

LINDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

16.01.19

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

1. Happy New Year

May I wish all parish councillors and the residents that you represent a very Happy New Year, and I trust it will be prosperous and enjoyable as well?

We face some turbulent times in the next few months and it would be a fool who professed to know how it would all turn out. What I would assert, however, is that this country is highly capable, and well able to succeed in a huge variety of circumstances.

In all the discussion of the various forms of Brexit that may be before us, what I find most disturbing is the feeling expressed by some politicians, business people and journalists that we are in danger of economic collapse or of some moral decline, because we may not have the protection and guidance of the EU.

Leaving may be the worst move we make as a nation, but it would be foolish to believe that our prosperity is indissolubly tied to membership of the EU. I worry when I read that our environmental standards might be lowered or our workers' rights might be damaged by leaving.

It would be a huge mistake to believe that we are dependent on Brussels for guidance in these matters. More often than not, we have shown the way, not least with the sort of environmental research that I undertook, on a Government grant in the early 70s, before we joined the EEC as it was then.

So whatever lies ahead, I am sure we can succeed, especially if we respect others' viewpoints and seek to understand their basis. I am disturbed by the rhetoric and rudeness I have encountered in social media, where the remoteness of the writers seems to give them freedom to be rude, supercilious and scornful in a way that would not be acceptable face to face.

2. Economic development

You will recognise that I am responsible within the Cabinet, for the economy and infrastructure in the County. 2019 promises great things, whatever the political climate and we must seek to encourage the good developments, no matter what.

W6, the business park just by J6 of the M5 is filling up with companies keen to take advantage of its excellent position. Kimal, Kohler Mira, Siemens (in the form of Material Solutions), Spire Healthcare and others are all expanding or transferring their operations to the park.

The Redditch Eastern Gateway also has serious interest from big companies wanting to take advantage of its location next to the A435 and the M42. The fifth phase of the Malvern Hills Science Park is ready to let and there is more land acquired from QinetiQ for further hi-tech operations.

We must not also forget the importance of Worcestershire Parkway which will open this year, probably in mid-summer. The May timetable will include provision for trains on both lines to stop at Parkway, giving passengers a new destination or embarkation point as an alternative to our road network.

All of these developments promise more jobs and economic prosperity, the sort of activity we need to encourage, in order to fund those in our society that need help from local government. You will recall that 70% of our income at County is spent on vulnerable children and adults, but their numbers amount to only 12,000 of the 580,000 residents in Worcestershire.

3. Local issues

Last Thursday I visited Eardiston and Lindridge with Dave Jew, the officer in charge of highway management and the like. We examined the site of the accident to the east end of the village and the turning to Cutmill Lane. I was advised that the main road there cannot support double white lines for two reasons, 1. It is too narrow, and 2. it is too straight. We cannot dig back the bank or widen the road by other means and the visibility means that it would be contrary to guidelines to prohibit overtaking.

The dangers of people overtaking while others are wanting to turn right into Cutmill Lane are understood and an extra "turn" sign will be added to the back of signs on the south side of the road, and further "slow" signs will be painted on the road. It is to be hoped that they will help to reduce speeds and make the road safer.

It appears from the accident report that the collision took place well to the east of the village, almost beyond the 30 mph limit and seemed to be caused by the eastbound driver making an assumption that there was no oncoming car on the left bend he was overtaking on. It is not clear that any of the measures being discussed would have prevented this misjudgement.

I have requested information on how the Mill Lane retaining wall will be repaired and when this will happen. I understand that work on Frith Lane is scheduled for the next few weeks, to clear up that difficulty.

At the Lindridge turn, it was concluded that the addition of "30 mph maximum speed" signs at both ends of the bend sequence will assist in ensuring the turn is safe. No other additional signs are planned and observations were that traffic was slowed by the bends and gradients adequately to make the turn relatively safe.

At a time of financial difficulty, it is not possible to promise work will be done to correct all outstanding difficulties and priorities need to be observed. As we are now in the winter, it is good to know that there are extra funds for correcting potholes and handling seasonal pressures.

I hope that you will all be keen to pass on any observations where highway matters are deficient, preferably in the first instance to your clerk, and thence to Hannah Davies, before coming to me for assistance.

Likewise any other issues that require attention can be brought to me at any time and I will do my best to pass them on to the correct officer, to see that they are dealt with. Bearing in mind our general shortage of cash, this may not always be swiftly handled or done to the highest standards.

**Cllr Ken Pollock
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