

Annual Report to Broadwas & Cotheridge Annual Parish Meeting 13th May 2019

District Councillors: David Chambers and Douglas Godwin

This has been another crucial year for Malvern Hills District Council, with further cuts from central government funding. We are pleased to report however, that unlike many councils across the country, Malvern Hills District Council has been able to continue to make savings, increase its services to residents, build on its reserves, work to a balanced budget at the same time maintain one of the lowest Council Tax rates in the country.

Your two District Councillors have played key roles in the Council during the last year with David as Leader of the Council and specific responsibility for Economic Development and Douglas as Chairman of the Audit Committee and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The following is a summary of the last year at Malvern Hills District Council

1. Our financial position is strong and stable. Despite having to make savings of £1.45 million between 2017/22, due to central government cuts, we are building our reserves, investing in land and property, which will not only deliver us appreciating assets but also an annual income return.
2. Council tax is increasing by just £5.00 on a band D property again this year (that's £5.00 for the whole year). Less than 10% of the amount you pay for your overall council tax stays with Malvern Hills District Council – the remaining 90%+ goes to the County Council, West Mercia Police, Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority and to Parish or Town Councils
3. The new extension to the Council House is now open. We will be bringing all our telephony back in house and for the first time in over 10 years the Council House will have a reception to welcome residents and visitors to the Council. This will save the Council in excess of £100,000 each year.
4. Led by Malvern Hills District Council, the six District Councils in Worcestershire have secured a government Business Rates Retention pilot for one year. This will generate an estimated £4.9 million pounds which we are allocating to help the County Council's budget deficit. The money will be ring fenced for specific projects to help with Adult Social Care and Children's Services
5. Our 5 Year Strategic Plan and 5 Year Business Plans are now well established and enable Councillors, officers, residents, businesses and partner organisations to have a clear understanding of the Council's priorities for the five years ahead, at any one time.

6. We implemented the “Alternative Weekly Waste Collections” in April last year which seems to have been a huge success. With general waste being collected one week and recycling waste the following week, we have seen the amount of general waste reduce and a substantial increase in recycling waste.
7. We all know that changes to our town centres and high streets are inevitable, with more and more people buying goods and services on line. The Council has just placed a multi £million bid into central government and are commissioning future prospectuses for all of our town centres in the District to ensure we are at the very forefront of any developmental changes.
8. This year we have engaged with more residents, business, partners and schools than ever before, to help us ensure our priorities are the same priorities of the people we serve.
9. Planning is always a contentious subject and we all understand why. With the SWDP Review now happening, which will take us to 2041, we have done everything we can to protect the villages and hamlets we serve, whilst appreciating that new homes are need, not least for the young residents in our community.
10. And there is so much more: We are delivering affordable homes, bringing empty homes back into use, working with partners to help those with mental health issues, loneliness and rough sleeping; provide £50,000 each year to help with Community Transport; have set up a £30,000 fund to help with food banks; are working closely with our schools, colleges and business to provide skills training, apprenticeships and creating job opportunities; promoting healthier communities for the young and not so young alike.

David and Douglas have enormously enjoyed representing Broadwas and Cotheridge and would like to thank, in particular, the Chairman and Councillors of the Parish Council for working with us in such a supportive way.