

AYMESTREY PARISH COUNCIL WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT JANUARY 2024

Firstly may I wish you all a very Happy New Year although I know for some across the ward it has not been so with flooding being a significant issue both before Xmas and during early January and in my time as a councillor which is 8 years I have not known the A4110 around the Leinthall Earls turning be closed due to flooding. In fact alarmingly from 2015 until late 2019 I had no reports of significant flooding in Mortimer Ward but since then it has occurred two to three times per year. We do have some information and links on the council website about Property Flood Resilience www.herefordshire.gov.uk/pfr.

The Chair has kindly shared with me the letter he has sent to Bruce Evans requesting a meeting to consider the Traffic Calming Plan which I fully support.

I try to attend the coffee mornings but it is not always possible due to my extra responsibilities. Barry and I do however attend the Quiz night, can't say we are an asset to any team.

The Government has awarded a grant of £1.76 million to support work on Local Nutrient Mitigation to allow the development of housing in the Lugg catchment area – this of course includes the river Arrow. It is four and half years since a ban on the granting of new houses was brought in by Herefordshire Council acting on the directions of Natural England.

The Government announced its provisional settlement to local authorities on 18th December for their revenue accounts and with a 4.99% Council Tax increase including the social care charge of 2%) the council is proposing a balanced budget for 2024/25 which has been out to consultation. When I last asked how many residents had responded it amounted to just over 350 which is low but twice that of last year. This will be debated at its February meeting and may well change following any further money the government may allocate to us as they sometimes do late in the day, the results of the consultation and discussions we shall need to have with other parties to get an agreement as we are a minority administration. There are national and local concerns about the rising costs of Adult and Children's care services, Home to school transport and special educational needs.

The Council has been carrying out consultations on its proposed budget and corporate plan. There is also a consultation on future fortnightly collection of garden waste from properties using a 240 litre brown bin. There would be a cost of £55 per annum with the gardenwaste being composted. Details can be found at <https://consultations.herefordshire.gov.uk/consultations/article/105/garden-waste-collection-survey>

Last month the council voted and supported by a majority the Capital Programme of the minority administration. It includes 10.6 million pounds for highway resurfacing.

At a meeting with Balfour Beatty I attended recently they advised that they were finalising a policy whereby parishes with recognised flood groups could issued with road closed notices which they could put out when appropriate and then ring BB to notify them of their actions. They would legally not be able to remove them but could ring the same number to advise that the flooding had ceased and request the locality steward remove the sign back to the keeper in order to try to avoid as happens now closed signs remaining long after the water has gone.