

## **Annual report 2008/9 from County Councillor Patricia Morgan**

At this time of year, to coincide with the Council's and Parish Council's year end, I think it is useful to review the year both within the Frome Ward and the Council.

### **FROME WARD**

#### **Parish councils**

There are 17 Parish Councils in the Frome ward. Some are very small and form groups making 8 individual meeting groups. All the Parish Councils continue to work hard to improve the places in which we live. This involves reviewing planning applications, reporting the many highway defects, responding to many other local issues and replying on your behalf to many consultations and information requests from Herefordshire Council and other bodies. Several public meetings have been held this year on issues such as Post Office closures, drainage problems and planning applications. I attend as many of these meetings as I can and would like to thank the Parish Councillors for all their hard work.

#### **Community Facilities**

Despite the economic situation and the difficulties (we are told) of rural areas, the Frome Ward has seen its community facilities improve:

- Stanford Bishop Village Hall has been refurbished
- Work continues for an ambitious upgrade of Putley Village Hall
- Bishop's Frome has a new community shop in the Village Centre. Now complimented by the Post Office Outreach Service, and a planned new Post Box to go at the entrance of the car park.
- Ashperton Village Hall has a new, and much needed septic tank
- Yarkhill Village Hall has invested in some new more comfortable chairs.
- Fromes Hill is delighted to have its Pub (The Wheatsheaf) reopened after seven years!
- The Trumpet Inn has reopened with a smart new extension.

It was very disappointing to lose the two Post Offices at Bishop's Frome and Yarkhill. These closures, although the result of a large business with different priorities, should remind us how important it is to support all our local facilities, and appreciate the hard work done by many individuals to create and maintain these valuable assets.

#### **Highways**

- The hard winter weather has taken its toll on the highways and the potholes seem to be multiplying. Much work has been done on drainage ditches and road repairs, but it is fair to say much more is needed. Do keep reporting defects to your Parish Council, me, or [streets@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:streets@herefordshire.gov.uk)
- Speed Indicator Devices have been used throughout the ward to encourage more considerate driving through our villages - Frome's Hill, Bishop's Frome, Much Cowarne and Ashperton. The road markings in Ashperton are to be remarked and to include a red line by the school to dis-encourage overtaking at this busy point in the road. I continue to stress to the Police how much this issue concerns people and how it would be good to see more enforcement.

## **Waste collection**

From November kerbside recycling collection will be extended to nearly every property in Herefordshire. This new service will collect glass, cans, paper, light card and plastic bottles in a wheelie bin every fortnight. Weekly plastic sack collection will continue as now. Further details are included in the latest Herefordshire Matters. The Cabinet Member for Environment and a Senior Environment Officer will be attending the next PACT meeting in Ledbury to discuss this (see below.)

## **PACT meetings – next meeting 11<sup>th</sup> May, 7pm, Burgage Hall, Ledbury.**

These meetings are held quarterly in Ledbury and are an opportunity for the public to voice any concerns within their community that they may have. The Police, local Councillors and supporting Council Officers attend. I have been working hard with my Ledbury colleagues to make these meetings more useful. The agenda at the above meeting includes waste collection, update on Knapp Lane improvements, the Market house developments, a Police report and an open session where other items can be brought up and suggestions for further topics are welcome. Do come along.

## **HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

Herefordshire Council is committed to improving quality of services, value for money and investing in the future for the County. I have included some key points.

### **Providing value for money**

The 08/09 accounts are yet to be signed off, but it is expected that the Council has come in on Budget. The Audit commission have confirmed that the Council's financial position remains sound.

- Over the last 2 years over £7m worth of savings have been made. An additional £1.3m will come from modernising services, and cutting costs. In order to make more sustained savings in the future the Council will need to reduce the number of buildings it operates from and improve administration systems.
- The Council continues to protect and improve services. It is committed to modernising and improving adult social care services with extra funding for older people and dementia care already allocated.
- Budgets in Children's safeguarding have been increased.

### **Helping Herefordshire through credit crunch**

- The Council, via the housing associations, have introduced a Mortgage Rescue Scheme which provides grants to allow families to stay in their own homes.
- To support local building the Council continues to identify sites for affordable housing and is investing in leisure centres, libraries (Market House, Ledbury) and schools.
- The livestock market will be relocated and £1.5m invested in the Council Smallholdings Estate.

### **Working for the future**

- GCSE results have improved for the fourth year running.
- Radiotherapy for the Renton unit at Hereford hospital has been secured.
- Rotherwas Access road has opened.
- A bid has been submitted to the Regional Funding Allocations for an Outer Distributer Road for Hereford.
- Work continues to improve the status of Hereford City by redeveloping the existing cattle market site providing 1,200 new homes, new university or higher educational facilities and added retail opportunities.