

# Report 16 to Whixall Parish Council by Shropshire Councillors Peter Broomhall + Edward Towers – July 2023

*Dear All* – Please find below our sixteenth written report as your County Councillors.

**Full Shropshire Council Meeting**....took place on Thursday 8th July in the Council Chamber at Shirehall, Shrewsbury. SY2 6ND.

After introductory remarks, minutes, etc there followed six Public Questions:

**1. The questioner asked about the council matters related to SC's declaration of a climate emergency in May of 2019 stating a pressing need to be net zero, both as a council and within the wider county by 2030. He went on to say the council had advised in response to a recent FOI (Council ref RFI# 4853) that no planning and budgeting has taken place 1/3rd (four years) into the corrective period of the Council declared emergency. He then asserted with no council plans or costings in place after more than 4 years, the emergency clearly isn't anywhere near as important or pressing as the 'emergency' status would suggest or specifically warrant and he felt compelled to ask why has the council made no structured and costed planning around a declared emergency situation 1/3 into a corrective action period? He also asked if there is any reason why the council should not immediately rescind their emergency declaration due to their own inactivity and as an elected body it is also something that has bypassed the election process with no involvement of the voters of Shropshire? Finally, he asked if there are there any good reasons why the Council should not remove all references to the 'emergency' on the council website?**

In response Cllr Ian Nellins [Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport] said that Climate Change is an extremely complex challenge which will affect every Council service, member of staff, Shropshire business and local community. The UK Government has adopted legally-binding targets for carbon reduction. In this context, Shropshire Council is continuing to plan and invest in measures to improve its own carbon performance (see carbon monitoring report, Cabinet 6 June 2023) as well as actively supporting wider community efforts to improve Shropshire's carbon performance. Many of these measure will also help Shropshire Council reduce costs. Accurate data and comprehensive monitoring and reporting systems for carbon performance are still being developed nationally and locally. Just because Shropshire Council does not hold the specific information which Mr Greig previously requested in his FOI, it does not follow, as he contends, that Shropshire Council is inactive or that "no planning and budgeting has taken place 1/3rd (four years) into the corrective period of the Council declared emergency." We are focussing on actions that we know will save carbon and costs to the council such as installation of solar PV on many of our building stock. These have saved the council hundreds of thousands of pounds since they started being installed in 2012. For further details of this good news story please see: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/shropshire-climateaction/energy-and-heating/solar-energy/>

**2. Was asked by young children as representatives from Condover and St Edwards Primary School Worship committee who are promoting children's voice within our local community. They asked SC How they are promoting children's voice within Shropshire Council?**

In responding Councillor Kirstie Hurst-Knight [Portfolio Holder for Children and Education] said a range of activities capture children's voices. For example:

- the Health, Wellbeing and Prevention Directorate are currently designing a survey to capture young people's views on their health and well-being needs. This will be a survey which forms part of our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- involving young people in workshops to shape SEND provision across Shropshire. The Youth Support team carried out a survey of secondary aged students last year to gain young people's views of a range of topics including local activities and facilities. The Youth Support Team are also due to appoint a Participation Officer who will work with 13-19 year olds to capture their views and use this to help shape future offers. The Virtual School has a responsibility for education provision of children who are looked after (CLA) and children with a social worker also has Participation Officers who will seek the views of young people and provide activities to meet their interests. Children who are looked after and children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will have review meetings for their EHCP or PEP (Personal Education Plan). The child's views must be captured for both of these documents. Often children will attend for all or some of the review meeting. Others prefer to write, draw or talk to a trusted person. We have involved young people on some appointment panels for staff who work closely with children especially those who are in care. We also have a children in care council (CICC).
- At a school level we encourage all schools to have student stakeholder groups such as student councils or eco-groups and we promote the use of pupil panels when schools are interviewing for a new headteacher.
- We previously had a youth parliament. We are investigating how we can reintroduce something similar.
- In Children's Social Care: Each child is asked for their views for every child protection conference, however they want to give them and are offered the opportunity to attend if they are of an age. Every Child Looked After completes their views for CLA Reviews, either a form or on Mind of My Own – the app that we have to engage children in sharing their views, contributing to their plans. We had a young people's advisory board acting to advise the Team developing Caer Bryn – our recently opened Children's Home promoting independence. We listen to young people and this year 2 young people have shared their views and come to Senior Leadership Meetings to talk to us and inform our service development. We have examples of practice changing as a result. We have a Children in Care Council who do pieces of work sharing their views about issues that affect them. We have a Care Leavers Forum that works with Care Leavers to get their lived

experience and inform developments for our 18+ group. We are developing a participation strategy to develop this offer further.

