

## LITTLE WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

12.03.18

### COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

#### 1. County Council affairs

March the 1<sup>st</sup> brought the dreadful and totally unexpected news of the death of our interim chief executive, Steve Stewart. He was only 64 and had made a huge contribution since starting last May, when our previous CE, Clare Marchant had left to run UCAS.

Steve was just coming to the end of his service with us, before our new permanent Chief Executive, Paul Robinson starts work on the 19<sup>th</sup> May. He has been the Chief Executive of Derby City Council, where he has run a unitary authority with a large budget and staff, comparable to this county.

In the last month or so, we have recruited other senior members of the management team. They are the Chief Finance Officer is Michael Hudson, from Wiltshire, the Chief Commissioning Officer is Andrew Spice from Sussex, and the Interim Director of Adult Social Care Services is Avril Wilson from West Sussex.

While there was never planned to be a handover period with both men in place, Steve's death casts a bit of a shadow over Paul's start in Worcestershire. We wish the whole team well in getting started in post, and providing the vision and leadership needed for the large County council staff, and all those in the County that rely on the council for services and encouragement.

#### 2. SWDP revisions

Following its publication in 2016, the SWDP has been the basis for deciding the pattern of house building across south Worcestershire. Recently, the three councils involved have been considering revising the plan in the light of the impending publication of the second National Planning Policy Framework.

While this concerns the County Council more from the infrastructure viewpoint, I have been keen to take part in the discussions. My impression is that while organic small scale growth of communities is desirable, it could be that larger new settlements may be necessary. Should one or two "new towns" of around 5,000 dwellings be required, the location of such developments is crucial. Any strong feelings on such plans would be welcome by your local district councillor and the planning departments.

Recently Tenbury Town Council considered an application to build 72 houses off Oldwood road opposite the high school. I would suggest that it would be advantageous to the school to have more young families in its catchment area. In addition, it is unrealistic to suppose that homes should only be allowed close to where there is an unmet need for employees. Minimising travel distance to work is desirable, but often unrealistic, and could be seen as a reason for allowing rural areas to become depopulated.

A similar principle applies across the County, and we should be prepared for organic growth of our villages and hamlets, as well as a growth in jobs in rural areas. It is in this context that better broadband is so essential and I have to report steady if slow progress at reaching the last 5% or so of premises not yet served by Superfast broadband.

### **3. Tenbury Public Realm**

The bad weather has delayed the completion of the Public Realm work in Tenbury. The latest news is that the red tarmac will be laid overnight starting on Monday the 19<sup>th</sup>, with the road being closed from 19.00. It will open again at 06.00. This operation should only take 3 nights, and the 20 mph roundels will be painted on the road surface at the same time.

There are still one or two items of street furniture outstanding as Tesco has not yet fulfilled all its obligations under the S278 agreement it signed. We hope continual pressure will achieve the appropriate result before legal action is required.

### **4. Divisional Fund**

I still have a small sum in my Divisional Fund and would be pleased to allocate it to good causes. If anyone knows of deserving enterprises that could benefit, I would be pleased to talk to them about whether I could help. Please pass this message to others in the community who may be unaware of the fund.

**Cllr Ken Pollock  
Cheltenham,  
Gloucestershire,  
GL50 2BZ  
12.03.18**