

MINUTES
of MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
held at 5 Russell Square, High Street, Broadway,
on Thursday, 14th January 2016, at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor B. M. Parmenter (Chairman), Councillors
Dr. R. Clements, D. W. Folkes, Miss D. Hardiman, G. Love,
G. O'Brien, F.L. Penny, Mrs. R. Rogers, Mrs. C.C.B. Wilson

In attendance: County Councillor Mrs. Eyre, District Councillor B.
Thomas, Mr. R. Goldsmith (Broadway Trust)

- (1) **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received and accepted from
Councillor Mrs. Stephenson, G. J. Franks, A.A.I. Holmes, N.D.A. Robinson,
- (2) **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None
- (3) **POLICE REPORT:**

The Chairman introduced PC Paul Lewis, the recently appointed police officer with responsibility for Broadway. PC Lewis reported that he had been in the police force for twenty eight years and had been beat manager for the past six years in Evesham before taking up his current role in Broadway. Both PC Lewis and CSO Schoenrock are currently trying to heighten police presence in the village, with at least one of them walking around the village each day, work duties permitting, together with a police vehicle parked in the High Street to make the police presence more visible. The Duty Chief Constable was invited to Broadway in September and joined both officers on a walk around the village engaging with both the public and traders, in order to keep him informed of what is happening in Broadway. Both officers are aware of the concerns regarding speeding throughout the village and are themselves undertaking speed checks on a regular basis, concentrating on the areas of greatest concern – Station Road, Leamington Road and Cheltenham Road, and also encouraging other officers to do so. County Councillor Mrs. Eyre stated that a number of other parishes within the district had signed up the speed gun initiative, whereby volunteers are trained to use the speed gun by the police to assist with speeding issues within their village, and asked if this was an opportunity to undertake such training in Broadway. PC Lewis stated that this could be organised, especially with the oncoming lighter nights, and would report back accordingly. Several councillors again raised concerns regarding speeding along Cheltenham Road on the approach to the village, particularly since there are now an increased number of larger vehicles using the Cheltenham Road/Pry Lane junction over the past few months. With a planning application for additional holiday homes in Pry Lane recently approved the vehicular movements are only going to increase. The Chairman added that this was the only major entrance road where there is no 40 mph sign before the 30 mph section. CSO Schoenrock also added that the 30 mph sign is situated just after a bend as vehicles approach the village, giving very little time to slow down appropriately, and a 40 mph section would give motorists advanced warning. Councillor Mrs Eyre asked if the police could forward the points raised , and also that a resident of

Cheltenham Road, who was present at the meeting, could also forward his views/comments, so that, along with Parish Council support, a more robust case could be put forward for the introduction of a 40mph section on this stretch of road.

CSO Schoenrock then reported that sixty-six calls had been received since the last meeting from residents resulting in ten offences being recorded – one burglary; one burglary of other buildings (shed); four assaults, two criminal damages; one theft from a motor vehicle and one fraud, and also highlighted that the only prevailing cross-border offence was that of theft of trailers. Everyone with such a vehicle should ensure that it is post coded and secured. There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked both officers for their respective reports.

(4) MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10:12:15:

Proposed by Councillor Mrs. Rogers, seconded by Councillor Miss D. Hardiman, the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on the 10th December 2015 were unanimously approved, and were duly signed and dated as a true record.

(5) BROADWAY COMMUNITY AWARD:

As announced at the last meeting, the Chairman was pleased to confirm that the winner of the Community Award 2015 was Mr. John Hankinson, for all his hard work and endeavours in the continued maintenance of the Activity Park. John was Chairman of the committee which helped research, design, obtain funding, and the project management of the construction and landscaping. Following its opening in 2009 John, in conjunction with his team of helpers, organised and maintained the upkeep of the park, which has made Broadway Activity Park not only a major attraction in Broadway, but also throughout Worcestershire and the surrounding areas. The Chairman then presented a cheque for £100 to Mr. Hankinson, which he kindly donated to 'Help the Heroes', and his name would be added to the plaque displayed in the parish office. Mr. Hankinson thanked the Parish Council for the award and gave a brief review of the activity park to date, stating that despite the enormous amount of people (it was estimated that since the park opened in 2009 over a quarter of a million visitors had used and appreciated the facilities) there had been no major vandalism, which was a testament to the quality of the equipment. This had, however, put extra unforeseen pressures on all of the pieces of equipment, and items/parts which were expected to last for at least ten years were starting to show signs of wear and tear or, indeed, in some cases needing replacement, and future expenditure budgets would need to take this into consideration. Mr. Hankinson concluded that due to the amount of work/commitment required, consideration needed to be given to finding an assistant to help with the maintenance of the park, and it would be appreciated if the Parish Council could consider this matter and advertise the position in the newsletter/local press. The Chairman again thanked Mr. Hankinson, and all councillors showed their appreciation.

