WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL – UPPER MEON VALLEY WARD

Updated, Parish update for April 2025

Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation

This month is when the parishes hold their AGM's and many of you have emailed separately to ask if we can give a public presentation to the assembled residents on Devolution and LGR.
With that in mind we have attached an 'oven ready' presentation from Hampshire County Council that we are happy to talk through and answer any questions. Although HCC, the Districts and the three Unitary authorities signed up to a joint interim submission to the Ministry, each, inevitably, had a slightly different emphasis in their own assessment of the consequences of the collectively agreed 'principles' of possible solutions. The HCC slide set, for example, offers an analysis that implies a 'three mainland unitary' solution (ie Portsmouth, Southampton and HCC) delivers greatest benefit – but then, as somebody once said, they would say that wouldn't they!

The future switch off of telephone landlines

The technology currently used to make landline phone calls is being switched off over the next few years.
Landline phone calls have traditionally been delivered over a network known as the public switched telephone network (PSTN). This network is old, and becoming harder and more expensive to maintain, so telecoms companies have decided it needs to be replaced. The change is happening all over the world and will make sure we continue to have reliable home phone services.
There have been some concerns about how this process might affect customers – particularly those who might be vulnerable.
Ofcom have instructed telecoms providers that they must minimise disruption and identify, protect and support vulnerable customers during the migration from analogue to digital landlines. Ofcom are tasked to keep a close eye on progress, including publishing industry guidance and stepping in to remind companies of their obligations.

In a question put to Scrutiny by Cllr Lee, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum have recently confirmed that:

- Ofcom are committed to ensuring in the transition to digital phone lines, vulnerable people are protected, so any vulnerable residents should contact their telecom provider and make sure their vulnerability is understood, and the provider can give

them a solution to call 999 for an hour in a power cut (this will be free for vulnerable people but may cost for others).
https://landlinesgo.digital/powercut/

- Mobile phones (charged) in a power outage should still be able to make calls, so mitigation should be access to a mobile, and it being charged. Emergency calls to 999 access all available coverage, irrespective of your network provider, so there should be better coverage for those calls, and sometimes phones display 999 calls only.

- If your mobile coverage is so poor, as in many parts of the Upper Meon valley, and this is not an option (first off, your provider should be aware when looking for those solutions) but also there is the ability to maintain critical payphones in areas with poor mobile coverage.

If you are vulnerable and have concerns about mobile coverage in the event of a power outage after conversion to a digital land line, then first and foremost contact your telecom provider to register your vulnerability.

Kind Regards

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