

LINDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

18.03.20

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

1. Flooding

Over the last month, Tenbury has been at the centre of a lot of national news coverage of the flooding. Tenbury suffered worse flooding than in 2007 and a number of the flood defenders supplied by MHDC after that event proved ineffective. This seems to have been because the rubber or plastic seals have deteriorated over time or that the water overflowed the barriers.

Residents of Eardiston and Lindridge will be familiar with the problems of flooding around Eastham bridge, running downstream as far as Woodston's Farm. I have asked Hannah Davies to see if we can source some better signs for indicating the road is closed. These would say where the blockage is and indicate an alternative route to and from Tenbury for HGVs. It seems that several HGV drivers believed they could get through despite the floods, and one such tanker was stranded for several days, apparently having collided with a Shrewsbury fire appliance.

I was present on the Monday when the local Fire and Rescue officers set off down Mill Lane to rescue the people staying at the cottage. I heard no more. We all know that shortly after that the body of the woman who got swept away near Eastham Bridge was found. A terrible tragedy, although apparently after a known risk was accepted.

During a number of visits to the Lindridge area and Tenbury town, I have been impressed by the fortitude and resilience shown by residents and retailers alike. There has been an admirable community spirit among the townspeople, despite high financial losses and huge inconvenience.

Tenbury Town Council itself has experienced flooding of the Pump Rooms, and needed to meet in the High School last week. The High School should be praised for running an evacuation centre at the height of the flooding, with generous support from Tesco's and the Coop that I know of. That is not, I am sure, an exhaustive list.

WCC set up a flooding hub in Tenbury library for residents and businesses to register, in order to receive money from central government, the District Council and the County Council. At County, we have allocated £250,000 for flood alleviation, to be directed at those who have suffered loss.

In addition, the Rev Sian Harris of St Michael's Church, Tenbury, set up the Tenbury Church Out Reach Fund for people to make donations to assist in the flood relief. It has so far accumulated some £12,000 and is still open to receive funds from those who might wish to help.

You may recall that the Environment Agency plan to protect Tenbury town would then have cost about £5 million and was judged not to be cost effective. It may be that new calculations in the light of the recent events will see that decision revised.

Your local MP, Harriett Baldwin, has been very vocal on the matter. Since 2007, around six different schemes for flood protection have been implemented with her active support. Only Severn Stoke and Tenbury remain untouched. In the former case there are local problems, but for Tenbury, the difficulty is devising an effective scheme at a sensible cost.

I would be pleased to hear of any local experiences that may help us avoid further problems in the future.

2. Local Matters

I would be keen to know of the feelings of the parish council and others about the classification of Eardiston as Category 4, meaning that no residential developments will be permitted. This seems illogical and unnecessarily restrictive, but I would want to know the local feeling before acting.

It is good to know that the fence in Frith Common has been repaired. Some of your neighbours in Menith Wood are annoyed about delays in installing fibre broadband, and in one instance being linked to Eardiston. We all recognise the value of fibre to the premises, as it gives “ultrafast” speeds. I would be keen to know what demand there is in Lindridge as a whole for this advance.

3. County Matters

You will all have heard that the new Worcestershire Parkway station was opened on Sunday, the 23rd of February. This is the first such station to open in the county for 100 years, and has been generally welcomed. There are 500 car parking spaces, and there already seemed to be about 250 cars there when I visited just after it opened.

Note there are also secure cycle racks, spaces for EVs to charge and plenty of disabled spaces. The infrequent X50 bus service calls at the station, and we are negotiating for more bus services as well.

Note you can now catch trains running between Nottingham and Cardiff, as well as the London services. We are working hard to improve the speed and frequency of the London service, which will require further dualling of the line, in particular between Pershore and Evesham.

You may expect that there will be continued congestion along the Southern Link Road, leading to Carrington Bridge. In case you have heard to the contrary, the work on dualling that section between the Ketch and Powick roundabouts has not exacerbated the flooding that always occurs in that area where the Teme meets the Severn.

Just over three weeks ago, we welcomed Matt Warman, MP, Minister of State in DCMS, to Worcester for him to confirm the allocation of £3.3 million to Worcestershire to run a two year experiment with Shropshire on the efficacy of 5G to improve connectivity in rural areas. This will be based in Tenbury, given its rural nature and the topographical features in the area, and thus will include Lindridge.

The intention is to see how much mobile coverage can be improved and also remote monitoring of those in need of care from social services. The idea of assistive technology is that the social workers can monitor activity remotely, without the use of cameras, to check that those in need of assistance are behaving normally. This may mean that routine visits can be scheduled more efficiently, prioritising those most obviously in need of help, rather than completing a round of visits where many may prove unnecessary.

**Cllr Ken Pollock
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire,
GL50 2BZ
18.03.20**