

BORDER GROUP PARISH COUNCIL WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT MARCH 2021

I was pleased to welcome Butch, the new Clerk and we have had a number of chats over the past few weeks.

There are continuing issues with regard to flooding and I am eagerly awaiting the report from the Environment Agency. My biggest fear is that they will identify work that needs to be done but say that they have no money to do anything. Ray Hickey has now left BB and that is a useful contact I no longer have.

Before Ray Hickey left, I asked whether the work on Buckton Lane (to be carried out using flood damage money) could be done at the same time the road was closed to repair the bridge. This is now complicated by the fact that the Administration have decided that smaller infrastructure projects will not automatically be given to BB and will go out to tender. I believe this is once such job and Ray said that it maybe that BB would not win the contract, or choose not to bid and that would make it more difficult to co-ordinate the work.

I have received a significant number of telephone calls regarding a planning application at Willey for yurts. I have requested of the planning officer that this application be redirected to the planning committee as it is in the River Lugg Pollution Catchment Area and other issues have been identified by residents. The closing date for comments is now 1st April 2021 as the notice only went up on 11th March.

I forwarded to the Clerk an email from a resident concerning PROW around Birtley.

There are ongoing issues with Letton Lane and its awful state of repair. Lee Fishwick has reported numerous potholes but this will do little to improve the condition. I am awaiting a briefing from BB with regard to the road maintenance plan for 2021/22 to see whether any roads in Mortimer ward are included. They were certainly not included in the extra £2 million allocated for C & U roads which is being used at this moment.

There are 3 through roads in Mortimer ward which are in a dire state, Ballsgate Lane, Aymestrey, Letton Lane and Stocken Lane and in the case of Stocken Lane, Lee has requested whether it can be closed to cyclists and HGVs as its condition is so bad and it is hilly.

I have received a complaint from a resident about the blocking of PROW around Adforton. It has been established that one footpath was a permissive footpath and that agreement has come to an end. I have downloaded the PROW map for Adforton off the HC website and intend this weekend to take a look to see whether the other areas mentioned by the resident are in fact blocked PROW.

I have been assured by the Portfolio Holder John Harrington that the drainage grants will be available again this year for those who have signed up to the lengthsman scheme.

The budget setting meeting was held recently and despite arguing for a lower increase and for money to parish councils for drainage schemes, this was not successful. The Council Tax will rise by 4.99%. I have publicised in Leintwardine Life the fact that if residents are finding it difficult to pay their council tax at this time, they may be entitled to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme or to apply for a Hardship Grant.

I have serious concerns with regard to planning enforcement and conservation where there appears to be a recruitment freeze. This will have significant repercussions for parishes in Mortimer ward where there are ongoing enforcement and conservations issues outstanding. I will continue to push for these to be resolved. I was quite angry to find out about this freeze

via an officer unofficially and that councillors had not been formally advised. Following a question at Full Council recently it still was really confirmed but the response was that officer have to make decisions on their directorate based on budget constraints.

We have a new Chief Executive starting at the beginning of May, his name is Paul Walker He is at present the CEO at Harrow and prior to that was CEO at Copeland Council.

Lingen, Willey and a part of Birtley are in the River Lugg Pollution Catchment Area and I have forwarded an email from HC planners advising that NDP sites in the Catchment Area may not be able to come forward and therefore NDPs may not carry full weight.