

Bircher Ward Report June 2023

I have now been a Councillor for over a month and in that time I have been grateful to receive so many messages of support from residents across the Ward. There have been two common issues which have appeared in emails I have received over the last month – Potholes and Planning Applications which I will expand on a little bit more later in this report.

Since I last attended a Orelton Group Meeting, we have had our first full Herefordshire Council Meeting and due to the Greens, Independents For Herefordshire and the Liberal Democrats failing to find common ground the Conservative Group were able to form a minority administration against the odds. In addition, Cllr Roger Phillips was elected Chairman of the Council. The minority administration will be in place for twelve months until the next annual meeting of the Council and I am sure there will be tough times ahead given the lack of a majority.

Planning

During the election Councillors were not allowed to comment on planning applications and so there is a slight backlog of applications which require review and comment from myself. Fortunately, the local Planning Officers have furnished me with lists of these applications and the areas they relate to.

As Parish Councillors, you are also consulted on all planning applications in your Parishes and I hope we can work constructively together to ensure residents' views are well represented. With this in mind, if there are any issues or concerns I should be aware of at a local level with planning applications then please do let me know. For my part I will, wherever possible, delay submitting my comments to Herefordshire Council until after the Parish Council has had a chance to consider the matter at a meeting.

Potholes

I have received the usual emails about the state of the roads locally and I am pleased to report that serious consideration is being given to both alterations to the existing repair system and a major funding boost to help address the backlog in repairs. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to give further information at this stage but as soon as a decision is taken I will update you.

Outstanding Queries

Lengthsman Scheme: I have been in contact with the cabinet member responsible to ask that this years scheme be published asap so Parish Council's have clarity on funding etc. In future I hope it will return to previous years and be published in advance of the Parish Council setting their budget.

TROs & PROW: I have held conversations with the relevant officers and cabinet members about the need for prompt responses to Parish Council clerks and Councillors on these issues which have now been taken back in house. The system should be better but communication is key.

Verges / Hedges: As promised I reported those which were sent to me by Olena and I believe they have also been reported in the system.

AOB

As always, if you have any queries however large or small then please do contact me. I am very happy to discuss issues by email, phone or in person.

Dan Hurcomb

Bircher Ward Councillor