(6) COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS:

Councillors Mrs. Eyre's and Thomas' reports had been circulated to all councillors, copies of which were available on the website and in the Parish Office, along with the Minutes of this meeting..

Councillor Mrs. Eyre highlighted the fact that as a result of the Local Government Settlement Worcestershire County Council had to find an additional eleven million

pounds of savings on top of the annual twenty five million pounds already required, and an extra forty million pounds over the medium term. This was a huge challenge, but the County Council must have, by law, a balanced budget by February. A word of warning to the Parish Council was that one impact of the spending review may be a review of the New Homes Bonus. Councillor Mrs. Eyre referred the residents and the Parish Council to the need to respond to the final consultation of its Local Flood Risk Management Strategy by its closing date of 29th February 2016, and finally highlighted the European Funding to support Worcestershire small businesses in rural areas and create more jobs – applicants can apply to support micro and small enterprises, such as construction of new factories/offices; support for rural tourism, encouraging new attractions along waterways and cycle routes, and developing more opportunities for young families.

District Councillor Thomas highlighted the Joint Senior Management Team where Wychavon is moving towards a joint senior management team with Malvern Hills District Council in order to realise cost savings, and also to work more collaboratively and maximise knowledge/expertise across the two organisations. Councillor Thomas reported that work was still being done with both enforcement and planning to try to resolve the issue regarding parking outside the United Reformed Church in the High Street and will report back accordingly. Finally, councils across Worcestershire were in the process of submitting a bid to house fifty Syrian refugees in Worcestershire by the end of 2016.

(7) CLERK'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE:

The Clerk had circulated an updated list of councillor's addresses and telephone numbers to all councillors for their information. A list had also been circulated asking councillors to confirm their e-mail addresses and whether they would be agreeable to agendas/minutes etc. to be e-mailed to them, rather than by post.

The Clerk circulated a memorandum asking for a photograph and brief paragraph on each councillor in order that the previously agreed information poster could be produced and displayed.

It was reported to the Clerk that the toilet facilities in the Activity Park were not open on all days over the Christmas and New Year period. The Clerk contacted the District Council who advised that it was policy to ensure that toilets facilities were available in each town/village, but where there were a number of toilets only a restricted number were open. In the case of Broadway, this was limited to one and the only toilets open were those in the central Car Park. After discussion, all councillors were in agreement that more than one toilet should be open, especially the one in the Activity Park. The Clerk was instructed to contact the District Council regarding this matter and would report back accordingly.

The County Council had notified the Parish Council of its proposal to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's 90th Birthday on 12th June, and wished to encourage everyone to play a part, have fun, and raise funds for the local community and local initiatives. There were many ways to mark the occasion and the County Council would shortly be producing a 'How To' information pack. After discussion, it was agreed that there should be an event in the village to celebrate the Queen's Birthday, and the Clerk would contact the Traders' Events Committee for further discussions

Details of the 2016 Wychavon Community Grants Scheme had been forwarded to the Clerk. £50,000 was available to voluntary and charitable groups, and grants were available for projects which included all aspects of life, such as community building, health, sports and arts, together with any projects that benefit the community including people from different backgrounds or differing abilities. Closing date for applications - noon, Thursday, 31st March 2016

The annual fire extinguisher service/report for the parish office had recently been undertaken and it recommended that the 2 kg powder extinguisher be replaced by one 6 litre foam and one 2 kg CO2 at a cost, to include full test and commissioning, of £293.10. Councillors agreed to this recommendation and the Clerk was instructed to contact the contractor to undertake the work accordingly.

The lengthsman, Maurice Parkinson, had notified the Parish Council of an increase from £14.00 to £15.00 in his hourly rate for work undertaken through the lengthsman's scheme.

