

Ward cllr report June 2021

New Role -

For those parish councillors who are unaware I have a new role as vice chair of Children and Young People's Scrutiny committee. This is largely as a result of scrutiny work which I have been involved in for the last 18 months advocating for a family harmed through incorrect safeguarding practice. Following the Keehan Judgment which rated the Directorate as failing, Hereford Council has a genuine opportunity to do things differently and we are being supported by Cath Knowles (Interim Director of Children's services) and Gladys Rhodes White. These two leaders were responsible for turning around directorates in Rotherham following the systemic failings there. They will be with us for at least two years and during that time we will need to embed systemic change – no mean task. Scrutiny is a vital part of this and I feel very motivated by the task. Alongside the regular schedule of Children and Young People's Scrutiny meetings there will be interim scrutiny of the work of the improvement board.

Road Safety Action Groups have appeared in both **Peterchurch** and **Cusop**.

Ensuring road users comply with speed restrictions through our living spaces is imperative and road 'design' can play a large role in this aim.

I am in conversation with Acting Assistant Director for Highways: Clive Hall and now have meeting date options for both groups.

There is a considerable groundswell of opinion in the Coalition regarding 20mph in residential areas but particularly around schools. I am hoping that we will be able as a Coalition to make progress in this area.

Peterchurch Primary rebuild

Just today I heard back today from Jesse Norman's caseload worker that my email lobbying for funding was to be passed to the DfE for consideration. It is easy to get over excited about this - I am keeping fingers crossed that the DfE will see fit to help with this very urgent need.

Planning Applications

The former Baptist Chapel at Preston on Wye: although I am of the same opinion as the Parish Council that the application which was passed in 2017 on this site is out of keeping with the local area, there is little that now that can be done to address the issue....this one got away before my time.

However, the planning officer has agreed to include a condition requiring the planting of mature trees to soften the roadside view of the development (with an obligation to care for the trees).

I mention this application because I think it might be a valuable exercise for Parish Councils to offer to talk their residents through the planning process. All too often there is local disquiet about a development but not enough representations on the planning portal to allow referral to planning committee. My view as ward councillor has minimal weight on its own, it is the views of the community which pack the punch.

Each community has its own planning applications to consider with different parameters for each. Suffice to say I will always do my level best to listen to all parties and in my thinking to prioritise the well-being and safety of the community and protection of our climate and biodiversity.

On the subject of which – have parish councils been given a copy of the **CEE(climate and ecological emergency) checklist** which is sent when persons apply for planning permission? If not I will request that Parish Councils are given a copy. At present the measures suggested on the list are all voluntary but consideration is being given when the Core Strategy is updated to their being included in a 'local list'. This will mean that scoring points on this list will be part of the validation process which allows plans to be submitted on the planning portal.

All part of the Building Back Better strategy!

Which leads me to my final update –

There are now two new project officers appointed to have in the in house resource (ie not going through BBLP) to progress the first stages of our HCTP the elements are:

1. **Cycling and walking infrastructure** and network flow
2. **Partnered bus strategy** between the local bus companies and Hereford Council – an initial meeting with bus companies has indicated engagement and willingness to take this forward – there will be govt aid to get this going.
3. Last but not least to begin work on the evidence base and plan for an **eastern bridge crossing** to improve resilience and traffic flow throughout the city.

There are more updates to come in relation to progress on city infrastructure – the public realm part of the City Link Road project - but these are for a later date.

Finally, **closures at local schools** have made life difficult for families. This is of national concern and reflected in our local outbreaks at Peterchurch Primary and Fairfield High School.

I am concerned about how families are coping when their 'bubble' or whole year group gets sent home. (pupils home alone/ disruption to school work and economic work for parents) I will be talking with head teachers to gain their views.

From a public health perspective Peterchurch Covid 19 resilience group have asked officers that Peterchurch be considered for a spot light enquiry into transmission pathways to inform our learning and guide public messaging. I will let Parish Councils know if this is taken up.

