

Charlton Cllr ELIZABETH EYRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT September 2023

In the Parish, there have been concerns re River Avon and other environmental issues so a bit of a focus on the environmental work of WCC. I canoed on Sunday, Fladbury to Pershore, part of a group taking samples and was aware of sewage at two points. I am supporting Louise Bugg, who leads with others on the Avonvale River Action Group. There are Government plans to reduce sewage discharges over time but in my view the time frame needs to shorten.

If you need more information re any areas below please contact me.

Environment Improvement Plan: producing an Environment Improvement Plan which will be a clear overarching framework and vision for the Environment, bringing together several separate policies such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan. The Plan will be considered by the Member Advisory Group (MAG) and Cabinet before consultation.

Tree Planting: our Corporate Plan pledges to plant 150,000 trees. To date, 50,000 trees have been planted, at New and Ashmores Farms, Norton, Evesham, and at Netherton Lane, Bewdley. Further sites at Upton Snodsbury and Dodderhill, near Droitwich, winter 2023/24 are currently being designed and Forestry Commission grant schemes have now been applied to fund the planting. A further site will be announced very soon.

Member Advisory Group: A cross-party group has been set up to advise the Cabinet Member for Environment on carbon reduction and water quality (arising from a Council motion).

Water Quality: Severn Trent Water outflows are known but the majority of pollutants come from industry and agriculture. We are seeking more knowledge on this to work with our partners and influence effective action as County Council has no direct powers it can exercise in this area. We have met with Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency and had positive conversations regarding their approach. Monitoring data is also being obtained to ensure that we have a framework to monitor progress and highlight issues.

Flooding: four main Environment Agency schemes are being supported

- Beales Corner, Bewdley
- Tenbury Wells
- Severn Stoke
- Toronto Close, Worcester

Local Nature Partnership: a partnership made up of volunteers and agencies to improve Worcestershire's green and natural landscape. One such project was the Diglis Fish Pass which is a part of the Unlocking the Severn project funded by Heritage Lottery and EU LIFE. 158 miles of the river to be restored, improving the habitats for biodiversity and in particular for the twaite shad. At Diglis in Worcester, a fish pass was constructed and opened in 2021, with the full river becoming open to the twaite shad again in 2022, including a public viewing area. Other key areas of focus for the Local Nature Partnership in the coming months are:

- Net zero initiatives
- Biodiversity and nature recovery including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Water quality & flood prevention

Local Nature Recovery strategy: A requirement of the Environment Act 2021 is for nature recovery and WCC has been appointed as the Responsible Authority for Worcestershire to work with partners and designated Supporting Authorities in developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy; this will become a statutory spatial plan which sets out the County's biodiversity priorities and objectives for the restoring our natural environment. We are proposing to have an Issues and Options early version of the plan for Cabinet consideration in late 2023, setting out challenges for nature recovery and proposed actions to address them. Public consultation will follow on this document before the full strategy is written in 2024.

Green Infrastructure: On behalf of the county's Green Infrastructure (GI) Partnership, the County Council has consulted on an updated county GI Strategy. This document showcases Worcestershire's outstanding environmental assets, describes the need for GI in the county, and sets a vision

for GI delivery. It highlights how this can be achieved through housing, employment, infrastructure development, and land management. A consultation response document and the final strategy will be published later this summer.

Net Zero Business Support: In June of this year, previously WCC-led, European-funded Business Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Opportunities Programmes came to an end. Details of a new energy efficiency and net zero business support programme for Worcestershire Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will be announced soon. Since 2016 these programmes have helped more than a thousand local SMEs review their energy use, reduce ca. 14,000 tonnes of carbon emissions, install ca. 4MWp renewable energy systems, and develop new products, processes, and services to help others go green. Over £5m in grants have been awarded to more than 530 businesses for measures such as smart LED lighting, solar PV, energy-efficient plant and heating and cooling systems, as well as for the development of new products such as a carbon-negative heat battery, portable wind turbine, conversion kit for low/zero carbon fuels and remote sensing methane detection. Energy advice saving an average 30% reduction in energy use has also been given. For more information on the new net zero business support programme email netzero@worcestershire.gov.uk

National Energy Efficiency Award: WCC has been shortlisted for a National Energy Efficiency Award. The National Energy Efficiency Awards recognise outstanding achievements in the energy industry and celebrate successes and best practices. We've been shortlisted in the 'National Council/Local Authority of the Year category. We're delighted to be recognised for our commitment to sustainability. Our efforts include our support for businesses (mentioned above) as well as initiatives implemented to tackle fuel poverty, support public sector organisations and the community to improve energy efficiency, as well as improvements made to our estate.

Solar Together: Through Worcestershire County Council and with the support of Worcestershire District Councils, Worcestershire residents were allowed to take part in Solar Together, a scheme run by iChoosr offering group buying of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage. Interested residents received their quotes in March and April and nearly 1,000 accepted their quotes to go through to site survey. As of last month, 85 installations and 414 surveys were completed. It is anticipated installations will be finished by November.