**3. was about the Shropshire Cycling & Walking 10 year Plan. He was surprised by the lack of information about those who would be unable to use plan - people with Disabilities. From a personal point of view as a blue badge holder, it is essential for me to be able to travel independently by car within the towns identified by in the 10 year plan. So he asked:**

**A) Has any form for exploration / investigation been completed by the council to identify the needs of people with disabilities to travel, to, from and within Shropshire?**

**B) How many parking spaces in general will be increased or reduced, including curb side parking in Oswestry over the ten year plan?**

**C) How many blue badge parking spaces will be increased or reduced within in Oswestry over the ten year plan?**

**D) What are the number of council car parking spaces available both to the general public and to people with blue badges in each of the areas within the walking & cycling zones across Shropshire and the total numbers that will be increased or reduced over the ten year plan?**

**E) Have Shropshire council plans to increase, decrease or change the bus service over the 10 year plan within the walking & cycling zones, if so what are they?**

**F) Can Shropshire council confirm any plans or suggestion to reduce people's freedoms to travel by car, including whether by the use of cameras to issue fines or roads blocked off, reducing in one form or another people's right to travel that they currently have?**

A reply was given by Cllr Ian Nellins [Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport] He said in answer to:

A) Not specifically. However, all LCWIP schemes will seek to be compliant with Department for Transport's Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) which puts planning for pedestrians and cyclists with disabilities at the heart of all schemes. People with disabilities and mobility issues are as important users of the transport system as everyone else, which is why we consulted with local disability groups during the development of the plan. We understand that people in this group may not be able to walk or cycle, and the aim of this plan is not to remove access by car for anyone who needs it. Some of the proposals, such as tackling pavement parking, dealing with uneven pavement surfaces and widening footways will benefit those who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs and walking frames, even over short distances. All schemes will have a disability assessment integrated as part of the detailed design and feasibility studies, which will happen at a later date

B) The LCWIP is a high level document and specific details such as loss of parking spaces depends on what type of scheme is put in place. Stakeholder engagement and public engagement will be carried out further down the line when schemes are at a more advanced stage of development and details, including loss or gain or parking spaces, will be made available at this time.

C) See response above

D) As the consultation has recently closed and is presently being assessed, it is too early to give an accurate response to the impact on parking spaces. As such, no decisions have yet been made on any of the potential projects. That said, the need for sufficient Blue Badge parking spaces will of course be carefully considered.

E) Shropshire Council has recently submitted 2 significant bids to transform public transport across the County, through its Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Bus Partnership with bus operators, whilst the initial funding submissions have been unsuccessful at this time, we have continued dialogue with the Department for Transport to ensure we are in the best possible position to attract the required funding to the County to improve public transport services. The initial Bus Service Improvement Plan can be found on Shropshire councils' website and will be update annually. Enhanced partnership | Shropshire Council

F) The LCWIP is about giving people a genuine choice between using their car, walking/wheeling or cycling, so that those people who may want to walk or cycle but currently feel like the car is their only option for confidence and safety reasons will be able to do so. Rather than diminish access, we hope to increase the range of journeys that people can make without requiring a car, which is particularly important for people who do not or cannot drive, and during the cost of living crisis when the cost of fuel is high. We are introducing School Streets in Shropshire which will restrict car access to specific streets outside of schools on safety grounds. This is to give children the freedom to get into school without congested school entrances and improve air quality around the school site.