The Chairman and Clerk attended the installation of the new defibrillator at Broadway Fire Station on Thursday 14th January. (Further information regarding defibrillators was reported later in the meeting during the public session)

The County Council had advised that the re-painting of the road markings at the Back Lane/Springfield Lane junction had now been completed.

(8) SETTING OF PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2016/17:

The Finance Working Group met on Wednesday 13th January when the Clerk, as Financial Officer, produced the ¾ year financial accounts to 31st December 2015 together with the proposed budget figures for 2016/17. The accounts and budget were fully explained by the Clerk and discussed, and any necessary amendments were made to the budget. It was noted that Councillors Parmenter, Folkes and Miss Hardiman declared an interest in items relating to some of proposed donations due to their connections with other organisations in the village, and took no part in the discussions/recommendations relating to those particular items. The Group would like to recommend the approval of the budget for 2016/17 and the setting of the precept to remain the same as last year at £87,500. Both these recommendations were proposed by Councillor Folkes, seconded by Councillor Miss Hardiman, and approval was unanimously agreed.

(9) REPORTS FROM VARIOUS GROUPS AND COMMITTEES:

Broadway Traders' Association:

Councillor Mrs. Rogers, as the Parish Council's representative, attended a meeting held on 4th January, when the main topic of discussion related to the Christmas lights. This year's improvements to the lights was very well received by both residents and visitors alike. Discussion concerned the putting up, removal and storage of lights for this and future years and how much time and effort was required, with thanks to Mr. Peter Reading for his hard work/endeavours for the 2015 lights. It was confirmed that the new boxes on the light columns to supply the electricity for the lights would be painted black to make them less conspicuous. As previously advised, the Traders' Association was being re-launched as Broadway Business Association, and an event to highlight this would be organised with existing and prospective new members invited. Finally, great concerns were raised regarding the lack of organisers/volunteers for previous events, and how more people must be found if future events, especially the 2016 late night shopping

events, were to continue/expand. Councillor Mrs. Eyre suggested that perhaps there could be more liaison between the Traders and the Parish Council to try and resolve these concerns, and the Clerk would contact Mr. Reading to discuss how the Parish Council could be of further assistance.

(10) PLANNING:

Demolition/rebuilding of the wall outside, Sargent House in the High Street:

The Planning Committee, both District Councillors and several residents, had raised concerns regarding the height of the wall. Discussions were held with the owner and, subsequently, with the District Council Enforcement Team, as to whether or not planning permission was required. Unfortunately, despite the District Council Planning Department agreeing that planning permission should have been sought, no further action was to be taken. After further discussion it was agreed that the Clerk should write to the District Council's Head of Planning clearly stating the Parish Council's disappointment at its decision, and also its concerns regarding the increasing number of retrospective planning applications being submitted. The Parish Council proposed that the District Planning Committee consider that fees for such application be increased to deter the practice.

The Planning Committee met on 11th January and discussed the following two applications relating to The Swan, 2 The Green - (a) replacement of internal and external signage, and (b) new external timber dining huts, minor external refurbishment and decoration, and internal refurbishment and decoration. Due to lack of insufficient information submitted and/or downloaded to the online planning site it was unable to make any decision or to forward any comments regarding these application and requested further information. No further details were available for (a), so this will again be placed on the agenda for the next planning committee meeting. Regarding (b), a lengthy discussion followed resulting in the Parish Council deciding to raise its objections to this application for the following reasons:

It strongly disagrees with the Conservation Officer's letter which stated that the dining huts "would become a feature of the setting of a listed building" and also "the harm caused to the setting of the listed building and character and appearance of the Conservation Area would be limited". The building and the Conservation Area are designated heritage assets. The design, appearance and materials proposed for the huts are inconsistent with the design guidance given in the Broadway Conservation Area Appraisal. The Planning Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to preserve or enhance a Conservation Area. This application does neither, and the Conservation Officer actually stated that the harm is limited - therefore accepting that there actually is harm.

There were also objections/concerns to some of the proposed internal alterations - in particular, allowing for new timber and glass screens; allowing for existing timber panelling to be stripped back and painted; allowing for new glazed doors to VIP area, and refurbishing existing timber doors. All of these would be detrimental to the character of the building, with some of the other proposed alterations being ambiguous and lacking in detail and would, therefore, need further clarification.

