

LINDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

9th March 2016

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

- **New Cabinet Role**

Following the resignation of Adrian Hardman, and his subsequent conviction for drink driving, Simon Geraghty was elected as the new Leader of the Conservative Group, and then as Leader of the Council. He also took on the role of Cabinet Member Responsible for Finance, a job that Adrian had done for the last eight years.

This created a vacancy on Cabinet for the job that Simon had done, also for eight years, namely that of being responsible for the Economy, Skills and Infrastructure. He asked me to take on this new role.

This is a significant position, with a budget for the directorate that includes Highways and the Environment of around £60 million, although that is much less than the cost of the caring roles of Adult Social Care and Children's Service. The brief extends to the following areas:

1. Strategic planning – community and spatial
2. Economic development and regeneration
3. Business Partnerships (including Local Enterprise Partnership)
4. Regional, European and international relationships
5. Strategic Transportation (including Local Transport Plan)
6. Skills Policy and Development, including training, apprenticeships, business engagement, and employment skills
7. Broadband.

In this context, it is worth noting again that Worcestershire's productivity over the last five years has been third fastest in the country, behind Oxford and London. This is partly the legacy of Simon and his colleagues, and I shall do all I can to see that the performance is maintained, and even improved.

The budget for the coming year, 2016/17 was set in February. It is clear that the coming year will be one of serious austerity and we will be aiming to see that front line services are maintained as far as possible. As already announced, the County's contribution to Council Tax will increase by 3.94%, including the 2% precept that the Chancellor has allowed to be devoted to Adult Social Care.

- **Public Realm in Tenbury**

The final snagging work for the Public Realm phase 1 started this week. The delay was mainly to avoid the sort of bad winter weather that we might have expected but has not really appeared.

This will involve detail improvement of some block cutting and mortar work and the replacement of broken kerbs. In addition, there will be new bollards in the footway outside Bowkett's after reports of vehicles running on the footway in the raised table area. This is mainly due to the narrow carriageway there, but the bollards should restore pedestrian safety.

I expect that the promised painting of white lines on the car park outside Bowkett's will happen on a quiet Sunday soon. I notice that the loading bays in Teme Street have at last been

designated properly and have requested the civil enforcement officers to take tough action against commercial vehicles parking partly on the footway in Teme Street.

It had always been my intention that there should be a 20mph limit on Teme Street and Market Street, to help slow traffic in general and make the raised table areas more likely to be shared by pedestrians and vehicles. I am disappointed that so far the county officers have preferred to wait for the second phase to be completed. In the absence of a timetable for that to happen, I have pressed again that the limit be imposed now, to avoid vehicles driving too fast for the raised table ramps.

- **Road Works**

The planned road works this week have been disrupted by the heavy rain and localised flooding. As an emergency measure, two sections of the A443 between Abberley and Newnham Bridge were to be repaired, necessitating the normal diversion for through traffic via Clows Top.

It is expected that the deformation between Eardiston and Lindridge will be tackled first and then the section at the bottom of Stockton Bank on the following day. This may well now be Thursday and Friday instead of a day earlier.

Both of these works were scheduled following my reporting of the problem online. I would urge all residents to use the system and let me know if the response is less than satisfactory.

On Monday, work will start on restoring the car park in Tenbury, where the household recycling centre has been sited. I hope at the end of that effort, the tarmac in that area will be appropriately smooth and durable.

A Tenbury councillor has also reported damage to road signs on Kyrewood Road. I am grateful for the information but would point out that the best first step is to report these problems on the County Council website as this is the most efficient way to get the problem on to the work rota.

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09.03.16