

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – NOVEMBER 2007

### Report by County Councillor Nigel Clarke

#### Introduction:

I have attended the following commitments since my last report:

- Examination in Public of the Case for a Bypass for Lyndhurst – interesting as to the technical & environmental obstacles that need to be overcome even before a case could be forward for a Capital bid, post 2016, to SEDA;
- HAT chairman's briefing on common themes emerging across the County & then on a New Forest Road Safety Council – emerging issue of road casualty amongst the 18 – 25 & >65 – a particular feature of the New Forest.
- Chaired a Pilot Study committee looking at the issues of access to Healthcare – a far more successful meeting than the first one. Real issues for any one who does not have access to a car given the location EA & Primary Care.
- Chaired the annual meeting of Town & Parish Transport representatives – interesting & ambitious programme of rolling stock & trackside facilities by the new franchisee & they are paying to government >£1 billion for the privilege as well, & the usual disquiet about the reduction in subsidised bus routes – no easy answer. The County did not shine – no heating in the Chamber & no one could switch on the voice reinforcement, so many froze & could only hear some speakers!
- Chaired the New Forest HAT meeting where our main focus was the proposed closure of 9 No Post Offices – a very one sided consultation & a review of what had been achieved to-date;
- Group meeting in preparation for Full Council & to receive a presentation on the County's Climate Commission the various speed reduction initiatives – do not be persuaded that changing speed limits will materially change driver behaviour;
- Full Council meeting which was one of the longest I have sat through – debate on the Climate Commission, much anguishing over Post Office closures & spirited defence of 'best value' in the context of reducing subsidies to under used bus routes on which more than £6.5m is already spent;
- A meeting of the Health Overview Scrutiny Committee that considered a wide ranging set of health related issues, such as progress on joint working on Care at the End of Life, various changes to service provision, mainly in the East of the County, a

briefing on the partial closure of Fordingbridge Community Hospital – an independent review is under way, delay in opening the new Birth centre at Ashurst & proposals for Milford Community Hospital.

**Other activities:**

I have also attended:

- Committee meeting of Community First new Forest where the principal topics were the review of service delivery & budget for 2007/8 & consideration of the nature of service provision & finances (income & expenditure) for the budget for 2008/9;
- Sopley Parish Council – proportionately a well attended affair as usual. Their main concerns were traffic calming measures & the future capital commitment when the ownership of the Community Hall passes to the Parish. A concern was need for a very substantial uplift in their Parish Precept if they are to carry out their ambitions.

*Nigel Clarke*