

THE SHELSLEYS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

10.11.20

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

1. Corona Virus effects

Your meeting comes a few days after the start of the latest national lockdown. You could spend the whole evening discussing whether this is wise and justified, but it would essentially be ineffective. We have to do as instructed, and trust that this is brought about by the highest motives of wishing our society to be free of this scourge as quickly and painlessly as possible.

The county was in reasonable shape before the national lockdown, with the worst infection rates in Bromsgrove where so many residents work in Birmingham. I am also told that many visitors to the hospitality outlets seemed to have Black Country accents.

The County Council is doing its best to provide help and grants to deserving cases, through the Here2Help website. *Please visit there for more information on what is available.*

We are keen to encourage people to stay local and shop local. It is easy to resort to buying everything online and that might be convenient but also helps big multi-national organisations. We also need to support local shops that might otherwise go out of business permanently.

Hence, we are making moves to assist setting up local click and collect services for those businesses, so we can continue to patronise our small local shops, rather than the big multinationals. The government has suggested it should be possible to find a way for pubs to serve visitors as if they have an off-licence, even if it means ordering in advance and turning up with your own containers for beer and wine.

It is not for me to tell people how to behave but I hope we all appreciate the significance of this next lockdown and trust that it is short lived and successful, so we have a chance of enjoying Christmas in a more or less normal fashion.

2. County matters

There is a full council meeting this Thursday, 12th November, which will be held on zoom, but also live webcast as normal. I will be presenting a report that will seek to commission a report on whether we can start a "Wheels to Work" scheme encouraging people to hire bikes and e-bikes from the county to get to work, where bus services are inadequate. The latter certainly applies to the Shelsley district and if the report is positive, we may be able to create such a service, to help those without access to a car to get to and from work more easily.

At the scrutiny meeting of the environment and economy panel yesterday morning, a number of members of the public were concerned about our plans for promoting active travel, i.e. walking and cycling. While the discussion was not detailed, it is worth looking at the agenda of the meeting on the WCC website to see the extent of the efforts we are making to encourage walking and cycling across the county.

While there may be limitations of funding, the intention is to assist those who choose to walk and cycle wherever possible.

3. Local Matters

Last Wednesday, the clerk in Tenbury spent a couple of hours with your highways liaison officer, Hannah Davies, walking round the centre of the town, to highlight various matters that need attention. Lesley will be able to tell you in detail, but it is worthwhile mentioning a couple of matters that arose while I was with them.

This is an excellent effort from Hannah, who is seeking to meet all the clerks and hear what problems arise around the division. I hope it will be as successful as it was in Tenbury.

Should there be any outstanding issues, I hope you will use the online reporting system, then let Hannah know if the response is inadequate, and as a last resort, let me know. I will do my best to resolve the issues.

4. Remembrance Day

It was a privilege to lay a wreath on behalf of the County Council during the attenuated service held outside St Mary's church on Sunday morning. While this was a lesser event than normal, it was certainly worthwhile, remembering all those from Tenbury and the surrounding district who fell in the many wars over the last century. I am very grateful to the British Legion and all the church elders for enabling this simple ceremony to take place.

We will remember them!

**Cllr Ken Pollock
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10.11.20**