

LINDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

12.07.17

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

- **County Council affairs**

The new council met for the first time on the 25th May and approved various formal appointments. The new Chairman is Anne Hingley, the new deputy chairman is Brandon Clayton and the leader of the council remains Simon Geraghty.

Simon has confirmed his Cabinet of ten people, the maximum allowed, with the inclusion of a new portfolio of education and skills. This has gone to Marcus Hart, whose highways portfolio is now held by Alan Amos. I retain the economy and infrastructure portfolio, but lose responsibility for skills to Marcus.

We also approved the appointment of an interim Chief Executive to replace Clare Marchant who left at the end of June. He is Steve Stewart, who has held the post of chief executive in a number of northern councils, including Northumberland and York. In the former he was in charge of the conversion from a two tier to a unitary council, and led an authority which was one of only three in the country with an “outstanding” rating for their children’s safeguarding.

One of Mr Stewart’s principal jobs will be to see how we can carry the council forward on the reducing budget that we expect to be available. He will be on a fixed term contract, paid the same as the former chief executive, and we expect him to be in place for between 6 and 9 months. During that time, the council will be considering the nature of the job, and whom we might wish to appoint on a permanent basis.

- **Road safety**

The measures that were discussed some time ago should now be partly in place and I hope the village gates are also on order – they were not in evidence the last time I visited Eardiston. I would be very grateful if councillors could let me know how these measures are working out, as they may not be sufficient to achieve all you wished.

If that is so, we will need to consider further efforts to ensure safety of pedestrians in the village.

- **Velo Birmingham Bike Race**

Councillors will be aware of the controversy surrounding plans for a large cycling event, called Velo Birmingham, taking place on 24th September. A meeting 2 weeks ago approved a change in the route, which will mean that the 15,000 cyclists will not penetrate further west than Great Witley.

This will be a relief to many, but a disappointment to some. I was aware of the disturbance that was going to be caused to many people in the Shelsley and Clifton areas, and I regret to say that this had been underestimated by both the organisers and the council officers.

At the first meeting between WCC and CSM, the organisers, which I chaired, it was made clear that the figure of eight west of Great Witley, including Herefordshire, was too disruptive and that the Council was inclined to withdraw support for the whole event. Further to that

meeting, the revised route was proposed and we are working on ways of making this acceptable to all concerned.

There will still be a large section of the event in Worcestershire, though none in Herefordshire and now more in Staffordshire. This will require TROs to publicise the event and approval or otherwise by the county council, having received any objections to the closures. At present, it is most likely that the event will go ahead, but it is not 100% certain.

It is important to note that the county council has a very strong pro-cycling and walking policy, restated in the latest local transport plan (LTP4). This is demonstrated by our continued support for the Redditch bike race in May and the Tour of Britain, the last leg of which starts in Worcester on September 10th.

Velo Birmingham is, by contrast, not a race but a mass participation event, called a sportive, to promote general wellbeing and appreciation of the countryside. We are assured that it will also bring economic benefits to the county, as with the Wales Velothon, held last weekend and based in Cardiff, and also Ride London, that is now well established and covers a lot of roads in Surrey.

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12.07.17**