Parish Council Comments:**MEETING: 07:12:15****Application W/15/02755/PN****MR. S. HOLLAND**, 111 Sandcroft Avenue
Demolition of garage and erection of new dwelling

The Parish Council raised no objections to this application

Application W/15/02722/PP**MR. R. GEERING**
Ambleside, Springfield Lane
Ground floor extensions to front and rear, extension to garage, demolition of conservatory to rear as approved under permission W/15/01776/PP but without compliance with Condition 4 (to amend approved plans)

The Parish Council objected to the removal of condition 4 (to amend approved plans) and also to the proposed increase in the height of the garage and the inclusion of a window on the east elevation.

Application W/15/02603/PP**E-on ENERGY SOLUTIONS**
7 Collets Gardens
Installation of external wall insulation to all elevations of property in neutral colour (white/cream/grey)

The Parish Council raised no objections to this application

Application W/15/02765/CU**MR. R. CABLE**
Northwick Farm., Pry Lane
Installation of three log cabins (mobile homes) for use as short term holiday lets

The Parish Council objected to this proposal for the following reasons - (a) the property is in a Flood Zone Area ; (b) the property is outside GD1; and (c) referring to Policy ECON19 the proposal amounts to an unsustainable form of development in light of national and local policies relating to tourist accommodation which would harm the character and appearance of the local area. (The Parish Council referred to a similar dismissed appeal decision - W1400341/PN - Lybrook Farm, Snowhill Road)

Application W/15/02933/PP**E-on ENERGY SOLUTIONS**
85 Brookside
Installation of external wall insulation to all elevations of property in neutral colour (white/cream/grey)

The Parish Council raised no objections to this application

MEETING 21:12:15**Applications W/15/02905/PN
W/15/02906/LB****MITCHELLS & BUTLERS**
The Swan, 2 The Green
New external timber dining huts

The Planning Committee were unable to comment on this application as there was insufficient information/drawing/photos of both the proposed external and internal alterations. Both County/District Councillor Eyre and District Councillor Thomas were in attendance and were of the same opinion and would be following up the matter. Further information/drawings etc. were requested so that the Parish Council could make any necessary comments.

Application W/15/02941/PP**MRS HASLAM**
107 High Street
Proposed rear extension and additional alterations to property, new boundary wall to side driveway.

The Parish Council raised no objections to this application, but asked that a condition be placed that the roof light is in keeping with the character of the building and surrounding properties.

**Applications W/15/02970/PN
W/15/03008/LB****MR M ASPINALL**
Cotswold Trading Ltd, 36 High Street
Replacement of existing corrugated metal and asbestos cement roof sheeting with matching plain tiling, rendering of common brickwork and new lantern light in conjunction with internal alterations

The Parish Council raised no objections to this application

<p>Applications W/15/03069/PP W/15/03071/LB</p> <p>The Parish Council raised no objections to this application</p> <p>Application W/15/03082/PP</p> <p>The Parish Council raised no objections to this application</p> <p>WYCHAVON APPROVALS:</p> <p>Application W/15/02651/PN</p> <p>Application W/15/02603/PP</p> <p>Application W/15/02933/PP</p> <p>Application W/15/03082/PP</p> <p>Application W/15/02722/PP</p> <p>WYCHAVON REFUSAL:</p> <p>Application W/15/02755/PN</p>	<p>THE TIBBITTS FAMILY DISCRETIONARY TRUST 84 High Street Proposed alterations to dwelling</p> <p>MS HOMER 24 Lime Tree Avenue Single storey extension to rear, amendment to scheme approved under planning permission W/15/01514/PP with gable instead of hipped roof</p> <p>COTSWOLD SPA RETIREMENT HOME, Station Road Proposed erection of prefabricated garden room in rear garden area E-on ENERGY SOLUTIONS 7 Collets Gardens Installation of external wall insulation to all elevations of property in neutral colour (white/cream/grey)</p> <p>E-on ENERGY SOLUTIONS 85 Brookside Installation of external wall insulation to all elevations of property in neutral colour (white/cream/grey)</p> <p>MS HOMER 24 Lime Tree Avenue Single Storey extension to rear, amendment to scheme approved under planning permission W/15/01514/PP with gable instead of hipped roof</p> <p>MR. R. GEERING Ambleside, Springfield Lane Ground floor extensions to front and rear, extension to garage, demolition of conservatory to rear – as approved under permission W/15/01726/PP but without compliance with Condition 4 (to amend approved plans)</p> <p>MR. S. HOLLAND, 111 Sandcroft Avenue Demolition of garage and erection of new dwelling</p>
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(11) SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS from 01:12:15 to 31:12:15

