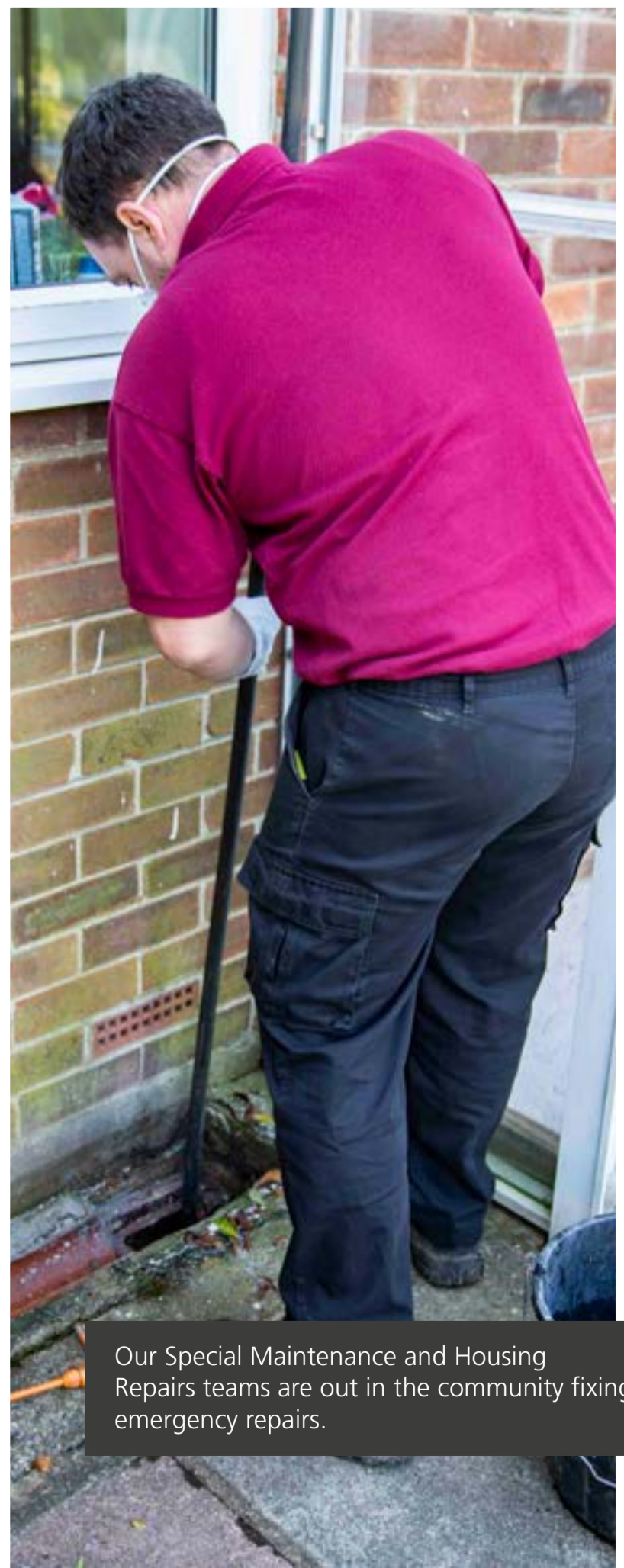
Although our reception on Colebrook Street in Winchester is currently closed to visitors, the city council still remains open for you by phone, email or through online digital services.

If you need to contact a Winchester City Council service direct, then the following numbers will take you to someone who can help during normal business hours:

General enquiries	01962 840 222
Housing - General Housing enquiries	01962 848 400
Housing Options - Homelessness	01962 848 163
Sheltered Housing	01962 848 440
Waste	0300 300 0013
Benefits	01962 848 539
Council Tax and Business Rates	01962 848 288
Environmental Health	01962 848 097
Parking	01962 848 346
Planning	01962 848 177
Planning Enforcement	01962 848 480
Trees	01962 848 301
Building Control	01962 848 176
Electoral Registration	01962 848 125
Licensing	01962 848 188
Legal	01962 848 428

Some services have needed to make changes due to the impact of COVID-19 – to find out about service changes click [here](#).