**4. The questioner asserted that the risk assessments of the proposed NorthWest road scheme seem culpably inadequate: financial, ecological and traffic flow downsides seem systematically underestimated. The environmental assessment wasn't even available to the public at time of WSP consultation . Additional costs are clearly externalised or put off, such as:**

• **risk insurance for remediation of unintended disruption of town water supply by damage from roadworks**

• **new work needed on the Uffington roundabout to prevent gridlock at Battlefield roundabout for commuters from Hadnall**

• **increased costs of materials necessitating a more realistic cost-benefit calculation. He said that it seems obvious that councillors are being corralled into approving this scheme to free up land for housing rather than for the stated objectives of the road. Is the level of risk being proposed misfeasance in public office?**

Cllr Richard Marshall [Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services] replied saying he could confirm that the range of risk and mitigation assessments undertaken in support of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road fully comply with those requirements set by Department for Transport and also the wide range of Statutory Consultees engaged through the Planning Application process. The results of these are in the public domain, including the full Supplementary Environmental Information documentation submitted in February 2023. This addressed the key remaining issues raised through consultation, and work to conclude this process with consultees is now nearing completion. The project continues to monitor forecast costs around risk mitigation across a number of carefully monitored scenarios, and these costs, along with the final construction cost, will be brought back for the consideration of Full Council as part of the Full Business Case (FBC) due at the end of the year. It is

important to note at this time that Planning Permission, and any subsequent decision to move to road construction following the FBC are related, but entirely separate processes.

**5. Was about Climate change with respect to the North-West Relief Road (NWRR). He said that on 28 June 2023 the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), the government's climate adviser, published a report saying that the UK had gone backwards on progress towards net zero in the last 12 months and that urgent action was needed to get back on track. In his covering letter the committee chairman, Conservative peer Lord Deben, writes: 'Our children will not forgive us if we leave them a world of withering heat and devastating storms where sea level rises and extreme temperatures force millions to move because their countries are no longer habitable. None of us can avoid our responsibility. Delay is not an option.' The report recommends a national review of current and future road-building projects to assess their consistency with the government's environmental goals. This is to ensure that decisions do not lock in unsustainable levels of traffic growth. Schemes should only be taken forward if they meaningfully support cost-effective delivery of Net Zero and climate adaptation. So he asked, What are the implications of such a review for the proposed North West Relief Road, given that it will result in adding more CO2 into the atmosphere under any meaningful timescale?**

Responding Cllr Ian Nellins [Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environment and Transport] said that the NWRR received Programme Entry under the DfT Large Local Majors Programme in 2019 and is now in delivery. As such, the Council has not been made aware of any suggestion that future government infrastructure investment decisions would be applied retrospectively to such projects. That notwithstanding, the proposal to deliver the NWRR has been carefully reviewed in the light of the Council's stated carbon position. A rigorous carbon modelling and forecasting exercise, both for the construction phase and the future lifetime use of the scheme has been undertaken and is published on the Council's website. Further to this, the methodology and conclusions within the report have been independently reviewed by an academic specialist at Birmingham University and this is also available through the website. The findings of the report highlight a net carbon legacy for the scheme in the region of 27k tonnes over the lifetime of the scheme. This impact has already been considerably mitigated through informed design choices (build materials and methodology), and the acknowledgement of net carbon savings on the highways network more widely within Shrewsbury. Work continues on developing approaches that will deliver further reductions in the project's carbon legacy, potentially to net zero over the lifetime of the road, and a funding commitment to this has already been made within the project budget.

**6. Was a further one about the NWRR. He said on 23 June 2023 DEFRA told Shrewsbury and Atcham's MP that, in relation to the proposed NWRR, "The Environment Agency [has] outstanding concerns about issues to do with protecting the water resources aquifer from which Severn Trent Water draws water supplies for the town of Shrewsbury. The Environment Agency does not consider the information supplied by the Council and its representatives to demonstrate an appropriate level of assessment and risk mitigation." If Shropshire Council builds the road-against the Environment Agency's advice, will it be liable for the costs of remediation/ replacement of the water supplies if they become-contaminated by a spill on the road and how would Shropshire-Council underwrite such a risk?**

Replying Cllr Richard Marshall [Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services] said as applicant for the Shrewsbury NWRR, Shropshire Council continues its ongoing and positive engagement with all statutory consultees. This includes the Environment Agency, where discussions continue around the appropriate risk and mitigation plans for the road during construction and in future use. As a responsible scheme promoter, appropriate controls and risk management plans will continue to be refined by the Council as part of the current planning process, with the input of the Environment Agency and other agencies, in order to provide appropriate levels of reassurance to all parties.

