

December Report 2023

Healthy People : Healthy Economy : Healthy Environment : Healthy Organisation

1. Over the next 18 months there will be at least three elections, Police and Crime Commissioner in May24, a General Election to be announced, and Shropshire Council Elections in May 25. You need to ensure you are registered to vote and can also apply for a postal vote. To do this go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote .
2. Storm Barbet has delivered a serious amount of damage in our Ward. We so far have properties registered in the parishes of Kinlet, Cleobury, Milson, and Doddington being affected. The Council has applied for funding from the government to help householders alleviate the issues they have; with hopefully grants and Council tax help. Please let us know if you have been affected.
3. A new way of raising funds for community groups has been launched by the Council. If you are part of a voluntary organisation looking for funding for the wider good of the community please take a look at [Crowdfund Shropshire](#) on your search engine for the link to the fund; which currently has £150,000 to allocate up to 2025, which has to be match funded and meet specific requirements for local projects .
4. Gwilym has now taken on the portfolio for communities overseeing Town and Parish Councils and the VCSA . This will also include the outcome of any changes in the recent Unitary boundary review and any future town and parish council changes. This is an addition to his existing portfolio of Finance and Corporate Resources.
5. At November’s Audit Committee (Simon sits on this Committee) the Council’s external auditors advised that they will be issuing ‘unqualified’ audit opinions for the years ending 2021, 2022 and 2023. The accounts will hopefully all be closed in February 2024. It is disappointing that the accounts for 2021 and 2022 are clearly delayed, and this has been discussed with Grant Thornton the external auditor – though to be fair the delays are not their fault. At least the work of the external auditor is now back on track.
6. A review of the Council’s Treasury strategy has shown that the Council is not over borrowed. This is important when considering the difficulties that Woking Council has faced due to high levels of borrowing. Borrowing is usually project specific and it would appear that there is scope to borrow more – however, prudential financial management would not support further borrowing at this stage.
7. A survey is underway for those of your constituents that make use of the Council’s SEND support services [Views sought on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) the Information Advice and Support Service \(IASS\) - Shropshire Council Newsroom](#) If you now of people in your Town and Parishes that use these services the Council would like their feedback.

8. Citizens Advice remains an important part of Shropshire's support network. In 2022/23 they assisted over 10k people with over 30k unique queries – which led to income of £7m being accessed. Their free advice line is 08082787894.

CLlrs Gwilym Butler and Simon Harris

Cleobury Mortimer Division

5 December 2023