Waste: We seek to develop and improve our circular flow. As we look to implement the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, we have set up a Waste Task & Finish group with District portfolio/cabinet members supporting a 'One Worcestershire' approach. We are using the important #Food Savvy campaign to try and help educate the importance of minimising food waste.

Boundary Change for the Division: A new pattern of divisions is being developed for Worcestershire County Council. The Local Government Boundary Commission has decided that the number of councillors in Worcestershire should be 57, the same as now. The Broadway Division, is 14% light in electors, no account is taken of the size of the territory or the large retail and hospitality demands of Broadway. To even up the number of residents, the suggestion is to increase the Broadway division by adding in the Littletons. Originally the plan cut through Sedgeberrow leaving half in the Broadway Division and half in another Division. The Commission has a website where people can give their views: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/worcestershire or email reviews@lgbce.org.uk

Minerals Plan - the refusal at Lea Castle, Wyre Forest, and appeal seems to be directing interest to an Upton expansion.

Worcestershire County Council is delaying the development of its Mineral Site Allocations Development Plan Document due to uncertainties about changes to national policy and legislation.

Changes to the legislative requirements for developing planning policy documents which are proposed through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, progressing through Parliament are has also taken longer than anticipated and has not yet received Royal Assent. Recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework need to be considered, and further changes to national policy are anticipated in order to implement the proposals in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

A public consultation on the "Preferred Options" draft of the Mineral Site Allocations Development Plan Document had been due to take place in Autumn 2023. The Council has decided to delay this consultation until there is clarity about legislative and policy changes to the plan-making system. The timescales and requirements for preparing plans under the existing planning system or transitioning to the revised system are not yet clear, and it is not

possible to produce a meaningful update to the [Mineral and Waste Local Development Scheme](#) at this stage.

Local Charlton Matters

Campaign - Time to cut back your foliage! Please spread the message around the village – The overhanging foliage on public roads and pavements is the responsibility of the riparian owner. Now that the bird nesting season has finished, WCC is asking that residents cut back any overgrown foliage to help stop your bushes, hedges, and trees growing over our public roads and pavements. Overgrown shrubbery can impact on the visibility of junctions, signs, and streetlights and impact accessibility, so it would be a huge help if residents could grab your loppers in the coming weekends and give their greenery a good trim back. If not Parish Council sends a letter, if not acted on WCC does the job and bills the resident. Better if residents are pre-warned. Councillors I am sure can understand the impact on mothers with pushchairs, buggies, and safety if not done.

Enquiry 259 Tree root problem Strand/ Green excl Ryden Lane, work did not happen in October 2022. On the very difficult list, trees TPO, BB to contact G Poole. **not getting good answers – cut tree roots will die – patchy to infill the ripples**

Enquiry 262 - **Build up under the bridge** not at a safety issue level at present, so no works required, monitoring through routine inspections.

Openreach Broadband vouchers – completion end of Summer?

Enquiry 773 **Charlton Cemetery Bridge to Jubilee Bridge - road cracking, barriers. DEC 2021** - still on the list for the edge of carriageway repairs. WCC only completes this type of repair during certain times of the year. We are also now looking into land ownership of the adjacent verge as this is the main cause. **Parts not registered getting engineer to look at our side**

Enquiry 776 **Yew Tree Cottage on the Green to Cemetery** I added £ 6,000 from my divisional fund work is programmed (Money from B4084 footway work Hampton to Brook Lane about 2700 metres. reassigned. Canceled request Enquiry 776 took precedence **Feb 19-23rd 2023^d**

Enquiry 777/1163 **March 2022 The Bight** Water leaking on the road. Wychavon investigated, a French drain installed by private landowner cant be pursued by WDC but can be by WCC under the Highways Act. BB traced the land registry

and wrote to the owners of the land requesting they take action to prevent water from draining onto the highway. Four plans showing The Bight through each epoch have been checked. 1846 – 1901 shows four wells. 1888 – 1915 and 1900 – 1949 both show seven wells. No springs are denoted and no drainage channels or pond. Request to our Drainage Team for any works that would stop water draining onto the highway. BB chasing to see if jetting has been done. If not a date.

BB getting update from Mark Morris WDC

(U44206 Boston Lane, Charlton) (Temporary Closure) Order 2023 - to close that part of U44206 Boston Lane from its junction with B4084 - Pershore Road for a distance of 1040 metres in a northerly direction.

Anticipated duration: 3 days (24 hours). Commencing: 30 October 2023

Reason: Short pipe repair by Severn Trent Water.

Exemptions: to permit access to any land or premises fronting the highway affected where there is no other form of access; and to allow the works to be undertaken.

Alternative route: U44206 Yessell Lane, U44206 Canada Bank, U44206 The Strand, C2022 Church Leys, C2022 Main Street, C2022 Brook Lane, B4084 Main Road, B4084 Pershore Road and vice versa. Maximum duration: 18 months.