

Ward Member Report – Penyard Ward – Cllr Harry Bramer – April 2025

Road resurfacing and Maintenance

Following a much larger injection of money into resurfacing roads in the County in the last financial year, we have added to the budget for this current year starting on 1st April. Significant work will be undertaken to try and get more of the County roads into a fit state. More work is aimed at Drainage across the Network and new ways of working are part of how the Council will deliver the Public Realm Contract going forward with the New Contractor expected to be in place for 1st May 2026. These things don't just happen, they have to be planned for.

A number of Staff changes are taking place to ensure that the whole service can deliver best value per £ spent as we move to our new contract. Please expect traffic lights and road closures across the Network especially at night for resurfacing works. Diversion signs will be in place when necessary.

Our minor road network is being destroyed by, more traffic, bigger and heavier vehicles of all types, poor drainage and not enough maintenance.

This is why far more funding is directed to improve the situation and the processes to get our network into a better shape. Individuals with negative vibes on social media don't fix anything.

This administration is addressing the issues.

Herefordshire Council Carbon management

A number of us Councillors sit on a Task and Finish group to try and figure out how to meet Herefordshire Councils Net Zero challenge by 2030. The meetings get tougher each time as the obvious wins in reducing "our" Carbon emissions become more challenging. In the most recent meeting we became deadlocked in how the process is now being rolled out.

Fundamentally, I believe that if we are to reduce our emissions then that is what we do, not get someone else to reduce theirs, and we buy credits from them so we can continue to emit CO₂e as does every big emitting company across the world.

I think most of us believe we should do the right thing in alleviating the damage Global warming effects are having on the planet, but that should involve emitting less CO₂e ourselves.

Some of the ideas for Carbon offsetting are just ridiculous and follow this environmental trend of "we continue the same, if someone else emits less."

In the light of the current world affairs, it would appear that progress is more likely to take a step back if we don't address our very own footprints.

Parish Summit

Those attending the Parish Summit on the 8th April had the opportunity to discuss all services the Council offer but the main debate was around the new Parish Charter, which you will all be able to read on the Council website if you weren't actually involved in creating it, or had a copy provided on the night.

The Document is a live charter that will update as the team of independent people consider ongoing improvements. With many people attending from large and small Parish Councils the evening discussed many issues, including Rights of way improvements from training of Footpath officers to the reopening of over 10 footpaths as new bridges fitted, to planning matters from new housing mandates, the Local Plan and Neighbourhood planning.

My take was a marked improvement on positivity over what we all try to do for the County, unfortunately there are still a few negative souls around.

Working between Herefordshire Council and the Parish Councils and specific additional funding we can all make things happen and improve services. Whilst much more needs to be done, together we are moving in the right direction.

Planning Matters

There are significant concerns about house building and where the numbers asked for by government may go. The Council Local plan which was ready to go for adoption last year has been put back and now abandoned, so a new version can come forward to accommodate new housing and building the local economy and infrastructure. This will set the plan back 2-3 years. This will impact on Planning application decisions over that period as the required 5 year housing land supply has dropped to a 3 year land supply, which is relevant in planning decisions

The Cabinet members recently met with the CEO of Herefordshire Wye Valley Hospital trust to understand why the hospital was in Critical status during January and the bed shortages. Apart from the current problems, the question was raised what are they doing about the increased demand from an expected 30% increase in homes in Herefordshire.

A very complacent answer was ferociously challenged. The WVT, Public health and the Council must address the increasing demand head on and be better prepared than at present.

Local issues of concern this month are Flooding, drainage, road repairs, Bus services, Local Neighbourhood plans, sports areas and playgrounds, road signage, pavement repairs, road closures. Parish Lengthsmen and Rights of way, all of which will continue throughout the summer.

Spring is in the air and grass cutting road verges will become another issue as more people want the grass left to grow and others want it cut. I doubt we will ever please everyone, but we do try.

I can always be contacted on 07900 918384 and of course will always attend your Parish Council meetings if I am asked to attend

Please pass this on to your Parish Councillors and to any Parishioners that you have on email and to any newsletters that may be of interest

Regards

Cllr Harry Bramer

Penyard ward

Cabinet member Community Services and Assets