

LINDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

18TH JANUARY 2017

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

- **Happy New Year, 2017**

May I wish all Lindridge parish councillors, and indeed all residents of Lindridge, a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. The year promises to bring some major changes both locally and nationally and I have even seen speculation that there might even be a General Election on May 4th, to coincide with the one when all 57 county council seats will be contested, to give a new administration at County Hall.

Before then we need to approve our County Council budget and seek endorsement for our plans to increase council tax by 0.94%. This will be in addition to the 2% rise in tax to provide money for adult social care, using a device arranged by the government for councils to raise the amount of money they think we need locally for this essential service. We are keen to point out that only a third of the increase will actually go to the normal local services, while the rest seeks to cover the large demands of our ageing population.

Beyond that we are keenly awaiting news on further government funding for big projects like the second Carrington Bridge, and improving the A38 through Bromsgrove. Some of this money has been promised, but the needs always seem to expand beyond the available cash.

This year should see the start of the new Worcestershire Parkway rail station at the intersection of the London line with that serving Birmingham and the south west. This will bring huge benefits in terms of connectivity and shorter travel times, leading we hope to a 2 hour trip to and from London every hour.

2017 will also bring superfast broadband to new areas, as those who do not get a decent service are naturally irritated to hear about how good it is to have a fast connection. We will continue to press ahead with filling in the gaps so that everyone can have what is becoming to be seen as a necessity.

Meanwhile the Council is backing efforts to get better mobile coverage across the whole county, a campaign strongly supported by Harriett Baldwin our MP. This may mean higher phone masts and more of them but many will benefit from being able to use their mobiles from home and on the move.

- **Tesco's in Tenbury**

We can expect the new Tesco store to be completed soon but before it an open, the Public Realm work that they are paying for will need to be completed. This will run from the bridge to the Regal, after which the County will complete the remaining section up to Crow Corner.

All this work, plus that now going on in Shropshire at the junction with the A4546, will undoubtedly cause some disruption and delay but will bring great benefits once completed.

- **Eastham Bridge**

Work on Eastham Bridge continues apace. The steel spans should be installed this month, leading to the construction of the carriageway and balustrades. The unfortunate puncturing of the water main service Eastham and the Hanleys was caused by the Severn Trent contractor

not following the design drawing properly when they installed the link under the river, rather than across the bridge. We hope the delay to our reconstruction will be no more than a day.

There has also been concern about gritting. On some occasions, the drop in temperature comes too soon after rain for normal gritting, leading to some roads being missed. It is better to grit before the temperature drops below freezing, but it is not useful if the surface is still wet from rain in the last two hours.

In addition, the brine making machine has been out of action over Christmas meaning dry grit has been spread recently. We entered the winter with 16,000 tonnes of salt in store. So far, we are confident that we can handle whatever the weather throws at us.

- **Speeding on the A443**

I would like to draw attention to the excellent work done by your clerk, Steve Workman and others in seeking to find ways of reducing the excessive speed of some motorists on the A443 through Eardiston. I find it strange that the county officers are so averse to using more white paint to deter bad driving and I have been lobbying behind the scenes to seek a change of mind here and elsewhere on my patch.

I would support more attention from the Safer Roads Partnership to this problem, although the only time I came close to being caught by them was at 08.00 on a Sunday morning – not the sort of peak time when pedestrians are at risk.

I hope there will be better news in the near future.

- **Road works at Menith Wood**

Many of you will be aware of the land slippage problem in Menith Wood. I have seen reference to a short period of closure in February to repair the carriageway, but this does not seem to be related to the much bigger job needed to forestall any more slippage. Those living closer to the road may well understand if there is a need for short term repairs.

As with all such work, I would be keen to hear of any problems in the conduct of the road works.

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18.01.17**