

County Councillor's report for Annual PC Meeting April 22nd

Meeting with Highways England

This much awaited meeting took place on March 25th in the Salwey Arms car park. In attendance Richard Timothy, network manager Highways England, Cllr Vivienne Parry, Cllr Sebastian Bowen and Cllr John Stone. Mr Timothy told us he was aware of all our concerns about safety at the junction and the frequency of collisions there. Highways England have been carrying out studies in recent months and he hoped to be able to report their outcome later in May. He promised to inform us of the outcome even if it was not what we wanted to hear ! He agreed that communications needed to improve. We listed the number of collisions including a fatality between the end of October and early March and the impact the new garage complex was having at the junction. Highways England have received no written offers of land which might make a roundabout a more feasible proposition. They will not consider such proposals unless they are in writing. Any measures to improve road safety on the A49 between Skew Bridge and the turning into Brimfield would also depend on available budgets. Mr Timothy listened carefully and was willing to meet us again. We made the point that Parish Councils should also be kept informed. We need to keep talking with HE even if the results are disappointing.

Sign on A49 before School Lane turning ?

I raised this with Mr Timothy pointing out there was a sign coming north from Leominster but not coming south from Ludlow. The result was huge lorries were entering School Lane junction and turning on a road unsuitable for their size. The current sign just off the A49 can be easily missed. Mr Timothy told me he would investigate but I have heard nothing back yet and will follow this up.

Litter Pick

Many thanks to the residents who turned up on Saturday morning and also Karen and Boris. The sun shone and a total of 11 bags were collected in Brimfield, awaiting removal from Balfour Beatty. Several lanes were virtually litter free thanks to the efforts of a number of stalwart residents who kindly collect litter as part of their walks. Many thanks to all concerned. Thursday is Earth Day and we should all be aware of our environment. Keeping our lanes and verges litter free makes life more pleasant for everyone. I am grateful to the Parish Council for organising the litter pick on Saturday.

Future of rubbish and recycling collection services

A public consultation took place in January and early February and residents were asked for their views. The current contract ends in 2023. All the feedback will be considered before a final decision is taken on how services are provided in the future. I consider that the present system works extremely well but recycling rates need to increase and there have been changes in legislation so we will have to wait for the outcome.

Meanwhile the Recycling Centre in Bridge Street Leominster is now open from 8am to 6pm every day, the normal summer opening times. Please book your slot before you go.

Covid Vaccinations and Step 2 of Roadmap

Over 102,000 Herefordshire residents have now received their first dose of vaccine. The NHS has invited people aged 45 and over to book their Covid jab. It is really important that you attend the second dose appointment booked for you. Many will already have received their second jab. Vaccines are ordered according to the booked appointments to make sure the right vaccine is available for you at the right location on the right day. Over 33 million people have received their first vaccinations nationally, a remarkable achievement by the NHS, helped by an army of volunteers.

Covid cases continue to decline in Herefordshire, about half the national average, to levels last seen in early October.

Some increase in cases is to be expected as society reopens and more asymptomatic cases are identified through regular rapid testing. Testing centres are open in Leominster, Ludlow and other towns.

The reopening of shops, hairdressers and libraries as well as outdoor hospitality from April 12th has been good for the economy and for everyone's morale. I was thrilled to get a haircut last week ! It is also good to have golf courses and tennis courts open and for our local football teams to be playing again. It is also important that we all remain vigilant and sensible so that we can move to the next step in the roadmap in May.

Other local headlines

I was pleased to see the results of the drainage scheme in Lynch Lane, with three new gullies established and other drainage work. Many thanks to David and Boris and everyone else involved. It should be a major help in alleviating flooding there in the future. We are waiting to see if there are similar drainage grants available this financial year.

I look forward to the installation of a SID on the Tenbury Road in due course.

Finally the new Dog Waste Bin is being well used. I hope another one might be possible in the future. I expect it will be mentioned in the Parish Meeting.

Planning

I have successfully requested that three recent applications should be redirected to the Council Planning Committee in Hereford. They are the 14 houses off Wyson Lane, the Haynall Lane application and the motorcycle tyre business (change of use application). All three will therefore be properly debated and democratic decisions reached. No timings are yet known.

Mark Painter

Many thanks to Mark for chairing the Group Parish Council both face to face and virtually for two years. He has been a safe pair of hands in difficult times and we are grateful for his patience, courtesy and humour. All best wishes to his successor who will also have my full support.

John 01584 711 227