

February 2021 Report – Gwilym Butler

1. Connexus Housing Association are taking over two new semidetached bungalows in Cleobury Mortimer on the new Rea View estate. If anyone maybe interested please ensure you are registered on Homepoint.

2. For those that use the Cleobury to Bridgnorth road the road is going to be closed near Bridgnorth from 9.30am to 4pm from 25th February until 19th March for road repair from Cleobury side of the Half way Inn by Morr Brook bridge to Deuxhill .

3. The A4117 south of Cleobury where it meets the Bridgnorth turning will be closed overnight from the 1st March until the 6th March to undertake repairs and resurfacing and enhance safety on the junction where we have had many accidents. After having the Vehicle activated sign installed by Shropshire Council I am now pleased that further safety measures have been designed. The extension of the speed limit further out of the town should also be coming out for consultation shortly.

4. I am putting a motion to full council on Thursday 25th to instruct the Leader of The Council and Chief Executive to write to Central Government, Chancellor of Exchequer to insist that Shropshire and Rural Counties are included in the Levelling up agenda post pandemic. It is totally unfair that we on average get around £90 per head less funding from Central government than urban areas and that is just on revenue expenditure day to day things and does not include new infrastructure .If we had funding equality we would be £40 million a year better off and what impact would that have on our roads, access to services and transport to name but a few .I represent Shropshire on RSN Sparse (Rural Services Network) which is a lobbying organisation whose membership includes most rural County and District Councils in England and outside bodies related to countryside issue. The organisation now has the support of over 85 MPs and many members of the House of Lords to influence further Government policy moving forward.

5. Elections will go ahead on May 6th, with Purdah starting on March 15th .Anyone who is considering standing as a Town or Parish Council can attend a virtual meeting hosted by SALC [Shropshire Association of Local Councils] on May 12th at 6.30pm where a panel will be taking questions and giving advice , I will be attending as Portfolio holder .For further information contact Dianne.Dorrell@Shropshire.gov.uk.

Postal or proxy vote applications can be accepted up to the 20th April and you can apply on the Shropshire Council web site just search" Postal/proxy vote application"

6. After the elections the Council will start the review of Town and Parish Council Boundaries. It will start with a timetable and terms of reference on how it will be undertaken and the consultations times etc and what is involved. SALC is working in partnership with us on the process. Community Governance will be more important than ever post pandemic and boundaries have not been reviewed since 1894. We have many councils across the county that cannot recruit, some areas without Councils, some with just Parish Meetings. The heart of the process in my opinion will be outcomes for residents and value for money. Any Councils who wish to look at changes straight away should contact Graham.White@Shropshire.gov.uk. Any changes would come into effect at the Local Elections due in May 2025, 4 years away.

7. Place plan officers are still currently working on distributing Covid relief and grants to businesses across Shropshire. However plans are underway on how we review the Place Plans and evolve them for the Post Pandemic world taking into account boundary reviews, local plan, economic strategy,

Library review, to name but a few. I would hope they will be back to their day job by June if not before.

8. Full Council on the 25th will be reviewing the move from Shire Hall as headquarters for the council to a site centrally located in Shrewsbury as part of the Pride Hill Riverside re development under the Big Town Plan. This is a once in a lifetime plan for Shrewsbury and should capitalise on its heritage and make it fit for the 21st century and bring a lot of investment into the county.

9. In my current portfolio I cover Air Quality. I am pleased to report that Shropshire has some of the best Air Quality in the country and we are rated 7th nationally. We currently only have two hot spots in the county one at Shrewsbury by the station and riverside towards Frankwell and one in Bridgnorth on the hill as you turn into Whitburn St. These are being monitored regularly and solutions are being considered.