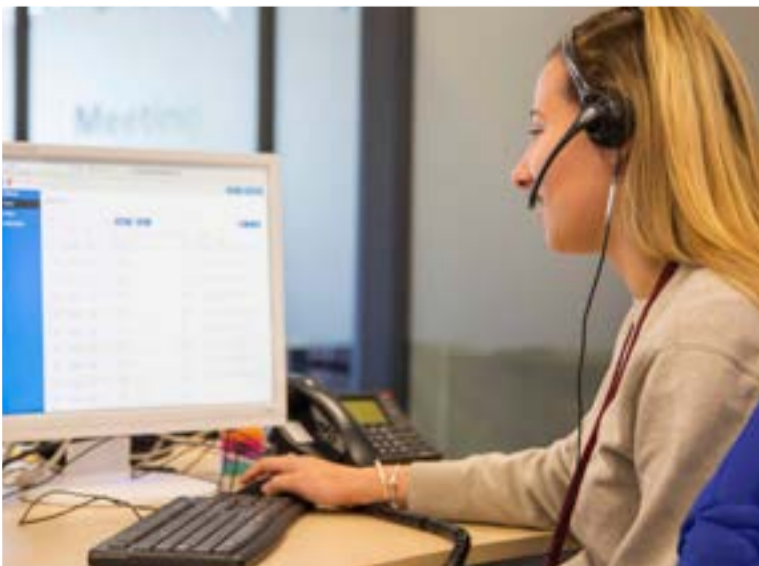
The out of hours Housing Repairs telephone number is **01962 865 405**. For out of hours help for all other council services, **01962 865 407** is the number to call.



Our Special Maintenance and Housing Repairs teams are out in the community fixing emergency repairs.



Our teams are here to take your call and support those in our community who need a helping hand.



Council services update - Housing

Council Tax, Benefits and Housing Rent payment issues

We know that this is a worrying time and we are providing support and advice on payment plans to help anyone who is concerned about paying their Council Tax or needs some help relating to benefits. You can call **01962 848 288** or email **counciltax@winchester.gov.uk** to access helpful assistance based on your individual circumstances.

Landlords shouldn't be evicting their tenants at this time but some may be trying to, or at least making life difficult to tenants. If you are struggling financially click [here](#). If you have concerns about a landlord not maintaining a property safely you can contact our Private Sector Housing team on **01962 848 381** and they will investigate. If an individual is threatened with homelessness, they can contact the Housing Options team on **01962 848 163**.

In addition, if you live in a council-owned property and are concerned about paying rent please contact our housing team on **01962 848 205**.



Our Revenues & Benefits and Housing teams are manning the helplines to support you if you're worried about paying Council Tax or need advice on Benefits or rent issues.

Council house repairs service

We are still carrying out essential repairs to our council houses, so if something urgent needs fixing, tenants can call us on **01962 848 400**.

But we have rescheduled all routine maintenance for a later date and our Customer Liaison team are responding to everyone who requests a repair individually. We are contacting everyone with an existing appointment date for a non-urgent repair to reschedule the date.

Support for homeless people

If you become aware of someone without a home in your local area, please contact us on **01962 848 163**. Local rough sleepers have been offered accommodation and specialised support teams are monitoring the situation daily to ensure any new rough sleepers arriving in Winchester are also safely supported off the streets.





Council services update - Refuse

Waste and recycling collections

Household waste and recycling collections are running to schedule with around 95,000 collections still happening every week. We're collecting more waste at the moment as households are continually at home - this means the crews are having to empty the lorries more frequently during a round. Therefore we've asked you to help crews by putting bins out by 6.15am to ensure crews extra time to do their rounds safely.

