Jackie's County Corner for September

It is said that "Everything comes to [s]he who waits…" It is never more true than when trying to claim for a new footpath or cycleway!

In 2017, a resident 'made a claim' for two new footpaths, immediately north of the Cart & Horses in Kings Worthy in the Itchen Valley Division. The two paths were on the site of an old house, where residents of all generations had made the woods and grassland part of their daily walk, whether exercising a dog, walking to school or building a pump track-or just taking a short cut between Pub and park.
So it was a pleasant surprise to receive notice it had reached the top of the queue for a consideration of the claim. Thank you to the residents who completed forms in 2017-but importantly, if you recall walking in the wood or the field since 2017, please let me know and we'll send you the form or put you in touch with someone who can help you.

Stagecoach buses cross the Itchen Valley Division, but still many people miss out on a frequent and reliable bus service they can depend on. A local Parish Councillor and I have met with Stagecoach bosses to ask how *they can help you* to catch a bus rather than take the car, especially if you live in a rural area, where the population is sparse.
I wanted to talk with Stagecoach about several matters from across the whole division. The conversation included providing capacity for school children catching the 6 bus to Henry Beaufort school now the school bus can't be used by many of the children. Stagecoach are sympathetic but their timetable and Winchester congestion makes it virtually impractical for services to be on time.
The 64 bus flies down the A31 into the King Alfred end of the city. Requests to divert to the 67 route just won't work because of the congestion of the route into Winchester. Meanwhile, suspending the A31 bus stop has led to several families without a service: another subject for Stagecoach. The KB1 has cheap fares continuing into September and by the time you read this, the 75 service is being improved too.

This brings me to the congestion resulting from the weekend closures of the M3Jn 9. I'm sure that we are all grateful to the National Highways team for keeping us well informed about the main road closures at night or some weekends.
But closures create rat-runs which create delays which create congestion-and often lead to accidents. Sutton Scotney, Easton and the Worthys were particularly affected in the late July closures. Spitfire Link remains variable, as does Easton lane.
We are all paying the price of a convenient motorway right in our midst.
NH are reviewing the first weekend's events to see if more can be done in future.
So neighbouring County Councillors and I have asked for *your* local knowledge and understanding to be taken into account when future closures are agreed between HCC and National Highways. If you have views, there's still time to let me know: the work won't be complete until 2028!

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After each weekend closure takes place, a new section of road is open to traffic. By the time you read this, we'll be travelling over both of the new bridge sections: the old bridges will be dismantled by the end of 2026.