

Broadwas & Cotheridge November Parish Council Report – District Council

As I'm sure David will agree it's becoming increasingly difficult to update when much of my update was going to be based on what has happened in the district in regards to Covid over the last month and we had in place going forward - and now – here we are – with a complete change and again back in Lockdown.

I hope everyone is safe and well.

We have more walk in/ drive in test centres than a month ago with the new one at the University of Worcester and there are still hopes to get one in Malvern itself. This would be useful. If it is it will be the Malvern Victoria Road Car Park.

The Government has confirmed we will be receiving another £152,000 in support to help cover losses and additional costs caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Total support received from the Government is just over £1 million. However, our total losses are estimated to be £1.4million. That said the council is continuing to operate well. We are also now looking to receive further support for businesses, but this will be aimed specifically at businesses which have had to close for this new lockdown period.

The Coronavirus CPG, which I chair, has continued to highlight the danger to the economy across our region as we see a continuing increase in unemployment although financial support has been good to local businesses and with the extension of the furlough scheme until March hopefully this will mitigate some of the issues for some businesses.

We are seeing unemployment at rates we have not seen before although there are some beacons of hope with some businesses continuing to do well. Of course, this period will have a drastic effect on retail in the area and hospitality and tourism.

Our other real worry is that of vulnerable people and this next month will be a test for many people as go into a further lockdown. With this local support networks are being fired back up and we're now back part of local response groups to help people. This past week has been busy with a varied number of incidents with residents to help out with. We've been busy.

Overall cases have been increasing but far less in our district than in other areas and we now have the lowest confirmed cases per 100,000 with those districts in the north of the county currently worst. All libraries across Worcestershire remain open but with reduced services during the lockdown period. All Household Recycling Centres are remaining open

89% of pupils returned to schools last week and whilst there is a number of pupils isolating it is a small number compared to the 84,000 children across the district in total.

We are working with schools to display messages targeting parents at school drop off and pick up times to remind them about social distancing. Advice is also displayed in all town centres on street scene signage. I can say, as a School Governor at the Chantry, I'm extremely proud of the school's response.

On my return from holiday I had a meeting with our enforcement team and Broadwas Parish Council to go through how enforcement works and is currently working. We've also, as councillors, had further planning training over the last two weeks with a session looking at enforcement – which has seen a significant increase in activity.

We have recently learnt that we are ranked second, of all shire districts, behind Elmbridge, when it comes to enforcement cases and the numbers we issue.

The vast majority of the ones we receive are low level ones (known as C) (Anything under A – the most serious- is looked at within one day – but these are rare and usually mean deal danger or threat to a listed building). A rated are the most harmful and C ones that are not causing immediate harm. The team also take into account the public interest in terms of speed of which cases are dealt with.

I know that with Broadwas & Cotheridge we've had various enforcement cases over the last 2 years. With most of these, as it is anywhere else, it is a notification of a development by a resident to a district councillor or reported directly to MHDC and – in most cases – these would be C cases.

We have a separate update to the Parish Council from Aaron in reference to Zourka.

Calls this week for parked cars to be dealt with have been reported and residents can report this via the Report Page on the website, which I've made numerous references to in the past. Once dealt with the road will be cleaned again.

It is important to make use of the 'REPORT IT' page on the MHDC website where most things can be reported so we can deal with them. I don't mind at all these things coming via me but sometimes neighbours can offer more details.

The full 'Planning Enforcement Plan' can be found on the MHDC website and is a useful document to go through the process of enforcement.

As Councillors we now receive a regular update on enforcement cases – something that we used to receive before my time – but given the increase in number of cases we've asked to receive again and it's proving useful.

I know that Eric, Richard and Robert, has supplied a report on our meeting, so I'll leave to report back further and Aaron has further updated us on Zourka, so again I'll leave that report to Aaron.

I have also asked David Harrison to attend a future Parish Council Meeting once the report of our meeting has been discussed and disseminated and as our Planning Portfolio Holder he can answer any further questions and take on any thoughts further to what was discussed at our meeting three weeks ago.

Thank you to Eric, Robert and Richard for making that meeting.