

County Councillor's Report for Drakes Broughton Parish Council meeting 6th July

HIGHWAYS

WORCESTERSHIRE'S grass cutting programme has now started with around 5,000km of grass up for a trim. There is more than six million metres squared of rural verges and over 320,000m² of central reservations in place across the county.

Cutting the grass in a programme in place since 2016 helps to keep roads visible for motorists but also provides a safe space for wildlife too.

Green-fingered staff cut less to make areas more friendly and protected for pollinators. When the visibility splays and road junctions are cut back, only one or two metres of grass is now cut back from the carriageway, leaving significant uncut areas available for wildlife.

Coun Mike Rouse, cabinet member for Highways and Transport, said: "Although our primary responsibility for roadside verges is one of safety, we are very keen to support the recovery of pollinator populations within Worcestershire and this includes the way we manage the sites.

"There are 46 roadside verge nature reserves designated for rare or special species and habitats across our county and all sites now receive a bespoke approach to ensure protected or rare species are fully considered when it comes to maintenance. "We all need to look after the bees and other pollinator species because as we know our own survival ultimately depends upon it . The council has become pollinator friendly to promote the protection of pollinating insects and their habitat.

Often referred to as 'Bee Lines', they connect previously isolated areas of ecological interest. During the summer months, the roadsides grow very quickly and there is a statutory duty to maintain them and to make sure the road network is safe.

However, the changes implemented in recent years have seen significant improvement to biodiversity opportunities on Worcestershire's network.

A New secondary school has been proposed between Worcs Royal. Hospital and the A440 Nunnery Way roundabout

A MONTH-long survey is now live to allow parents and carers to have their say about plans for the new secondary school in Worcester.

Previous consultations held on the new school have allowed parents, carers and stakeholders to give feedback on the age range of the school, the size of the school, the values of the school and the build principles of the school.

Coun Tracey Onslow, cabinet member for Education at Worcestershire County Council, said: "I would encourage local residents to take the opportunity to have their say, and share what is important to them for us to consider with the new school.

"The provision of a new school is really vital for the future as it will ensure children can access a secondary school place within their local community in a growing City, as well as improving choice and access."

The survey is available to view by visiting online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/2141bb1c-2a9e-43c6-bd4f-af19903e2f70

You can also view the information from the consultation event at County Hall on the dedicated New Worcester Secondary School pages on the [website](#), under the Open Consultation and Engagement tab: New Worcester Secondary School | Worcestershire County Council

The survey closes on Wednesday July 12.

If you have any questions about the consultation, please e-mail at NewSecondarySchool@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Boundary Commission Consultation

Having recently redrawn Wychavon District ward boundaries the Boundary Commission are now looking at the County Council Division boundaries. They are looking at drawing up a new pattern of Divisions that means the current 57 Cllrs. each represent roughly the same number of voters and reflect local communities.

For your Upton Snodsbury Ward for me this very much means making sure we retain our rural identities with our surrounding villages. The initial consultation now closes on the 19th September

The link is: lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/Worcestershire

The consultation has been extended in order to give local residents and organisations more time to engage with our initial consultation to ensure that we receive meaningful and helpful responses and input that reflect local needs, views, and circumstances.

This is to ensure we create boundaries that are appropriate, and reflect community ties and identities while supporting effective local governance in order to provide the best arrangements for the authority.

If you have already made a submission in this stage of the initial consultation you do not need to do so again, however you are invited to make additional comments during this extension if you so wish. We will consider all representations already received as well as those made between now and 19 September.

This consultation on division patterns will now close on: 19 September 2023

Under the original timetable we had intended to run our consultation on draft proposals between 31 October 2023 and 23 January 2024. In order for the commission to properly consider all submissions made to this initial consultation, the consultation on our draft recommendations will now run between 9 January 2024 and 18 March 2024.

The original publication date for our final recommendations was intended to be 7 May 2024. Once we have considered all responses to this stage of consultation, the commission now intends to publish final recommendations in early July 2024.

The implementation of the new electoral arrangements has not been affected by this extension. Following a period of parliamentary scrutiny, these are still scheduled to come into effect at the local authority's elections in May 2025.

If you represent a local organisation or community group in Worcestershire, please pass this message on to your members or anyone you think who might be interested in the review. You can share the message by email or through social media by using the buttons at the bottom right of the page.

What is an electoral review?

Our electoral review will recommend new electoral arrangements for Worcestershire County Council. We will propose:

- The total number of councillors elected to the council in the future;
- The number of divisions;
- The number of councillors representing each division;
- Division boundaries; and
- The names of divisions.

How to get involved

This is a public consultation and we welcome views from individuals and organisations across Worcestershire on where they think new division boundaries should be drawn.

We are minded to recommend that 57 councillors should be elected to Worcestershire County Council in the future.

This is no change from the current number of councillors.

We are now inviting proposals to help us draw up a pattern of divisions to accommodate 57 councillors.

In drawing up new electoral divisions, we must balance three legal criteria, namely:

- To deliver electoral equality: where each councillor represents roughly the same number of electors as others across the county;
- That the pattern of divisions should, as far as possible, reflect the interests and identities of local communities;
- That the electoral arrangements should provide for effective and convenient local government.

We will treat all submissions equally, and judge each case on its merits and against the legal criteria.

If you wish to put forward a view, we would also urge you to ensure that evidence supports your submission.

For example, if you wish to argue that two areas should be included in the same electoral division, make sure you tell us why they should be together, providing evidence about community facilities, ties, organisations, and amenities, rather than simply asserting that they belong together.

There is more advice on our website about how you can get involved in the consultation.

Our website features technical guidance that explains the process and our policies, as well as guidance on how to take part in each part of the process.

We have also set up a webpage dedicated to the review of Worcestershire, where you can find all the relevant information, access interactive maps of the current division boundaries, and give your views.

Get in touch

We welcome comments on our extended initial consultation by 19 September 2023. Representations should be made:

- Through our website
- By email to reviews@lgbce.org.uk
- Or in writing to Review Officer (Worcestershire), LGBCE, PO Box 133, Blyth, NE24 9FE