

Broadwas & Cotheridge Parish Council Meeting – 11th May

Since our last meeting in April there has been little change in terms of what has been going on from the District Council point of view with a focus on supporting people, getting support out to business (£11.5 million paid out now) and continuing services such as Waste and Planning.

Plans are now at work alongside the County Council to look at what we can return to as close to normal as possible in line with government guidelines and our governments own “out of lockdown” plans.

It will, of course, be a long time until things are fully anything like they were and, of course, the overwhelming feeling is that things will never be quite the same. Short to medium term social distancing is likely to continue and longer-term lessons learnt from the period will play out so I’m sure we’ll see habits built up during this time continue beyond it.

The Malvern Hills Good Neighbour Network has now been set up as well and can be seen at the Malvern Hills website : <https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/community/malvern-hills-good-neighbour-network>

It has been good seeing communities working so well together.

The current hot potato is the re-opening of tips. There is a feeling this ought to be done but it’s working this with other agencies and ensuring it’s done safely. This means that one in Newlands, Malvern will open from today (Monday). We haven’t seen the upsurge in fly tipping we expected, and the slow re-opening of tips should mean this now doesn’t happen. Our refuse collectors must be commended for the incredible work they’ve done, and, on a few occasions, I’ve spoken with the team to organise collections of missed refuse for people and it’s been done straight away. There is no desire to leave anyone with excess rubbish. And on the times, I have reported any fly-tipping it’s been removed quickly and safely.

Finally, our planning department and enforcement has continued to operate extremely well under much more difficult circumstances but Arron, who we all know well, as been able to make visits as needed to continue to move on enforcement where needed.

We had our first virtual Northern Area planning meeting this week but in the meantime myself and David have worked closely with the team on the numerous applications coming through and ongoing enforcement cases. The planning meeting was interesting and showed to me it’s better to be there to be involved but it worked well. It was calm – there was debate and if you had a knowledge of sheep sheds was even better.

The weekly residents’ emails from our communications teams have been extremely useful in keeping everyone up to date. The latest one was sent by Ian Dipple on Friday.

As it’s been a year since my first Broadwas & Cotheridge Parish Council meeting, and it would be usually the AGM I’ve looked back over the last year. Prior to this worldwide pandemic, we’ve had widespread flooding, a ‘kind of’ conclusion to Brexit and a General Election somewhere in there. It’s been a busy year for me as a first-year councillor. I have been learning as I go along and thank everyone for their help and support.

I am extremely lucky to have three great Parish Councils full of Councillors who work hard and conscientiously for their parishes and Parish Chairs and Clerks who have helped me and kept me on my toes. I thought I got up early in a morning, but I have noticed if I reply to any of Carol’s emails before 6:30 I still get an immediate response. Broadwas & Cotheridge Parish Council meetings are a

pleasure to attend and community has been wonderful to be involved in making me feel very fortunate to have been one of the two elected councillors last year.

Similarly it's been fantastic to work alongside David for the last year who has also been supportive and even though we may at some level have differing political views both of us only ever want to work as best we can for our ward and have worked together very well. I hope he agrees! I knew Douglas would be a hard act to follow. As of now I no longer have the excuse of being new.

My start as a councillor was even a strange one with our council offices not being ready for new councillors and our initial meetings all taking place at County Hall, as opposed to the council offices in Malvern.

The SWDP Revision has taken up much of our year and the work we've done to ensure the best for our ward on this continues despite, once again, our ward appearing to take the brunt of new housing in MHDC if the proposal goes ahead as it at the consultation stage. We have continued to talk about the roads and burden on villages and what is needed - and to push for this.

We've talked about the new administrations 5 Year Plan which continues many strands of the previous administrations but developing our own in line with current residents demands.

We want to see continuity but an increased focus on community, the environment and addressing the skills shortage across the district.

Our budget has also been approved.

Locally it was great to see Broadwas and Cotheridge complete their Neighbourhood plan and good to visit the Cotheridge art and music festival. And those bins on our laybys. Of course, we've also been heavily involved with planning applications and enforcement.

The new administration passed a climate emergency and we continue to build upon that. We've approved a £2 million refurbishment of Malvern Splash with Priory Park set to be next and we supported the opening of the Maggs homeless centre in Malvern. For me that led to one of the strangest events of being a councillor, which meant being dropped off in the middle of nowhere in Oxfordshire along with a fellow councillor and having to make it back to Malvern within 48 hours – with no money, no electronic devices and rules on how we could use transport.

Thankfully we made it back and raised a good amount of money for Maggs.

We've looked at transport around the district with the falling numbers of buses and we're continuing to develop a plan around community transport and I've just completed a report on Apprenticeships which will be heard at the next Overview & Scrutiny Panel and I hope actions will come from it which will further support businesses and apprentices in the area.

It'll be good to get back to our usual meetings and the Village hall soon.