**The followed a series of reports for the Council. These were on:**

- Financial Outturn 2022/23....accepted by a vote in favour after an amendment that had been table by opposition parties had fallen
- Levelling Up Fund Award for Shrewsbury
- Local Authority Housing Fund Round 2
- Annual Report of the Portfolio Holder Finance and Corporate Resources
- Annual Report of the Portfolio Holder – Culture and Digital
- Changes to Committee Membership

....and 5 subsequent ones were all accepted unanimously.

**Then there were two motions to consider:**

**a) Motion was about vaping issues. It began with an amendment from an opposition member that was accepted by those proposing the motion. It stated that:**

Shropshire Council believes that the use of disposable vapes by young people is concerning. The marketing of colourful, candy-flavoured vapes that are relatively cheap and easy to access could create a new generation addicted to nicotine. There has been no specific research undertaken into the health impacts of vaping on young people's development, including their respiratory health. There is also a growing environmental impact of these devices, especially the single-use plastic and use of lithium batteries and copper that are hard to recycle and pose a fire risk.

While it is the case that the long-term health outcomes for adults have also not been researched, the UK Government states 'Vaping is an important tool to help the government achieve its ambition for England to be smokefree by 2030. This is because vaping is one of the most effective ways to help people quit smoking. A recent [Cochrane systematic review](#) found with 'high

certainty' that vapes were more effective than nicotine replacement therapy. Ensuring vaping devices can continue to be made available to current smokers is vital to reducing smoking rates, and their use contributes to an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 additional fewer smokers per year.<sup>1</sup>

One survey suggests that over half of all vapes used in the UK are disposable, with the majority being used by adults who are reducing/ceasing tobacco use<sup>2</sup>.

While it may play a part, there is no guarantee that banning disposable vapes will solve the problem of young people vaping. As a measure alone, it could drive some young people to non-compliant devices which may comprise of more concerning and damaging substances. On June 15<sup>th</sup> '23 Shropshire's Task and Finish group on underage vaping report that:

'Vapes can be purchased online often with relative ease and are more challenging to regulate. There has been a large rise in sales of non-compliant vapes (with risks around product safety requirements such as chargers and batteries). This is compounded by worrying implications that the supply of vapes may be linked to child exploitation and serious organised crime.'

There are a range of possible responses to tackling youth vaping including:

- It is illegal to sell vapes to under 18s, and this legislation could be better enforced.
- There have not been the same restrictions imposed on the marketing of vapes as there are on tobacco products. Marketing could be more strictly regulated.
- Trading standards also have a role to play and Shropshire Council has been recognised by the Local Government Association for its pro-active actions regarding identifying the illegal selling of vapes with 1244 illegal vape products seized following test purchase operations and including 3 sales of vapes to children. More can be done to reduce illegal sales
- A tax could be imposed on vaping products

In addition with regard to climate concerns, retailers selling vapes must by law provide an option for consumers to dispose of vapes on a one-for-one basis under the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) regulations. The Office for Product Safety and Standards is responsible for compliance

In light of the above Shropshire Council calls on the Government to:

- Legislate to end the use of single use disposable vapes whilst ensuring that adults who are vaping as an alternative to tobacco use do not experience disrupted supply.
- Support the Local Government Association's call for action to central government for vapes to be in plain packaging, be kept out-of-sight, for mandatory age-of-sale signage on vaping products and a ban on free samples as tools that can help achieve this (this is a recommendation of the Shropshire Task and Finish Group)
- Support local authorities to improve prosecution rates for the sale of illegal vapes
- Support local authorities to boost smoking cessation services, including those for children who are vaping, and develop health promotion campaigns
- To reduce online sales of no-compliant vapes
- Enhance the ability of the Office for Product Safety and Standards to enforce retail compliance with the disposal of vapes

