

Broadwas & Cotheridge District Council Report – 13th September 2021

Because August is a quieter month it is a shorter report this month.

We have also asked Vic, our CEO, to produce a report from District Council to Parish Councils (which is a bit lazy on our part!) so please find that attached too and that should give a more general update about what we're upto. Nevermind the pics this month.

Just to start a few links on Covid for updates.

To view the latest infection rate visit the [Coronavirus dashboard](#)

Walk-in vaccination clinics were in operation throughout August.

[View the Worcestershire Vaccine dashboard](#) for the latest information.

[Read more information about the Covid-19 Vaccination Programme in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.](#)

There are 2 schemes relating to Afghan resettlement to the UK:

1. The Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) for Locally Employed Staff (LES) in Afghanistan. This scheme is designed to support those Afghan nationals who have worked with our forces eg interpreters. This scheme was launched in April 2021.
2. The Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This was the scheme that was announced last week and which is designed to welcome 5,000 vulnerable Afghans into the UK in the first year of the scheme and 20,000 over the longer term. Further guidance on this scheme is still awaited.

Locally, the current Afghan resettlement scheme is being co-ordinated by Worcestershire County Council and this will be the same for ACRS. The County Council will work closely with the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership who are delivering this programme for the West Midlands on behalf of the Government. The County Council will consider wider support arrangements for Afghan arrivals, co-ordinate financial support from Government and donations from communities. We are also working with groups Citizens Advice and [Malvern Welcomes](#).

As non-housing stock councils we are working with our housing association partners and private landlords to identify accommodation. Commitment has been sought from both Platform and Rooftop to begin to identify suitable family sized accommodation within our districts that could be appropriate, and both have responded positively to these requests. In addition, we will be working with voluntary groups in due course to help them with their work supporting new arrivals and getting access to funding.

We have now said goodbye to Phil and Stephen (two of our joint Directors with Wychavon) and interviews were last week for replacements.

Over July and August there were many events in Malvern including the Gin festival and the Food Festival both of which were very successful. Footfall, in general, to our town centres have increased and we're seeing a lot of tourism activity including our walks app being downloaded more than ever.

In line with this we've been launching a lot of Economic Development project to support our High Streets including a grant for High Street businesses to support new shop fronts and for businesses to launch or revamp their websites. We've also launched our own new ' Visit the Malverns ' website – a revamped version with lots more information for visitors.

Both myself and David have been heavily involved in local planning matters in regards to the Bloor and Red Row sites at Crown East and we have now had the result of the appeal at Rushwick.

I've copied below my social media post that I put out following the result.

As most people are aware we had the outcome of the Appeal decision on the land behind the Whitehall late on yesterday afternoon. As you'll remember Lioncourt homes had previously applied to put houses on this land which we rejected. They re-applied but then Rushwick became a focus of a potential 'Urban Extension' meaning that all development would be subject to a wider plan to give new infrastructure, including a rail holt etc to support any further housing.

The developers decided to push forward anyway and at planning committee we gave a robust series of reasons for this development to be rejected. In the meantime this piece of land was also removed from the potential future development after I'd made it clear that this is a special area for the village and a very important piece of green infrastructure.

The appeal yesterday was won by the developer meaning that as it stands, with a few conditions, the developer can build 120 homes on this land.

The inspectorate has given very little weight to anything we've said. There will apparently no impact on the roads from highways of putting in 120 houses with one access point which will come out on to Claphill Lane which will pull out onto the main road directly opposite where the new developments at Crown East will be built. They've whitewashed over any significant gaps and made wild claims over the impact on wildlife and land.

I know that the appeal was well fought by MHDC and even worries over the 5YHLS issue were not realised as the closing statement of the appeal says that regardless of that this appeal would have been granted in favour of the developer.

Is it clear that Government policy to build, build, build regardless of local need, impact on wildlife or even available infrastructure trumps everything.

Because of all this I have asked MHDC to look at our options to respond to this and I'll keep you updated but I'm hopeful that we have options to continue the fight and ensure a valuable piece of land remains house free.

If it does go ahead there will be further implications on potential plans for Rushwick but as they become apparent I'll let you know.

Sorry to be reporting this. I had hoped sound argument, strong reasons and common sense would work.

We haven't seen the full fallout of this – as yet – but the inspector did state 5.76 years in terms of MHDC housing land supply which I hope keeps Broadwas & Cotheridge safe in terms of planning applications.

Finally, on local planning matters:

The Track – from MHDC nothing has although we do now have an outstanding enforcement case now that needs to be resolved. I did receive the following from Aaron:

In relation to the Track I was slightly concerned as there appeared to be people present with a door open on the caravan and a table with cups outside. I will contact the Police to assist me in carrying out a site visit with the intention to speak to them, albeit I don't think there is any permanent residential use taking place at present.

I have asked Aaron to update on the enforcement case, which is going to be difficult given we don't have contact with the landowner and other routes are going to be effective, but I am waiting on his update. Beyond that the EA and WCC have been working on this – I believe.

Gladwish – I have asked Aaron to keep an eye on it as he's passing it more than me. At the end of last week he reported:

I visited the Track and Gladwish field yesterday. I noted the two tents in the field, I cannot imagine that it is their intention to remain permanently or for any substantial length of time. However I do intend to contact the Police when I return from leave to visit them to enquire what their intentions are and take the matter from there.

This married up with Richards update in terms of what's been seen but MHDC will be using the police to follow up.

Church Lane/ Zourka – This is work being done via the County which Richard has been involved in in reference to Mark Morris. Mark made reference to the widening of the culvert which Jack references below. The work from WCC is vital to stem the water coming onto Church Lane and we'll take up the below in terms of the private land. Things have been slow, as everyone seems to vanish in August, but I will focus my time on the culvert to resolve any water that does go that way whilst the work of WCC is vital to stop the water flow.

From our side on Zourka:

The Bat Barn has been completed and has the drainage in place. We are expecting an update from the owners within the next two weeks in regards to all the other place but the landscaping, in terms of drainage, is better around the Bat Barn. I'll share any future correspondence on this.

In terms of the drain I have spoken with Jack this week (and many other weeks) but it is a long process. His email to me over the weekend stated:

*The summer growth has started to die away and should be gone in another few weeks. With the summer growth starting to die back, I was able to inspect the ditch and the culvert inlet fully. There is no obstruction in the ditch and the culvert inlet is clear to the invert of the culvert. There is no point digging the ditch deeper than it currently is as any water would not be able to leave via the culvert. **Increasing the culvert size could be beneficial to allow more water through during periods of high rainfall while also decreasing the chance that it could get blocked.** You would need to speak to the owner of the culvert to convince them to under take the works as there is nothing in legislation to compel riparian owners to undertake works to improve watercourse and culverts.*

I am following up with Jack this week in terms of his recommendations on the culvert – all as above.

Tack Farm - We are still waiting for the appeal decision on the riding arena, apparently the inspector has been out so I expect a decision notice imminently. The only issue at stake was the access and its suitability.

20/01303/FUL is still pending. We are about to get the agricultural appraisal independently assessed but there is still some information required from the applicant who may be waiting, first, on the outcome of the appeal.