

LITTLE WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

13.11.17

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

1. County Council Affairs

While the overall picture of our finances is difficult, there are a number of very encouraging developments, some of which were enumerated at full Council last Thursday.

The Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy was approved. This plan, based on work done by our consultants SLC Rail, outlines the priorities for rail development in the county, with great emphasis on the new Parkway station to be opened in the winter of 2018/19 and achieving two trains per hour from Worcester to Paddington. One of those should be a high speed train averaging a lot more than the current 55 mph.

We also approved the developments of Kidderminster station, the second most used station in the county, but with very poor facilities. Pershore will also see important road improvements, including a new bridge over the main railway line to linkup with the Wyre Piddle bypass. This will relieve some of the problems at the Pinvin crossroads.

Finally the revised Local Transport Plan (LTP4) was approved. This outlines all the possible transport improvements across the county to be considered between now and 2031. It does not in any way guarantee the funds to carry out these projects, but rather describes an envelope encompassing all the schemes we would like to see implemented. There are also priorities given, so that it can be seen what work might be undertaken first, as funds become available.

In all of these matters, we see a useful counter balance to the difficulties experienced in Children's Services and with Adult Social Care and demonstrate there are valuable developments that will affect the lives of the great mass of Worcestershire people in a positive way.

2. Tenbury public Realm

The public realm work has continued at a good pace over the last month and the general response seems to be very positive. A third crew from Ringway has been deployed, in an attempt to make up for time lost, after the late arrival of the second crew.

This has resulted in some disruption to traffic, and the need for traffic management using stop go boards. While I have heard of difficult periods, in general the delays experienced seem to have been small.

The work is on schedule to finish before the end of the month, with four night closures scheduled for the 27th November onwards for the carriageway works, i.e. laying new tarmac on Teme Street, and relaying the raised tables using proper red coloured tarmac as originally specified. The closures will be from 21.00 to 06.00 and will last only as long as necessary.

It is therefore clear that the Teme Street work will be complete before the Santa Parade, scheduled for Saturday, 2nd December. It is hoped that the disruption to trade in the run-up to the night closures will be as small as possible, given the inevitable problems of access.

I trust that all parties will be satisfied with the end result of this extended work, and that Tenbury will flourish as a retail and visitor centre once the work is complete.

3. Velo Birmingham Bike Event

The controversial bike event took place on the 24th September and divided the communities through which it past. There were large crowds out in all the villages applauding the riders, and in several places like Bewdley and Droitwich, special arrangements were made to offer food and drink to the spectators.

In other places, there was serious opposition, some of which was regrettably expressed in oil, nails and tacks being strewn on the road and hedge clippings deliberately scattered on the route. Clearing up this material meant the cyclists were delayed and the road closures lifted late. This aggravated the situation for many who were not sympathetic to the event in the first place.

County officers and relevant councillors met the organisers last week to hear all the evidence of positive and negative impacts, caused by Velo. There have been many positive comments about its value and one of the major charities benefitting from the event, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Charity (including three other hospital trusts) and the Leukenia Trust informing me that they are each in receipt of £400,000 from the participants.

I will be very interested to hear from Little Witley councillors and residents how they were affected by the event. Before it took place, there were many who expressed concern about its impact, and some were pessimistic about how it would be organised. On the day, there were significant failings, both in stewarding and signage, and the whole event was tainted by some extensive sabotage in the county.

The Director will now decide whether to permit the event to go ahead in subsequent years and, if so, whether the route might be modified to minimise disruption and loss of business.

4. The A443 layby

I hope that, after the discussion last month, the layby on the A443 is no longer a cause for concern. I have used it myself on a couple of occasions and it seemed to be satisfactory. I have a feeling the planting and stones on the westerly edge are not quite legal, but I think they are great, serve a useful purpose and should stay.

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