Shropshire Council will also continue to support the work of:

- the task and finish group including their work on an approach for communications aimed at children and young people.
- Link Youth vaping to the Shropshire Plan

**This motion was accepted unanimously.**

**b) Motion to stop the use of Glyphosates and oppose the use of Neonicotinoids in Shropshire by both Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council when contracted to do works for the former.**

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<sup>1</sup> UK Government Youth Vaping Call for evidence May '23

<sup>2</sup> ASH factsheet. [Use of e-cigarettes \(vapes\) among young people in Great Britain](#). July 2022.

It stated that 'This Council notes: In 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer an agency for the World Health Organisation, published it's findings into the relationship between cancer and glyphosate – a herbicide – and classified it as possibly carcinogenic – it had scientific data that it definitely caused malignant tumours in animals. Glyphosate causes damage in human DNA and chromosomes and is associated with the blood cancer, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. This is all before the damage it will inflict on our insect and mammal species:

There has been a 60% increase in the use of pesticides such as glyphosate in the UK since 1990. Italy, Portugal and the Canadian city of Vancouver have all banned use of glyphosate [or glyphosate based weed killers] and France is working towards this. Mosanto and German owner Bayer face 9,000 lawsuits in the US from those that believe their illnesses are caused by this product, a \$6.9 million settlement in June this year as Monsanto falsely continues to state that it's product is safe. That recent studies published in ScienceDirect show a 41% increased risk of Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma caused by exposure from glyphosate-based weed killers and products. In Shropshire Unitary Council – there is no Policy on Glyphosate use or guidance on how to use.

Various supporting evidences were provided and there was much sympathy in the Council Chamber for this motion but it was felt that we should be working to phase out the product because at present a blanket ban would cause an increase in weed related problems and then more labour /costs would be involved for SC, as well as blocking drains and making flash flooding worse.

**Consequently when it came to a vote the motion fell with 21 in Favour, 32 against and 2 abstentions. Council believes:**

**Then followed three questions from Members:**

1. Shropshire Director of Public Health stated recently that our county has the 3rd lowest budget in England for mental health services, something evident for anyone who has interacted with the system. What is the current strategy for improving Shropshire's Mental Health Services and lobbying for better funding?
2. What are the total budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24 for Women's Health in the following categories: Community, Primary Care, Secondary Care, Obstetrics and separately Sexual Health, Contraception, Menopause and non-urgent gynaecology? What is Shropshire's progress in implementing the most recent strategy publication for Women's Health? What are the current waiting times for these services? Will Shropshire Council formally request Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Integrated Care System to formally establish a Women's Health Hub to provide comprehensive services for the women of Shropshire as published by DHSC and the Secretary of State for Health in March 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/womens-health-strategy-forengland/womens-health-strategy-for-england> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/25-million-for-womens-health-hub-expansion>

3. The member noted a recent press report concerning Blue Badge applications. They wanted to be assured that the problems are short term, and the backlog will all be cleared within the next few days? When residents who need a Blue Badge for parking whilst away from home and especially when on holiday it is important they can legally park near their chosen destination. In answer to this question can the number of applications outstanding be circulated and separated out to show the longest, average, and the re-applications compared with new ones.

Written answers to all the above questions were given and if any would like to have a copy, then do ask Peter or myself.

**Finally**, before the Council went into closed session for an item related to homelessness there was a report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority presented, and accepted.

### **Shropshire Climate and Carbon Advisory Board:**

There hasn't been another meeting of this board since 16<sup>th</sup> February, already reported upon. Dates are currently being suggested for mid to end of July 2023.

### **Shropshire Local Plan Member Group:**

This group hasn't met since the short 'Teams' meeting of this board for ET on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023 when the joint SC/Telford and Wrekin Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site now that the public consultations have finished. This concerns a land area where SC have 23% proportion and T+W 77%. The SPD should be ready to go to both Cabinets in mid-July.

