

Report for August 2024

Cllr. Elissa Swinglehurst, representing the lovely parishes of Llangarron, Bridstow, Sellack, Peterstow, Marstow, Welsh Newton and Llanrothal.

It has been an old fashioned summer where you just can't rely on the sun. On the upside it has been good for the river and we have seen fewer high temperatures and less algae than in previous years. Hopefully it will give the ranunculus some time to recover! I have attended a couple of kick sampling demonstrations on the Monnow and the Wye and can report that on both occasions the invertebrate populations looked good.

I have also been the leader of the council for a few weeks which has been a good experience and given me a chance to sit in the swivel chair.

Roads and parishes

You might have noticed some news on social media as the council started to get some of the black stuff on to the roads. This does result in disruption but it is a necessary thing. We hope to do even more next year. The current works are part of an 8 million pound capital budget spend which was part of the 2024/25 budget and follow the commitment given by the administration group of the council in last year's local elections to spend more on our highways. There will continue to be many surfacing and dressings across the county so look out for diversions.

We have also invested in grants for drainage and lengthsman so some of the work can be done locally commissioned by the parish councils. In my view this is something that saves both money and time, is locally responsive and valued by local people. If there is a vacancy please consider getting involved with your local parish council- they are delivering for your community.

Broadband

Openreach are working in the area (Llangrove/Welsh Newton) and upgrading the broadband. I am still on slow band...no band..band on the run but I am optimistic that we are about to launch into the world of super fast.

A40 Rockfall

This is likely to be an ongoing saga for some time. I have had a few meetings with National Highways and made some suggestions about things they might consider for the social value element of the work. I have asked them to look into the discharge of road debris into the Wye and the installation of a bus stand opposite Everstone Rise. If you have any projects that apply to the national highway network (A40/A49) please let me know and I'll see if I can get them on the list!

h.Art



The long established h.Art week exhibition of local artists work begins on 7th Sept till 15th Sept. It gives everyone the opportunity to see the work of individual artists in their homes or local locations against the background of the Herefordshire`s beautiful landscape.

Herefordshire exams results

last month continue to be at and above the national average. The A level success pass rate was 97.1% particularly helped by Hereford Six Form, which continues its outstanding achievement of being one of the most successful non selection six forms in England for well over the past 20 years. At GCSE 68.5% of our young people achieved grade 4 or above. Performance in science was strong with Herefordshire out performing nationally in physics, biology and chemistry.

Planning

Some important news from the new government on increasing house building. The Government expects Herefordshire to increase its house building by 80% from a projected 773 per year over the next 20 years to 1,375.

Herefordshire currently has 82,800 homes (of which 27,000 are in Hereford City) and will have to build an extra 27,500 over the next 20 years to meet the Government`s new mandatory target.

The initial impact this announcement is on our emerging Core Strategy which will have to go back through the Reg 18 consultation once we have found the extra deliverable sites that are required. This is bound to impact on the timetable and require more consultation on where and what these extra homes should go and be. We will be making the case for the urgent need to invest in infrastructure in order to be able to deliver the housing that is being required. This includes doctors, dentists, school places and roads.

Show me the money.

We had been promised over 200m for the roads by the last government (over 100m from the cancelled HS2 project, over 100m for investment in road surfacing) but this is being reconsidered and we are waiting to see the outcome. Likewise the 35m that was promised for the River Wye catchment...despite repeated requests for some update from DEFRA we have had no news about this money or the plan for the Wye. I live in hope.

A load of Rubbish



This week sees the start of the new waste collection contract which was re-awarded to the existing contractors. There is no change to collections so please continue to put out your bins out as normal. There will be a roll out of some new collection vehicles including two electric ones for the City.

We intend to add food waste and green waste collection in the fullness of time as the contract is designed to be flexible and future proofed.

Fame at last!



I was very pleased to be able to introduce Kevin McCloud who had kindly agreed to cut the ribbon at the official opening of the Luston wetland. We were lucky with the weather and I have to say that I was very impressed by how mature and beautiful the wetland now looks. The last time I saw it there was just a lot of mud, holes, more mud but now it is a fantastic habitat teeming with life. Not only that, it is also taking phosphate and nitrate from the water and exceeding expectations as to performance.

Can't wait to get the next one underway.

And finally....I recently had occasion to look back at the decision to go from sodium to LED lights. Herefordshire Council (Conservative administration) took the decision to be (we believe) the first council to go 100% LED for our street lighting. This will save 20,000t of carbon and 17m quid over 20 years. We not only went for LED but also have a system of dimming the lights over periods to save even more money and carbon. That decision was taken in 2014 and we have already had over 8 years of benefit – less light pollution, less GHG emission and less money spent. Here's a great picture showing the difference in light spill.

2015 Before LED

29/01/2015 23:52

F11, ISO 800, 10.0

2016 After LED

01/02/2016 23:29

F11, ISO 800, 10.0

Isn't that interesting?

As always, if you need help with anything...get in touch.

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