<i>Payments:</i>	verified by the Clerk together with two nominated signatories	<i>net of VAT</i>
Office cash / milk/coffee/sugar		17.49
Office cash / postage		28.48
Office cash / Office Supplies		7.29
Worcestershire County Council / pension contribution		455.64
Unicom / telephone-internet		62.71
GBD (Evesham) Limited / mowing contract		325.07
Cotswold Building Supplies / activity park maintenance		533.40
Abbey Forestry / tree maintenance		877.50
Grassroots Garden Services / activity park maintenance		48.00
Maurice Parkinson / lengthsman scheme		69.00
G Franks / Costs re Appeal		8400.00
A T Woods / Tree Maintenance		345.00
Hentland / office fire extinguisher service		54.93
K. Beasley / Clerk's salary / December		1,254.46
G. A. Tomkins / Asst. Clerk's salary / December		251.95

HMRC / PAYE	1016.81
GBD (Evesham) Limited / activity park maintenance	349.13
Justice Fire & Security / Office Security maintenance	142.62
Hereford & Wors. Community First Responders / Defibrillator	550.00
Society of Local Council Clerks / annual subscription	167.00

Receipts:

Lloyds Bank / Interest re Fixed Term Deposit Bond	106.19
Lloyds Bank / gross interest	4.65
Wychavon District Council / Grant re Christmas Lights	500.00
Signpost / Contribution to Office Electricity	89.66

(12) COUNCILLORS' REPORTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA:

Councillor O'Brien reported that he had recently witnessed an elderly lady trip outside Tisane's shop on the corner of the entrance to the arcade, and suggested that the slightly raised area outside the shop should be marked to highlight the hazard. The Clerk would investigate further and report back accordingly. Councillor O'Brien also asked if there was any update regarding the painting of the post-boxes to which the Clerk replied that he had written to the Post Office who replied that they had a maintenance programme for painting all of their properties/assets, and make routine checks on such items. It was also pointed out that the collection times had changed so that only one collection took place each morning from all boxes other than the box outside the newsagents/post office, where post was also collected at 5.00 pm.

Councillors Love and Mrs. Wilson raised concerns regarding the mini-roundabout at the High Street/Leamington Road junction – (a) having witnessed a number of near accidents it was felt that the roundabout should be re-painted and better signage installed to highlight the dangers, as motorists were simply not abiding to the law, and (b) Councillor Mrs Wilson asked if a crossing could be installed. Councillor Mrs Eyre replied to (a) that motorists should adhere to the highway code by giving way to traffic on the right, but agreed that the re-painting of the lines/roundabout would help the situation, and suggested the Clerk should contact Highways, and to (b) that a crossing was not possible at this site, adding that there was a dropped kerb further along the road outside the library to allow better/safer crossing of the road at that point.

Councillor Love stated that in response to a previous request, work had been undertaken to alleviate the road flooding outside 6 Leamington Road, but this had resulted in flooding now taking place further along the road. It was suggested that all residents affected should report the matter using the 'report it' section on the County Council website. Concerns were also raised regarding the state of the pavements in general, and Councillor Mrs. Eyre suggested that the Parish Council should write to Mr. Gerry Brienza, the County Council Senior Highways Liaison Engineer, stating that the gravels in the High Street were in a poor state so that the process of bidding for the undertaking of this project, which would be lengthy and expensive, could be started as soon as possible.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35 pm and opened the PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION:

Mr. Robin Farnworth, of Sandcroft Avenue, introduced himself as the new Community First Responder becoming a first responder due to worries/concerns in the reduced ambulance service available in Evesham, and took up this role permanently on 4th December 2015. Since that date he had undertaken twenty-four calls in Broadway and surrounding areas. There were two defibrillator boxes in the village – one outside Budgens store, and one outside the Fire Station, and the Parish Council, in association with Budgens, was looking to fund a further box which Mr. Farnworth suggested could be situated outside the Nisa store in Bibsworth Avenue to serve that area of the village. The Vale of Evesham First Responders were quite happy to organise training sessions to teach defibrillation and CPR to anyone/organisation interested, and Mr. Farnworth was keen to involve the traders in such training and will contact them accordingly. He would also be keen to hear from anyone interested in becoming a First Responder. Mr. Farnworth stated that he was willing to attend a Parish Council meeting on a regular basis to give an update on call-out figures etc. The Chairman thanked Mr. Farnworth for his offer and also for his very interesting presentation.