The group now has a date of 30<sup>th</sup> June to look at the additional information the Officers have supplied for Stage 1 of SC's proposals for the emerging Local Plan 2026-2038. As already reported this is largely about how SC is supplying answers to the Inspector about the way the plan had been devised and dealing with extra housing allocations that were being requested of

Shropshire by the West Midlands authorities as there wasn't sufficient land available after taking their 'Green Belt' areas out of consideration. This too should then be able to go to SC Cabinet in mid-July. When this has been sorted the Inspector will then go on to Stage 2 where individual sites across Shropshire that have been allocated by Shropshire Planners will be examined and individuals/Parishes can attend hearings with the Inspector to raise issues that they may have. This is now expected to be later this year – Summer onwards?!

Another piece of information that came out to us was that Place Plans have been given extra time totalling 12 weeks to be completed at Parish Level, so not being completed until mid-August.

### Shropshire Council Member Briefing Sessions:

There has been only one since our last report on 6th May. This was a Teams presentation to explain that the 'Connecting Shropshire Broadband Programme' is moving into a new phase, namely that Freedom Fibre has won the government-funded Project Gigabit contract to roll out lightning-fast connectivity to around 12,000 homes and businesses in North Shropshire. This has Wem at its centre – as the map below shows and aims to transforming broadband speeds and reliability for local residents and businesses. It does however raise the question of what is happening in other parts of the County!



This is a new three-year contract is part of the UK government's £5 billion Project Gigabit, which aims to provide lightning-fast gigabit-capable broadband to hard-to-reach communities across the UK. Freedom Fibre is expected to start network construction in February 2024, with the first properties potentially being able to connect to lightning-fast broadband as early as October 2024. The award supports the government's priority to grow the economy, creating better-paid jobs and opportunity across the country.

Freedom Fibre plan to invest thousands of pounds in a broad range of socio-economic and environmental projects across North Shropshire including running its 'Freedom Fund' that offers funding for good and green community-led projects within its build areas.

### In response to this announcement Councillor Robert Macey, Shropshire Council cabinet member with responsibility for Culture and Digital, said:

"This £24m investment is great news for communities and businesses in Shropshire as gigabit-capable broadband further enhances our ability to be a digital county. Improved digital infrastructure remains a top priority for Shropshire Council given its significant economic and social benefits and we look forward to seeing Freedom Fibre progress this exciting infrastructure project. In addition, Freedom Fibre has committed to deliver significant Social Value through the contract; examples include upskilling and employing local people, tree planting schemes, and a £25,000 Freedom Fund for local community projects."

### Public Transport Working Group:

This Cross-Party Group (of which ET is part) met on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and mainly dealt with planning for the Connect on-Demand 'pilot zone' being begun in the Autumn in an area involving Radbrook Green, Lyth Hill and Pulverbach that lie south west of Shrewsbury. We've put two slides below to explain what might be coming to the rest of the county. The date of the next meeting is has not been decided as yet, but is expected later in July when more news is available on the new 'greener' buses on order and other discussions related to this new initiative have been sorted out.

**PRESS RELEASE**

**INITIAL PRESS RELEASE – MAY 2023**

Following the recent press release regarding the development for an On-Demand flexible bus service we want to answer a few of the questions that this has raised with current users and to provide some reassurance.

**ARRIVA SERVICES**

20 (RADBROOK GREEN)  
544 (LYTH HILL)  
546 (PULVERBATCH)

