

AYMESTREY PARISH COUNCIL WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT JUNE 2025

Firstly although I was able to thank Ian Goddard for all his hard work as a member and Chair of the Parish Council recently, I would like my thanks to be recorded and I wish him and his wife all the best for the future.

I visited the Talbot Hotel in Leominster recently where we are housing about 17 single people who are homeless. There had been some bad publicity on Facebook about the accommodation but I found it to be extremely clean and welcoming. It is not suitable for families and we house those in a form of B & B accommodation but it is accommodation we own.

Despite a lorry writing my car off I still managed with the help of Barry to attend and speak at the Unpaid Carers event held at the Kindle Centre during Unpaid Carers week. Unpaid carers are so important and their voices need to be heard. Often professionals, neighbours, friends and relatives ask the carer when they meet them "how is Jo" but fail to ask the carer "how are you, is there anything you need" and we must change this. Unpaid carers save local authorities and governments millions of pounds and should be recognised for what they do. It is clear that many people do not recognise themselves as a carer when a child is looking after a parent, a man or woman looking after their partner, they just see it as part of their duty and so miss out on opportunities for support.

I will this week be attending the Shared Lives celebrations at the Rowing Club. Shared Lives is a scheme where someone with a mild to moderate learning disability is offered an opportunity to live with either a single adult, a couple or a family and be supported by them whilst also in many instances bringing joy to the family or to a single person. In many cases that person soon becomes just another member of the family.

Very shortly the Council will be writing to parish councils advising them that they will be calling for potential housing sites as was the case in the making of the previous Local Plan. The guidelines given by the government so far are that sites should be in areas which are sustainable and have at least one other form of transport than the car. This will be a worrying time for many parishes but we still recognise that the issues around the River Lugg pollution catchment area have not been resolved and in the rural areas public transport is rare or non-existent. It has been suggested by those involved with compiling the new local plan that no parish council review its present NDP if it is over 5 years old and therefore not carrying the amount of weight it previously did, until the Spring when we might have a better idea of housing number allocations. At present it would just be a finger in the air. As you will be aware we have to identify housing sites for 27,260 homes along with sites for economic development. We have no choice in this matter and across the country authorities are struggling with the quota given. We have in fact been asked to look for sites for 30,000 homes in order to provide some flexibility!

This week we are having a Corporate Peer Review of the whole Council, this is carried out by officers and elected members of a number of different councils who will consider what Herefordshire is doing well and where it could do better. They will be in Herefordshire for 4 days and give a verbal report on Thursday and then the final report will be published in July. It is a helpful process and some of our officers carry out Peer Reviews in other authorities. We are still awaiting a date for our CQC inspection of Adult Social Care.

The drainage grant for 2025/26 which will run until March 2026 will not be allowed to be extended as was the case in the previous year so it is imperative that you identify sites, get quotes, get the sites assessed and start work. Several parishes have been unable to spend the money allocated in 2024/25 despite it being extended to June.

Barry and I are looking forward to the fete on the 19th July.