There were no further questions from the public and the Chairman finally closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.

*Date /Time Next Meeting: 17th March at 7.00 pm
(followed by Annual Parish Meeting at approx. 8.00pm)*

Cllr LIZ EYRE

**A Happy and Healthy New Year to all of you and thank you to the
councillors who give up their free time so valiantly to support their
neighbours and our clerks who so ably support them.**

Bad news first

Financial challenges on the cards for the County and its residents

The first week of 2016 has seen us starting to understand the full impact of the **Local Government Settlement**. Worcestershire's challenge, post settlement, is an extra 11m to find on top of the annual 25m and an extra 40m over the medium term. Every year now will be a challenge. Already a council tax rise of 3.94% is on the cards. This rise will ease pressures in elderly and children's care but we just cannot face any more "huge cuts". Of the 3.94%

- 1.94% will provide financial support for services for Looked After Children (budget forecast to be £5.8 million in 2016/17),
- 2% ring-fenced grant for Adult Social Care services, as allowed by the Spending Review, will contribute to existing older people cost pressures in 2015/16 (presently funded by one-off grant income or reserves that will not be available from 2016/17.)

We are not complacent the Council is already into five years into a programme to transform itself into an innovative organisation with residents' priorities (ascertained through surveys) at the heart of the decisions it makes. And new ways of working have been introduced so that the Council is more agile and responsive to residents' priorities but life has just got a whole lot tougher.

The net expenditure budget for 2016/17 set out a provisional budget requirement of £327.8 million and an indicative funding gap of £2 million which has to be closed by February 2016

The Government has announced its Revenue Support Grant to the Council will reduce evenly to an income of £10.9 million for 2019/20 so that by 2020/21 it will be nil.

Business rates are expected to rise in accordance with the Retail Price Index each year and income from Council Tax will gradually fund a greater proportion of the Council's budget in the future – not good news for residents but it funds services for residents!

The Cabinet has approved a draft budget for consultation which includes

budget reduction area in Council's programme for the future. These are proposals that have been subject to detailed Cabinet and Scrutiny review.

Cabinet has endorsed the plan to address a savings requirement of £2 million, taking account of central Government's Spending Review announcement. It has also endorsed:

- an investment of £0.5 million each year for road maintenance,
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- Great news for motorists! A significant investment in a two-year Driving Home highways infrastructure improvement programme and ongoing annual road maintenance. £12m of capital funding allocated to the two-year **Driving Home programme**, which will be used on residential roads across the county following feedback from residents and in support of the Council's Open for Business priority.

Please not one impact of the spending review will probably be a review of the New Homes Bonus.

Flooding

Worcestershire County Council has launched a final consultation on its draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to ensure every resident and business has the opportunity to express their views. The consultation is open until Monday 29 February 2016, and the Local Flood Risk Strategy will be formally adopted in July 2016. The Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority, has a duty to manage flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses across the county. To read the draft Strategy and comment visit www.worcestershire.gov.uk/flooding Paper copies of the draft Strategy are also available in the County Council's libraries and County Hall.

Fortunately Worcestershire has not so far suffered the extreme severe weather experienced in the North: Cumbria, Lancashire and parts of Yorkshire and also Scotland. Key areas for Worcestershire were around the river Severn, the Avon and some surface water flooding, not least in light of the ground water table which was fully saturated, with the last few weeks' regular rainfall.

Where are we now?

The river Severn is either levelling out or in some locations levels dropping slightly.

Lower reaches of the Severn in the County around Upton and below will re-open it as soon as conditions enable this.

The river Avon is a faster responding river and did react over the last few days to the more localised rain and with ground saturation conditions being as they are, went up quite quickly as expected. Levels on the Avon are now dropping and this has meant that the B4080 Eckington roads as flood waters have receded.