Although our crews wear gloves, it would be helpful if you could also disinfect bin handles to help keep the teams safe and well. With over 19,000 bins collected a day, that's a lot of contact with other people's handprints!

We really want to keep our waste collections running to schedule for as long as possible so we have temporarily paused our bulky waste service to move staff across to support the essential household rounds. Although we know that this may cause inconvenience but in this unusual time we are asking if residents can temporarily store any bulky items until we can collect them. The latest advice relating to reducing waste from Hampshire County Council is [here](#).

We have, however, sadly seen an increase in fly-tips and our teams continue to respond to these with an eye to prosecution. Please continue to report fly tipping [here](#).

The textile banks operated by the Salvation Army are temporarily closed so we are asking people to store any textiles for recycling in their home for now. But you can use our new Tetra Pak recycling bins at Worthy Lane recycling site in Winchester

All the latest information on waste collection service is [here](#) and this is updated regularly. We're continually updating the rest of the website to reflect these changes. We've also been passing on all your comments and thanks to bin collections crews - they appreciate all the kind words and cards they've been receiving.



Biffa's hardworking bin crews receive a standing ovation as they arrive at Wickham Court during lockdown.



Our Neighbourhood and Community Safety team inspecting a fly tip.

Be a good neighbour

We've had some complaints about bonfires and noise and have put some messages on our website and social media reminding everyone to be extra considerate of others at this time when we are all at home.

Put Bonfires, BBQs and DIY on the back burner

Please do not burn garden or household waste and check wind direction prior to lighting a BBQ.

With more people at home susceptible to the side effects of inhaling smoke due to respiratory illnesses like COVID-19, it's more likely you or your neighbours will be adversely affected by bonfires. Our advice is either to compost garden waste or keep it in a safe place until these restrictions are lifted.

If you're affected by smoke caused from bonfires or BBQs, please do speak to your neighbour first (and be mindful of social distancing) as they might be unaware of the impact it is having on you.

If using power tools or gardening please think about your neighbours by avoiding noisy work early in the morning or late at night. Similarly please be considerate about the noise level of any music being played.

If it gets out of hand, our Environmental Health team will respond to the most serious complaints as usual, contact them on **01962 848 097** or email **EH@winchester.gov.uk**.

Support for businesses

Latest information

There has been a huge amount of information released by Government relating to support available to businesses at this time. We've pulled it all together in one place in our business newsletter, Entrepreneur – you can see the latest version [here](#). We've also written to 2,700 businesses to ensure they are aware of business rate relief and business grant availability. To date, our Revenues team has received 1,500 grant applications, and already distributed over £19m to businesses.

Your local businesses can call **01962 848 288**, email **businessrates@winchester.gov.uk** for help or click [here](#).

For general support they can visit these pages [here](#).

Free mentoring for small businesses

In addition, we have been working with local business support service IncuHive to provide free online mentoring and e-learning for small businesses and home workers dealing with the impact of COVID-19. Businesses can find out more at www.incuhive.co.uk

Operate from a council commercial property?

Our team is here to help local businesses that operate a business from a commercial unit run by the council. Please call **01962 814 929** for help.

Changing the way your food business works

Winchester City Council is working hard to support local food businesses over this unprecedented period, many have made changes to offer customers a takeaway option.

For guidance on how to offer takeaways and deliveries, please see guidance in light of COVID-19 [here](#).

For further guidance on this please contact our Environmental Health team at **EHealth@winchester.gov.uk**

For a wide range of government guidance for food businesses regarding COVID-19 click [here](#).



Parks and open spaces

We are working hard to keep our open spaces clean and safe for people to enjoy on their daily exercise, although play parks and pitches remain closed for now in line with national guidance.

It is good news that we have not seen the crowds in our open spaces as reported in the bigger cities. So our parks and open spaces are being maintained and litter and dog bins are being emptied as usual. It is essential that the two metre social distancing guidance is followed to enable everyone to enjoy this outdoor time safely.

