**Little Birch Parish council**

Ward member report, November 2015

**RA1 v RA2**

Following the last Little Birch PC meeting I have spoken with the planning department with regard to the classification of Little Birch, it appears that changes to classification can not be made at this stage but this should not have an effect on planning in the parish. Please see note below from the planning officer

... The relevant part of the Core Strategy is pages 68-75. You’ll note the only further policy requirement of settlements listed under HMA(para 4.20) as opposed to those listed under HMAs (para 4.21) which I can see is at bullet point 1 of Policy RA2, which states:

*In relation to smaller settlements identified in fig 4.21 proposals will be expected to demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement and/or they result in development that contributes to or is essential to the social well-being of the settlement concerned;*

Quite honestly, I can’t see how this makes a real difference. Surely if I’m doing my job properly, all development should be appropriate for its context? Therefore and in actuality, the implications of being listed as a main settlement (para 4.20) as opposed to a smaller settlement (para 4.21) relatively minor in my view.

**Core strategy**

You will have heard that the core strategy was adopted on 16.10.15, it is now more important that ever for parishes to write their own neighbourhood plans. Some parishes may wish to develop a joint plan with a neighbouring parish (it was mentioned that Little & Much Birch could link up for this purpose). Not having a plan means losing influence over where the housing growth in your area will take place.

**Castle Inn**

I contacted Scott Lowe who is an enforcement officer at HCC and have forwarded his comments to the Parish council following an enquiry about a change of use at the castle Inn

**Kings thorn bus stop**

I chased the councillor for Much Dewchurch about the bus stop issue, see comment below in response:

‘the survey has confirmed that there is asbestos on site of the bus stop, therefore there will be a meeting that BBLP will contact us both about in due course’

**County news…**

**High Town fire damaged building**

Herefordshire Council met with representatives of the owners of the fire damaged buildings in High Town, Hereford on Thursday 1 October and is encouraged by their willingness to facilitate a sale to enable the site to be redeveloped.

The council can confirm that Hereford based architect Hook Mason Ltd has now been instructed to seek pre-application advice from the council’s planning service to obtain a more marketable development with the aim of selling the property and bringing the buildings back into use as soon as possible.

**Hereford Library**

Herefordshire Council is reviewing its position following the unexpected discovery of asbestos at Hereford Library.

As traces of asbestos have been found at the venue, it is in the best safety interest to remove it completely and that work will start later this year. As yet there is no firm date as to when those works will be completed.

There has been a considerable increase in the use of Belmont Library to compensate for the closure of Hereford Library, and a drop-off point is available at the Shire Hall. In addition we plan to open a temporary provision at Hereford Town Hall as soon as we can.  Options for temporary relocating the Museum and Arts Gallery are being explored.