Highways maintenance staff have been involved in addressing and resolving any localised flooding issues that have arisen, working closely with our Highways Maintenance Contractor Ringway.

The County has worked closely with colleagues in Emergency Planning, Communications & liaising closely with officers in the Environment Agency and Met Office daily to ensure we monitor the situation closely. Where required we can and will put in place additional resources such as gulley emptiers/jettors and Highways gangs to manage any flooding issues as they arise.

They are or should be liaising with our Parish Council Colleagues and Parish Lengthsmen to help locally clear grips and gulley gratings where it is safe to do so.

If you are aware of or see any specific issues of concern re flooding, then please contact us directly on 01905 822009.

The Highways Twitter account @WorcsTravel also has latest information.

Please be patient re highways issues given the call on our officers due to the floods.

Fire and rescue Support flooding events in Cumbria, Yorkshire and Lancashire. The service supported the "DEFRA Flood Rescue Concept of Operations over the Christmas period.

European Funding to support Worcestershire small businesses in rural areas and create more jobs.

Projects which support micro and small enterprise in rural areas, support farm diversification and support rural tourism can now apply for the £1.96m Rural Business small capital grant funding programme.

The key objectives of the programme include the growth of the rural economy and the creation of 74 jobs in rural Worcestershire.

Bidding applications can apply to support micro and small enterprises (including farm diversification) – such as the construction of new factories/offices and purchase of equipment – and support rural tourism, such as helping IT and e-booking systems, supporting equipment purchases for restaurants/cafes which cater to tourists, encouraging new attractions along waterways and cycle routes, and developing more opportunities for young families.

I am assisting one local business – please contact me 07801816755 if you have ideas or need help

Our MEP Anthea McIntyre has secured a deal allowing British workers first chance at British jobs

TENS of thousands of jobs will now be advertised only to workers in Britain under changes agreed in Brussels. Conservative Employment spokesman Anthea McIntyre has been instrumental in securing the key amendment to regulations governing EURES, a website used by people across Europe seeking work. "This gives companies the right to offer workers in Britain first crack at British jobs. That's fair for jobseekers, fair for companies and it should mean fewer British jobs going to migrants from other EU countries." It is an important decision. It is only right that businesses have the choice of advertising their jobs only to British residents and that people in Britain get the first chance to secure those jobs." At the same time we must remember we have 700,000 vacancies unfilled because businesses cannot find the workers they require, and in those circumstances it can be an advantage for companies to extend their search to attract the best people from Germany, France and elsewhere."

Report from District Councillor Bradley Thomas

Joint Senior Management Team

Wychavon is slowly moving towards a joint senior management team with Malvern Hills District Council. This follows on the back of Jack Hegarty the MD of Wychavon becoming Chief Executive of Malvern Hills District Council late last year.

This follows both councils resolving in September to see a joint senior management team in place by 1st January in order to realise cost savings where possible, but also work more collaboratively and maximise knowledge and expertise across the two organisations.

There is no change whatsoever to the political sovereignty or independence of the two councils: they both remain independent functioning bodies representing their respective areas.

- Joint MD
- Each council retains own deputy MD
- Joint head of Housing & Planning (but retain own planning departments and own planning committees)
- Joint Head of Strategy, Democratic and Customer Services
- Each council has own head of Community Services

Community Buildings Strategy

Community Development team is currently having consultants put together a Community Buildings Strategy for Wychavon, but the survey response from parishes has been disappointing. Parish councils have been written to twice in order to inform them how important this survey is, as the report's findings will ultimately determine where section 106 funding can be used in their parish. If parish councils have any dealings with community buildings in their parish and haven't sent their survey in, please let the Community Development Team know. For more information contact Tracy Grubb on 01386 565168 or email tracy.grubb@wychavon.gov.uk.

Parking outside URC

I am working this issue closely with Enforcements & the head of Planning. Currently Planning don't see it as an enforcements issue because they claim there is no development to have taken place, and that instead it is a Highways issue. The issue will be discussed at the Liaison groups meeting taking place on 29th January, but I have encouraged Wychavon to work with myself and the parish council to finding a solution, rather than stating that there is no enforcement issue. Dialogue is therefore still continuing with officers.