

## **Annual Meeting**

### **County Councillor's Report 2020/21**

Best wishes to the Parish Council for its annual meeting. Throughout the year, rather than providing text reports, I followed the procedure of keeping the clerk aware of events as they occur, in the knowledge she shares the information with the Chair and lead members as necessary.

#### **Strategic Matters**

##### **Children and Families**

I have continued as the county council's designated councillor with responsibility for Children and Families (particularly children's safety). After the difficulties of a few years ago staff have made tremendous progress, though Covid presented new challenges. Social workers visits have been carried out on a 'risk based' approach, allowing them to keep in touch. Sometimes this was through a digital link. It won't surprise PC members to find that some young people (particularly those leaving care) were entirely comfortable with this. However, for the very young it was not always appropriate, and ingenuity had to be used to see that parents were able to participate in managed meetings with children in care.

The impact of Covid is complex. but it has meant less children leaving care, and there have been national reports focusing concerns on the wellbeing of babies and increased incidences of domestic violence.

##### **Local Outbreak Board**

I have been a member of this board throughout the year. It has met weekly or two weekly depending upon the situation. The agenda has ranged from local outbreaks to surge testing, availability of PPE and arrangements for dealing with the deceased. I haven't been able to release information from meetings immediately, but it has been provided in a managed way, thus avoiding confusion.

##### **Place Partnership**

Place Partnership manages property facilities etc. for the county council and several allied authorities. I was made a member of its board during a period of transition. Most of the services have now returned to an in-house arrangement.

#### **Local matters**

##### **Education**

###### **Lyppard**

I have been an active member of the governors of Lyppard Primary School, within the constraints of the pandemic. The school continues to do excellent work under its head Phil Jackson. Essential education was provided for special groups during lock-down and other pupils remained engaged. Teachers, parents and children were excited to return to school, which was demonstrated by high attendance levels. This has fallen back somewhat but remain above the national average.

###### **New High School**

A highlight of the year was securing agreement for up to £35m funding for a new local high school for 600 students. Negotiations to acquire a local site are ongoing.

#### Environmental Issues (including highways)

There has been a big investment in footways and 'divorced' paths (those away from roads) in the year. These have including Hastings Drive and Bearwood Avenue, as well as the paths at the rear of Woodgreen Church and near Walmer Crescent.

I've also been involved with the Neighbourhood Development Committee.

#### Community

Work has been done with the local police on several matters and the roll-out of the Smartwater safety packs has continued. A picnic bench was provided on land off Dugdale Drive, and Worcester Environmental Group (WEG) helped with funding to build the organisation and carry out specific projects. A contribution has been made for the weekly support session for carers of those who suffer with dementia, and at Woodgreen Church for hardware/costs to enable live streaming of worship and other church activities. A contribution was also allocated to the Severn Arts' Festival, which did a powerful light projection display led by children and young people from Lyppard Grange Primary School. Help was given for a Care Leavers' Appeal, and Lyppard Grange Community Centre received a contribution to help with the extra costs involved in reopening the Hub in a Covid safe way. The Evergreen 'Worcestershire Project' was helped to stimulate good mental health, working closely with Lyppard Grange and Elbury Moor Medical Centres. Part funding was also allocated for a Vehicle Activated Sign in conjunction with the Local Policing and Community Ambassador's Fund, where the Police and Crime Commissioner funds the balance.