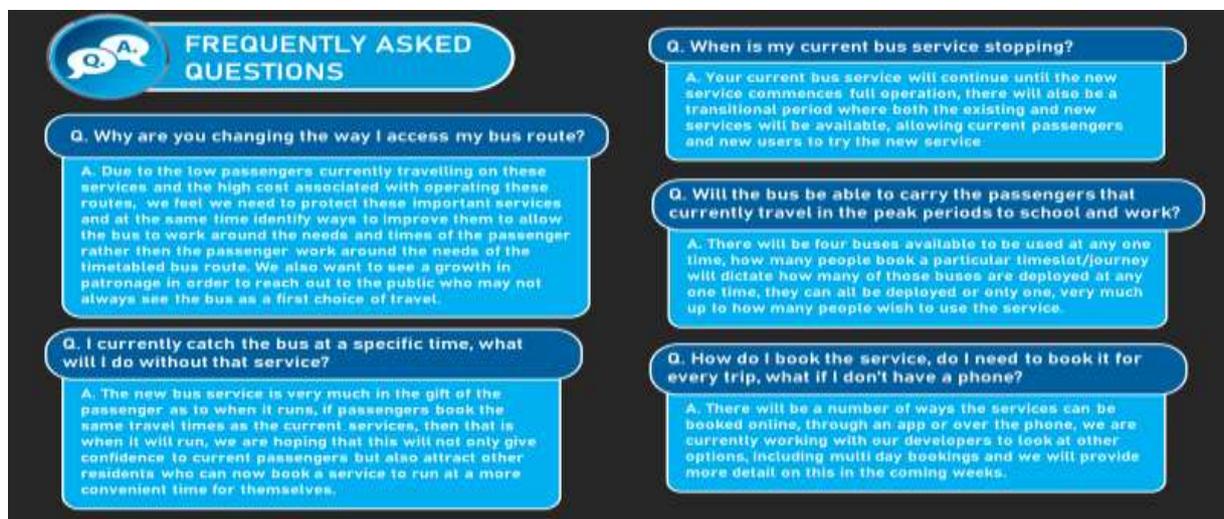
The above services will continue to operate as per their current timetables, once a start date for the new services is confirmed we will of course let passengers know of that intended start date.

There will also be a transition period where the new service will operate alongside the existing services to enable both passengers and new users to try the new service and help direct how the service will operate going forwards.

**CONNECT ON-DEMAND**  
A FLEXIBLE TRANSPORT SOLUTION

**BENEFITS OF FLEXIBLE TRANSPORT**

FLEXIBLE TIMES TO SUIT THE PASSENGER	IMPROVED ON-BOARD FACILITIES
AFFORDABLE FARES	REALTIME TRACKING
GREATER PUNCTUALITY	NEWER, LOW EMISSION BUSES <small>SHROPSHIRE'S FIRST FULLY ELECTRIC BUS</small>
IMPROVED PASSENGER INFORMATION	IMPROVED LINKS TO OTHER MODES OF TRANSPORT



## Shropshire Council Task and Finish Groups:

This last month there seem to have been a lot of these which are Cross-Party meetings to look into a variety of issues with Officers. The reports produced will then go back to Cabinet and Full Council for their discussion/approval of actions that need to be taken:

**Housing Member Group for ET.** The Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee are looking at Social Housing Need as part of their work with a view to setting out recommendations that will help to inform Housing Strategy updates and development. At a 'workshop' at Shirehall on 5<sup>th</sup> June questions such as:

1. We're getting older – how can we help and support people to plan for their future, including the homes that they would like and will need
2. Are rural areas becoming places where only those who can afford to can live? What are the reasons why?
3. How can housing be promoted/seen as a driver for economic success of Shropshire overall, and within Shropshire communities and areas of the county?
4. How can better Supported Housing options be provided in rural areas? \*Think all ages and different situations and scenarios e.g. care leavers, working age adults, families, older people, intergenerational living

The next meeting for this group was to have been on 23<sup>rd</sup> June to further this work, but this has had to be postponed and a new date has not been given as we write.

## Health and Social Care Task and Finish Group for ET

A second meeting of this group took place on 15<sup>th</sup> June following on from an initial one on 15<sup>th</sup> May. This took the form of group discussions about Mental Health matters, Primary Care development and needs, Local Care Programmes and other topics identified by Health & Social Care Committee members, the results of which were collated ready for a further meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> July when a presentation regarding the Local Care Transformation Programme has been requested and health 'commissioners' and 'providers' representatives are invited to attend and give evidence/answer questions that this HOSC group now see emerging from their investigations.

## Rural Proofing in Health and Care Task and Finish Group for ET

We had an opportunity to hear from and talk to Lois Dale (Rurality Equality Specialist for Shropshire Council) on 26<sup>th</sup> June as part of the Information, Intelligence & Insight team. Lois provided information on the national context of rural proofing and provide some local examples of it in action followed by discussion.

