

## **Unitary Councillor's January 2026 Report**

Dear Parish Councillors

I have been made aware that my monthly report is not as full as the previous Councillor's report. I am learning as I go. I am trying to attend as many PC meetings as I can. When I can't attend, I will endeavour to send a report to you prior to the meeting. Some of these meetings occur on the same night. I also have other responsibilities, appointments, and meetings to attend. I have 6 Parish Council meeting to attend each month. I spend considerable time acknowledging emails, attending Teams meetings, meeting people onsite, regarding planning matters, or trying to get things moving on road repairs etc., and I also run my own demanding farming business.

I include the other parish councils' matters for information, as they are in close proximity and could impact the neighboring parishes.

My wife Pamela, Cllr. For Cleobury Mortimer, Coreley, Neen Sollars, Milson and Boraston, are supporting each other to make best use of our time and skills and do our utmost to deliver a good service.

If there is a particular item where you wish me to be present, please let me know, and I will do my best to attend.

### **Stottesdon**

Jason Davis has said that they will be putting a depth gauge at the ford at Prescott. I have not heard anything from him so far.

### **Kinlet**

Two items I had reported myself have now been sorted. The first was a report of vandals and having fires and people going around on electric bikes, causing a nuisance at Hawksbatch wood. This I reported to the Forestry Commission which they have investigated and also notified the police who are going to keep an eye on it.

The second was a suspicious rubbish bag being dumped. This had been reported on Fix my street and unfortunately no action was taken. I chased this up with Shropshire County Council and asked why it had not been collected? I was told that there are only two employees now carrying out this work, instead of five. I am happy to report this has now been collected.

### **Neen Savage**

I am still waiting to hear from Andy Keyland regarding when the work will be carried out at the ford crossing at Neen Savage. I believe they have the depth gauges and signs which hopefully they will be putting up as soon as possible.

### **Hopton Wafers**

I have had notification about the proposed planning for three "self builds", which wasn't mentioned on the planning application that was submitted. I have given my opinion that I do not support this application because of the access onto an already very busy main road.

### **Wheathill**

Please accept my apologies as I will not be able to attend the next parish meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> January as I have a hospital appointment. I am very happy that things have been sorted and welcome back the new Chair-person Jayne, also the new Councillor.

### **Farlow**

I have received a message that the large pothole by the old gate hangs well has been filled at long last after being reported by myself and others several times.

### **Cleobury Leisure Centre**

I am happy to report that the total funds raised so far is £34,000. I wish to thank everyone and the local parish councils for their very generous donations. It really is a very much needed facility. Pamela has also managed to raise a generous £5000 from the Woodward Trust after meeting them and submitting an application. She is awaiting a reply from a couple of other charities. Fingers crossed.

### **Shropshire County Council**

The council are carrying out a public consultation to understand the views of residents regarding changes to service provision and council tax for the coming year. The financial position the council is in means that changes will have to be made which will result in council tax raises and service cuts. We are asking all residents to please go onto the Shropshire Council Website and complete the survey.

I attended the full council meeting at the Guildhall in Shrewsbury in December. All items that were brought up were approved i.e. payrise for council staff, Audit report – improvement plan approved, people plan approved, pay award for senior officers approved and appointment of interim chief executive Tanya.

There was much discussion about the future of the Shirehall Civic building and site. The report on the options was only sent to councillors less than 24 hours before they expected the decision to be made. This caused a lot of upset amongst members. This decision is historic and if demolition happens it will mean the loss of the civic heart of Shropshire forever because we cannot justify spending more money on a new centre. All opposition parties came together to force an amendment to set up a task and finish group to review the evidence. It's vital that this historic and strategic decision is made in an open and transparent way, which isn't the case so far, to ensure the decision is seen as legitimate by the people of Shropshire.

Stopping the delivery of the Schools Library Service was approved at Cabinet on 3rd December. This year they expect to subsidise this service between £79,000 and £90,000 and based on previous years, that figure is expected to increase. They are seeking expressions of interest from organisations who may wish to take on the delivery of this service and they will hopefully be able to provide an update in February. It is also worth noting that, in September, the Department for Education announced a government commitment to fund libraries in all state primary schools in England by the end of this parliament. If no one was to come forward to run the SLA, they plan to give the books to help our schools start their own libraries.

A decision was made at informal Cabinet that certain non-statutory grants would be discontinued. Shropshire Partners in Care last year were awarded (£81,000), Sight and Hearing Loss Support (£54,000) and Stroke Association (£44,000).

By pressing ahead with these decisions, it could save around £660,000 a year.

I wish you all a Happy New Year!

David