

Report from County Councillor Patricia Morgan

February 2010



Winter Weather.

Hopefully the worst has passed but the snow and grit has taken its toll on the roads. I am sure I have seen furrows as opposed to potholes! The bill to repair the roads is likely to be in excess of £5m. The Council has written to the Government for some financial help, after all the Government receives £40 billion from the motorist. In the meantime Amey is working hard to repair the roads. Please keep reporting damage either to streets@herefordshire.gov.uk or 01432 260000.

Mobile speed enforcement in Ashperton.

Concerns about the speed of vehicles on our local roads and particularly through villages such as Ashperton are constantly raised with me and the Police. As a result of this and the information gained from the use of Speed Indicator Devices, The Safer Roads Partnership is having a mobile speed enforcement site at Ashperton. This will be starting at the end of February and will be ongoing for six months. I would like to assure residents that this is very much about encouraging more considerate driving through villages, as opposed to a money making scheme, and is the result of residents concerns.

The Police always say the first to get caught are the locals, so please take care!

Ashperton School.

I am pleased to report that Ashperton School received an outstanding Ofsted report just after Christmas. All the staff, governors, parents and children should be congratulated and it is great news that our local school is providing such a great start for our young people.

Broadband.

Broadband coverage or lack of it continues to be a problem in the Frome Ward. I don't think that "not spots" are acceptable in this day and age. The Council has organised a conference aimed at anyone interested in creating and finding solutions to broadband coverage. Solutions are likely to be community based. Herefordshire's Community Broadband Conference is on 18th March, 4:30 to 7pm at The Three counties Hotel, Hereford. If you would like to attend or require further information please contact Kate Amos on 01432 260638 or email: kamos@herefordshire.gov.uk. If you are unable to attend but would like details please let me know.

Council Tax and the Budget.

The one thing for certain is that money in both Local Government and Central Government is going to be short. Personally I think that this is an opportunity to make sure that the Council is really achieving the very best value for money and concentrating on priorities.

This year, of the total revenue budget of £138 million, £62.5 million went on Social Care and Children's Services. Contingency funds had to be used to offset overspends in Social Care and Winter Road maintenance. These will need to be replenished. The 0% local government pay award (next year's capped at 1%) for this year offers some relief.

The proposed Budget 2010/2011 headlines

- repay the reserves
- put an extra £1 million into road maintenance
- put an additional £500k into Social Care contingency. Social Care and Children's Services base budgets increase by £1.2 and £1 million. This reflects the reality of demands on these services which were £3.4 million over budget this year. For example, homecare costs rose by 9%; residential nursing costs by 30%; The County has 142 child protection plans in force (up from 57 in 2 years), and extra fostering placements cost nearly £450,000.
- put an additional £500k into winter maintenance reserve

At the last Council meeting it was agreed that the maximum Council Tax increase would be 2.9%. I hope that this can be reduced further, but this will be the lowest increase for many years.

Long Term Planning for Development and Transport.

The latest "Place Shaping Paper" and "Transport Vision Paper" are now available for consultation until 12th March. These will go to make up the Local Development Framework and Local Transport Plan 3. I did not create these rather strange names but basically these are long term strategic planning documents which set out the vision and objectives for the County. Once these plans are adopted they will set the guidelines for the development of new houses, businesses, open space, transport infrastructure and other facilities across the county to 2026.

These are important documents, so if this interests you, do get involved and tell the Planners what you would like to see within Pixley, and throughout the County. There is a road show in Ledbury, St Katherines Car Park 23rd Feb, 10am to 1pm.

If you would like the documents please phone 01432 260386 or email: ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk or look on the Council website.

Kind regards,

Patricia