

Ward Councillor Report to the Parish Council's meeting of 12th February 2019

We have a full council meeting this week to consider a draft budget for Herefordshire Council for the coming year and a revised medium term financial strategy. Council tax is proposed to rise by 2.9%, plus 2% adult care precept, to give a total of 4.9%. Herefordshire expects to finish this financial year with a breakeven outcome, and will continue its policy of living within its means, and to do so requires us to deliver a further £4m in savings in this forthcoming year. Over the two years after that, a further total of £4m in savings are required. We continue to lobby as a council for a fairer calculation of financial support from government for counties with rural, dispersed and aging populations such as our own. I hope that our pleas will eventually be heard.

Locally, I submitted a conditional request for a referral of a planning application to the planning committee and I've no update to give (184496, near old court).

Following the refusal of Herefordshire Council to my request for a public meeting in Symonds Yat West, to update the besieged local community on the ongoing closure of the C1257, I organised a press call for last Friday. In the morning I was interviewed by BBC Hereford and Worcestershire together with John Blows and another local resident, and in the afternoon we were joined by Mr & Mrs Murphy, the owners of the wall at the Brackens, Jesse Norman MP, the Ross Gazette and the Hereford Times and a larger number of residents. Rides for our MP and the press were organised down Ferrie Lane to demonstrate the narrowness and danger of the route. Jesse Norman made a public offer to try to barter a way forward and I added myself to his offer. Herefordshire Council, Balfour Beatty and Welsh Water sadly chose not to be present. I'm expecting good local press coverage and look forward to hopefully contributing to new meetings with the stakeholders to try to move this issue forward towards positive action and urgent relief for the isolation of the our long suffering local community at Symonds Yat West.

Finally, to make you aware of an open meeting of our History Society, of which I am a member, in this memorial hall, this Friday evening, 7.30pm, on "The Lost City of Trellech". It is good, Mr Chairman, to see popular local societies working so well in this thriving parish.

Cllr Paul Newman