On 28<sup>th</sup> June the group met again and decided it next needed to take evidence from the Fire Service and a representative for the Primary Care Networks as well as 'Providers of services' and 'Customers/service users' as they write their report advising how to support/protect 'Health and Care' in rural communities across our county.

## River Water Quality Task and Finish Group for PB and ET

This group has begun to meet again after a short delay due to staff changes at Shirehall. This was on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> May at Shirehall when Terms of Reference were agreed, expertise/experience in this area shared by Councillors and lines of enquiry agreed. It is now due to meet on 29<sup>th</sup> June for an 'evidence gathering session' the purpose of which is to:

- To inform our understanding of the policy, partnership and service positions in Shropshire in relation to river quality, with the primary focus being on avoiding or minimising the release of sewage into waterways.
- To inform lines of enquiry and information requests by the task and finish group to other witnesses, to inform their work.

We'll report on how the outcome of this session next month.

## Shropshire Council Training/Development Sessions:

There have been none arranged since our December report.

## Shropshire Council Committees:

The June meeting for ET at the **Northern Planning Committee** took place was cancelled because there were insufficient applications to be considered. The next one is in the diary for Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July.

The **Strategic Licensing Committee** met on 14<sup>th</sup> June, for PB and ET who were unable to attend on this occasion. It proved to be a very short 20 minute meeting that met to agree SC's Statement of Licensing Policy 2024-29.

**Regarding Whixall Parish**, we have had another quieter two months since the Parish Council met and so no parish activity to report on this occasion.

## Regarding other matters of local concern to Whixall Parish that we are involved in:

### 1. Discussion matters regarding the pilot project between Shropshire Council and Wem Economic Forum/Town Council

There is still nothing more to report this month since the Teams Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April when the agenda was

- Discussing the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) Project in Oswestry and hopefully across North Shropshire to Wem!
- The possibility of a Shop Jacket Project in Wem....say around the White Horse
- Receiving the results of a Wem High Street Survey Results
- Getting the Soulton Hall Business Networking Event (on 28<sup>th</sup> February) Feedback
- Discussing Investment Planning and the Place Plan Review we are about to have

The Consultation Business Breakfast event organised on 28<sup>th</sup> June by Wem Rural Parish Council in the café on Wem Industrial Estate was supported by a number of businesses...including from in the town as well as the rural area and planning is just starting for a further one in the Autumn, possibly within the town this time.

### 2. Wem Area Climate Action (WACA) – This group met most recently on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June in the Cemetery Chapel near Love Lane. Wem Senior Club. It was another very positive meeting attended by a good number of people. Matters under discussion were:

- Charity applications leading to opening a Bank account were again discussed
- what to do next with Edinburgh House concerns regarding contacting Connexus
- further Green Day Planning for 15<sup>th</sup> July and distribution of publicity material
- Co-operation/links with Incredible Edibles and Combine Harvesters
- Biodiversity updates
- P3 (Parish Paths Partnership) Updates
- Work programmes with Thomas Adams School

### 3. North Salop Wheelers ('Wheelers') – Since the AGM in March they have continued modestly to expand and to consolidate their business foundations and organisation. They have re-started a service for Age UK in Whitchurch, taken on more bus subscribers/passengers, and sustained several Group hires such as The Wem Rotary Club's canal event last week and "Hear Here's" event this last week. The one thing that is holding things back is their need for drivers, so if you know of any who might be interested in helping – even in a small way, then do let them/us know.

### 4. The Wemian – As reported previously, whilst this is still in abeyance there has been some encouraging movement as to a possible new Lead/Editor who may be emerging, as well as a possible assistant or two now!! The main problem at present seems to be the transference from the current Editorship has still not been resolved....so do bear with us.

Hopefully, although late out this month we hope this brings you up to speed a little on our 'County responsibilities' and view of things in Wem. If you find you need more information, or have questions on the above, then do say.

Kindest regards,

*Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers*

*Shropshire County Councillors for the Wem, Wem Rural & Whixall Division*

*Date: 12th July 2023*