

LITTLE WITLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

12.11.18

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

1. Remembrance Day

It was a huge privilege to take part in the Remembrance Day parade and service in Tenbury yesterday, and to be present at the dedication of the memorial benches in the town's Civic Garden later that morning.

I have taken part in this event for several years, and it is very good to be able to lay a wreath on behalf of the County Council outside St Mary's church. This year there seemed to be far more people watching, the march itself seemed larger, and the church was packed out.

All this was entirely fitting on the exact day 100 years on from the end of the First World War. It was very moving to hear the names of those who had given their lives in the service of their country over the last 100 years read out in church, and one can only echo the pledge that "we will remember them".

The last post was played brilliantly (as was reveille later) and I am sure we were all moved by the Rev Mark Inglis' sermon. There are many things wrong with this world, but there are also many for which we can be profoundly grateful.

The Tenbury Civic Garden now boasts two superbly designed and built memorial benches, flanking a cut out figure of a soldier, with head bowed. Dozens of people were present for the dedication, in appreciation of the effort in getting the installation completed, and its deeper meaning.

I would like to thank all those involved in this enterprise, and indeed the Remembrance Service itself, i.e. principally the Royal British Legion, for their selfless efforts on this day, and indeed, throughout the year. Symbolically the sun shone brilliantly almost throughout, and one can only take that as a symbol of hope for the future.

2. Tenbury Public Realm

With regard to the Tenbury Public Realm work, it is distressing to have to report little progress. In fact, of course, what progress that has been made has been in the wrong direction. The wrong design of bench has been installed in the wrong place. This will be remedied in the near future, and the appropriate black bench, more like the ones in the memorial garden, will be installed next to the Regal entrance.

The proper red tarmac will be installed at the entrance to Tesco's after the Christmas embargo and when the appropriate temperature can be anticipated. By that time, any residual problems with drainage around the Bridge Hotel will have been sorted out.

3. Economic development

Over the last couple of weeks I have had the chance to address two breakfast meetings in Sixways, one a Find It In Worcestershire, and the other a strategic business breakfast. On both occasions I was able to point to some very satisfactory figures describing the Worcestershire economy.

As a county, we are creating more businesses, growing faster and creating more jobs than in the rest of the West Midlands and indeed in England as a whole. The only factor in which we lag behind is average wage levels – good if you are an employer, not so good if you are seeking attract or keep young people living here.

In that respect, we are very keen to see increased levels of skills training and a broad range of careers, not all concentrated at the higher end of university entries. As I said to the business breakfast last week, when did you last hear a teacher recommend their less academic pupils might seek a job as a long distance lorry driver? But could our society survive without them?

Cllr Ken Pollock
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire,
GL50 2BZ
12.11.18