

October Report 2022

1. A week in Politics. In the week commencing 5th September Boris Johnson resigned as Prime minister and Liz Truss was appointed Prime minister by our late queen who tragically died two days later and we had a new King. The Country, Commonwealth and World were in mourning. The Council instigated operation London Bridge (A co-ordinated Country wide protocol and guidance to follow on death of a monarch) to deal with the circumstance of the Queens death and the transfer to the new King Charles 3rd. This was undertaken by our Legal and Democratic services who have delivered much protocol and help organise the Proclamation and Books of condolences across the county. God Bless our late Queen, long live the King.

2. I am pleased to report that energy wise the Council is in a capped energy price until 23/24. The council is a leading partner in an organisation called West Mercia Energy which is a company run in Partnership with Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Telford and Wrekin Councils. The organisation acts as a broker to supply energy both Electricity and Gas to many Local Government bodies such as, Schools, Police, and NHS organisations and gives a dividend back to the Council. This has effectively saved the Council a further pressure of £7 million if it were not capped.

3. We are aware of the Governments move to cap household fuel bills at an average circa £2500. The details to date have been circulated around those on mains Gas and Electricity. We are aware that no details have been circulated although agreed in respect of support for those properties that have no mains gas and rely on other sources of heating such as Oil, LPG and Solid fuels. We are aware this affects most of our Council Ward and as soon as details are available we will circulate.

4. Please do remember we have a Council tax support grant for those suffering financial hardship. This is for financial help with not just your Council tax but also utilities and day to day living costs. Please tell your friends and neighbours and lets ensure we look out for everyone this winter. More details can be found on www.shropshire.gov.uk or telephone the help desk on 03456789000 and ask for information on Council Tax support.

5. Warm Hubs - the Council has encouraged its libraries to take on the role of a 'warm hub'. Cleobury's library (at Cleobury Country next to Lacon Childe school) is open Monday-Friday 10.00-17.00 and on Saturdays 10.00-noon. Furthermore 'warm hubs' have been established at the Parish Hall in Cleobury on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month (and a hot lunch at £3 can be pre booked 01299 271713); the Community Hub is also a 'warm hub' (offering a free soup lunch on Mondays) and is open 9.30-18.30 Mondays, 9.30-17.30 Tuesdays and 9.30-17.30 Fridays; St Mary's church is open 10.00-16.00 every day and the heating will be on. We also understand that St John's at Doddington is planning to act as a 'warm hub'. Please post this information on your Parish FB pages. Also as the 'warms hubs' are currently based primarily in Cleobury town, Parish Councils may wish to consider arranging a 'warm hub' for their parishioners. Notwithstanding, the Government assistance that is starting to come through - the increase in utility prices is still going to hurt.

6. Restoring Shropshire Verges Project (RSVP) - this project is a 'grass roots' attempt to improve the bio diversity of our green spaces ie verges and other areas that are trimmed back by the Council several times each summer. The belief is that through better management of these areas it is possible to assist our insect life and help our pollinators. My understanding is that the Council is willing to support but we believe probably needs direction from local communities. After all by restoring traditional wild flowers and reducing the number of cuts not only will summer look prettier - but tax payers money can be saved! Parish Councils could identify certain re plant areas and obtain advice on how to seed them and then how to work with the Council to ensure that they are only cut once the plants have seeded - and then properly managed to encourage more wild flower growth. Perhaps this is something that a volunteer group working alongside the lengthsman could take on. Contact: Janet Cobb of RSVP Janet@jan-net.co.uk. Please copy Simon who has agreed to help liaise with the Council's Highways team.

Gwilym.Butler@shropshire.gov.uk 07801099015

Simon.R.Harris@Shropshire.gov.uk 07833094145