

Little Birch Parish council

Ward member report, 3rd July 2015

Apologies first of all for my absence from the meeting. I'm conscious of the fact that Little Birch is the one PC meeting I have not attended & will make every effort to attend the meeting in September.

Core strategy & Neighbourhood development plan

We are awaiting the planning inspector's report which will be available by mid-July. Should the report be favourable, the Core Strategy then requires approval at cabinet for recommendation to Full Council.

At the time of writing we anticipate a full Council meeting to debate this before the end of July. This may change!

As soon as the Core Strategy is passed at full council it becomes the planning document for all applications to be judged against in tandem with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It also paves the way for adopting the Neighbourhood plans when they are accepted by local communities at local referendum.

Having a neighbourhood development plan is the best way for parishes to influence where new homes are to be built. Now that there is some certainty it might well be worth the parish council re-considering its position on not having a NDP – the alternatives include HCC making the decisions on where new housing development in Little Birch should go.

I met with Sam Banks (HCC neighbourhood development team leader) on 22.06 and the file she has on Little Birch is shown below. Her estimation is that the parish will need to build approx. 13 homes over the next 15 years to satisfy the targets.

If you need help or examples of other NDPs then please just ask, I have shared copies of the almost complete Welsh Newton parish plan with other parishes which has been helpful to them.

Little Birch	No NA designated	Possible joint plan with Much Birch?
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Fastershire (taken from their web site)

Work has been going well across sector 11 (Little Birch, Much Birch) and we're on track to hit our target of making fibre broadband available to 20,000 homes and businesses across Herefordshire by the end of the summer. We now expect the majority of work to finish by December 2015. Further work to ensure all premises have the capability to access faster broadband with a minimum of 2Mbps is expected to be completed by December 2016

Herefordshire Council Budget Outturn 2014/15

The 2014/15 revenue budget, which included savings of £15millions, underspent by £639k in the year.

Herefordshire Council 2016 – 2020 Budget Planning

Council approved the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in February 2015. This will be updated over the coming months, based on revised grant assumptions and savings plans, and extended to cover the period 2016/17 to 2019/20.

The overall savings requirement in the period 2015/16 to 2019/20 is £42millions. This assumes the removal of central government formula grant funding from 2019/20 with the council becoming self sufficient from business rates; council tax and specific grant allocations from that date.

Community first responder scheme

I attended a presentation recently given by the West Midlands ambulance service and they are keen to push the community first responder scheme, particularly in rural areas such as ours.

Community First Responder Schemes are teams of volunteers who are trained by the Ambulance Service to a nationally recognised level and provide life saving treatment to people in their local communities. Community First Responders are always backed up with the nearest available emergency ambulance.

Thorough training is given and having someone trained in first aid on the scene of an accident within a couple of minutes might make a crucial difference. I am going to try and organise some training locally and will be pushing this scheme with each of the parish councils on my ward. (This might be something that could be incorporated into the proposed new community shop on the A49)

Committees

I am representing you on the following HCC committees (get in touch if you have any particular thoughts or concerns):

Overview & scrutiny (including sub-committee examining the future of tenant farms owned by HCC)

Health overview

Audit & governance

Herefordshire sport committee

(I also hold a weekly session at John Kyrle High school in Ross encouraging students to consider starting a business as a serious career option)

Parish Councillor Training

There is a parish councillor training session on 9th July that will be of particular interest to new councillors.

David Harlow 03.07.2015