Please use the parks and gardens closest to home to avoid unnecessary travel.



Our Natural Environment and Recreation team are out and about making sure parks and green spaces are in good condition and safe for when people exercise.

Only travel for essential trips

It's really important that we all stay at home, but we know that some of you are key workers and have to travel to support the community through this outbreak.

We are now providing free parking to NHS and other key workers in all our car parks. Key workers can email parking@winchester.gov.uk and our team will work with them to sort this out.

Our Park & Ride service continues to run but at a slightly reduced timetable. Please click [here](#) to view.



City council meetings

The Government has issued new guidance that enables councils to hold virtual meetings.

We are preparing to hold our public meetings in May and June as usual, but these may be virtual with extra measures in place to ensure local people can still have their say.

Local elections

All local elections are deferred until 2021, or unless further regulations are passed. This means your city councillor won't change and is here to help. You can find the contact details [here](#).

We are now preparing to hold the county council elections, the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, district council elections and any local council elections in May 2021. You can register to vote [here](#).



Planning matters

Our planning service continues to operate as usual although the team are working at home.

Planning applications

We are registering planning applications as usual and where possible processing applications using online information. We will carry out a site visit if absolutely essential as long as social distancing requirements can be met.

Planning decisions

Delegated decisions will continue as usual and we are planning to hold the June planning committee, but this is likely to be a virtual meeting.

Planning Enforcement

We are responding to most serious enforcement complaints and last week issued a temporary stop notice in Hambledon. You can call **01962 848 480** with any queries.

Building Control

Our building control team is working as usual and are carrying out site inspections as required in order to support the construction industry. However, we must ensure our teams are safe and will only carry out a site visit if social distancing can be observed.

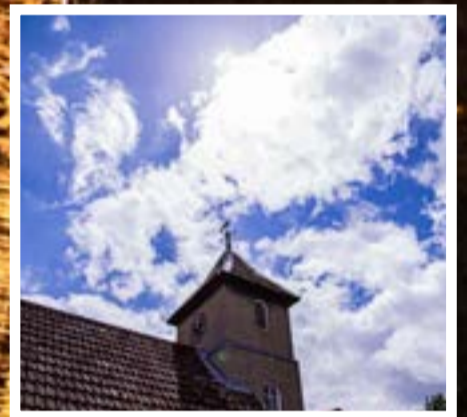
Arboriculture

Our arboriculture teams are continuing to carry out tree related work whilst operating within the guidelines provided by Government.



Our Service Lead for Built Environment serves a Stop Notice during lockdown.





We look forward to exploring our district again...

We're all looking forward to getting out and about when this outbreak has ended. For now we're encouraging people to enjoy our villages, market towns, city and surrounding countryside from the comfort of their own home.

You can stay connected by following 'King Alf's' Visit Winchester social media accounts so you can enjoy inspirational stories of our local heroes - past and present; taking advantage of educational ideas for home schoolers to help keep the kids entertained and educated; and embarking on virtual tours of museums, art galleries and hidden gems – the perfect getaway for those in self-isolation. And when it's time for our attractions, eateries, shops and hotels to reopen - www.visitwinchester.co.uk is the place to be!

 @King_Alf

 KingAlfWinchester

 kingalfwinchester

VE Day celebrations

The majority of VE Day 75 community celebrations due to take place on the bank holiday weekend of 8–10 May are being postponed - the weekend of 15–16 August is earmarked to celebrate VE Day and VJ Day together.

We will continue to keep you updated on these revised plans and welcome continued thoughts and ideas on how we can celebrate these historic dates. You can contact communities@winchester.gov.uk if you have any questions.





HM Government

NHS

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**DON'T PUT THEIR LIFE
IN DANGER.**

STAY HOME ▶ PROTECT THE NHS ▶ SAVE LIVES