

A Happy and Healthy New Year to you all and thanks for the work you do for your community.

The New Year did not start as well as it might have, even today there are challenges from the Severn at Bewdley and Worcester. We are cleaning up several roads in the north of the County, As of this morning there seems to have been a good number of closures including Brook Lane, Jubilee Bridge and Eckington. Pershore Bridge and Evesham Bridge have as of 7.30 am opened. Weather conditions or other urgent works may cause the highway works programme to change. Resources are in some cases being re-deployed as we move into the recovery phase following storm Henk.

I remind you that you can use [one.network](#) to see all live, historic and upcoming roadworks and traffic restrictions including works undertaken by utility companies or housing developers. There is also a function within the [one.network](#) mapping system that allows you to set up alerts that will email you directly with all planned roadworks and traffic restrictions in any specific area either daily, weekly or monthly. Below is a link, which you can add to Google, to a short video tutorial on how you can set up these [one. network](#) alerts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKzT1BEhAD8>

Budget 24-25. The budget this year is again a challenge the Local Government Provisional Settlement on the 18th of December gave us an extra £21 million (about £1.6 million less than what was already expected and announced the previous year) which leads us to a draft Budget for Cabinet tomorrow, 10th January. In summary. Any extra funding is welcomed but the recently announced rises in the National Living Wage and the major challenges with Children’s Social Care placements and Home to School Travel continue.

The Council is significantly overspending in year because of demand & cost pressures around Childrens Social Care placements, Home to School Travel and Adult Social Care. Many other County and Unitary authorities across the Country are reporting these demand-led pressures in statutory services and so we have been working with similar Councils through the County Councils Network to highlight these financial challenges to Government and suggest ways in which they could be addressed by policy changes \ reform, extra funding, or a combination. These in-year pressures show no sign of abating and therefore to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 we must address this “structural deficit” in our budget as well as make reasonable provisions for growth in demand & cost during the next financial year. The Government is actively encouraging Councils to use reserves, and we are

doing so, but they can only be used once, and the ongoing financial challenge means we must act.

Our current package of £25 million of proposals and the recommendation to increase Council Tax by 2.99% plus an additional 2% for Adult Services¹ will generate a further £19 million which still leaves us with a £20 million gap which we will continue to work on between the draft and final budget in February. We will seek to do this by challenging assumptions around growth, demand and cost wherever possible and considering the further use of some reserves. We will also be seeking to explore further proposals to reform the organisation in a way that does not affect the public, enhance productivity, and review our property needs. The important task is for the Council to remain financially sustainable and continue to protect the most vulnerable people in society as well as strive to improve the economy, environment, highways, and infrastructure of the County that you rightly expect.

VAS data I have because of the PCC and a chief officer appearance at Full Council, on 11th January, asked how the police use the VAS data that parishes collect. And I have been advised that there are 69 areas where community speed watch is being carried out in Worcestershire and the police plan further sites in the future so do contact for an assessment if you have an area that would benefit from community speed watch.

The Environment Act 2021 resulted in significant new responsibilities for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Local Nature Recovery Strategies must agree on priorities for nature recovery, councils must prepare a local habitat map identifying the most valuable existing areas for nature (be aware for your neighbourhood plans). This map will identify specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature. Watch out for the important issues and options for consultation.

Local Charlton Matters

Noted: your comments re Worcestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Noted re Parish Bio-Diversity action plans.

- Minimise road closures, ie use traffic lights etc wherever possible – **they do**
- When road closures are required the different teams from utility companies need to be lined up to turn up at the point in time at which the previous team – **highly unlikely**
- utility companies to use the one.network system in a timely way – **they do but things change**

¹ I understand Birmingham's increase may be 10% with half the staff reduced

- Road signage around roadworks needs to be accurate and with advanced notification notices – **needs to improve**

Enquiry 259 Tree root problem Strand/ Green excl Ryden Lane, work to go ahead, the subcontractor will be on-site in about 6 weeks to carry out some trenching and surfacing works This will involve removal of the kerbs and surrounding tarmac to assess the tree roots. There will be a tree surgeon on-site. We may need to raise the level of the footway to level and allow for the roots. Some small areas of the carriageway will be cut out and patched. The final details are still to be worked out so there may be variations to this update in the future. We have spoken with the occupier of the house with the wall. We will be keeping him informed of the works and dates. **Half Term in Feb**

Enquiry 262 - **Build up silt under the bridge is – need to discuss with BB**

Enquiry 773 **Charlton Cemetery Bridge to Jubilee Bridge - road cracking, barriers. DEC 2021** - still on the list for the edge of carriageway repairs. looking into land ownership of the adjacent verge as this is the main cause. Parts are not registered getting an engineer to look at our side. Asked for clarity as to when.

Enquiry 776 **Yew Tree Cottage on the Green to Cemetery** I added £ 6,000 from my divisional fund work is programmed (**Feb 19-23rd 2024**)

Enquiry 777/1163 **March 2022 The Bight** Water leaking on the road. Wychavon investigated; BB chased to see if jetting had been done. If not a date.

BB getting an update from Mark Morris WDC – Rogers sending me pictures

VAS sign Canada Bank Solar SWARCO, a minimum diameter 89mm just to the South of Swiss Cottage – Slow road markings, larger pole FOC, Battery elsewhere

Asset of community value send details of Sedgeberrow contact to Roger

Lengthman Budget can this be increased by £500 to cover ROW – discussing a parish choice – no plans at the moment, the team is still working as before – more requests.