

## **Lyonshall Annual Parish Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021, held virtually at 7.00pm**

### **Reports**

#### **Chairman – Paul Avery.**

There was no annual meeting in 2020 due to covid but during 2019 points of note are:

- New Councillor Richard Davies co-opted following vacancy from 2019 elections
- NDP referendum on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 – an excellent turnout with 82.4% supporting the plan. Herefordshire Council made the plan law on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020.
- Speed data collection from hired speed indicator devices (SID) from BB at Burgoynes and Fishpool – evidence show SID helps reduce speeding.
- Harper development on Holme Marsh – seeing diversion of LZ8 around the site but it is expected to be rerouted through the development after completion.
- Flooding in November 2019 & February 2020 caused damage to residents' property in the village and in Holme Marsh. Continue to liaise with Balfour Beatty and Herefordshire Council to help protect properties.
- Events - 2<sup>nd</sup> August outside BBQ and Picnic and 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 pop up pub offering free pizza and chips. Heartstart Course organised by Gill on 16<sup>th</sup> September
- Annual litter pick 1st March 2020.

In 2020

- Covid lockdowns – parish mailing and implementation of volunteers group – thanks to Rod.
- Parish Council meetings start on BlueJeans virtually in April 2020 thanks to emergency legislation.
- PC purchase a new Speed Indicator Device in December 2020 with grant funding obtained from the OPCC – Also installation of a new base along the C1031 – That gives three bases to move the SID around. Thanks to Rod Bevan for all his work on speeding.
- Telephone Box refurbishment
- Local parishioner set up a community charity box
- Gigaclear installations
- Licence at behind Barz
- Foxhole Clay Shoots complaints
- Christmas Tree Event
- Mission hut land transfer ongoing
- PC will support local wombling group with purchase of equipment if required.
- Continue to battle dog mess. Signs have been erected in the village.
- Playground: has seen the wooden bars on the climbing frame replaced under warranty, repairs to the see saw, a replacement wooden bar on the trim trail and extra bark laid. Also following flood damage, the whole fence was replaced in November 2020. In recent months there have been problems with local children climbing on the pavilion.

#### **Ward County Councillor – Roger Phillips**

By law, all Parishes must hold an annual Parish meeting and for this month's update I enclose my annual report presented to all five Annual Parish Meetings.

The last 12 months have been the most difficult time for us all with severe restrictions on our daily life and work. I want to begin by thanking those volunteers in our community who stepped forward to help the local support team to protect the most vulnerable and shielded sections of our communities. Our local Leads, who coordinates that work with public agencies along with all the key workers who brought us through the toughest and most difficult time we have ever known.

Herefordshire Council has received over 20 million pounds from the government to cover the additional costs regarding Covid, compensation for lost income, providing PPE, outbreak control activities including enforcement, school transport, food and emergency assistance, accommodation costs for rough sleepers etc.

By the 9<sup>th</sup> of April 2021 we had paid 21,200 grants (totalling just over £100m) to businesses, this number and the amount increases every day, nearly 2,000 businesses have had help with their business rates. The Council received grants just over £1m to help households struggling to pay council tax, distributed over £5m to care homes and care providers and also to nearly 300 people required to self-isolate under test and trace rules.

Can I encourage individuals and businesses struggling with Council tax or businesses rates to get in touch with the council to see if we can help?

Throughout the pandemic using broadband, using an informal slogan of being “nice nosy neighbours” I have maintained contacts with the residential emails I hold with monthly updates, and in the six months till Easter weekly local covid information, and will continue in the near future on a fortnightly basis. I have attended Parish Council meetings by zoom and other platforms working with them on a range of issues throughout the year. I have helped many residents and businesses and when possible, under covid compliance arranged personal site visits to address individual concerns. I would value receiving any additional email contacts of residents within the ward who you feel may be interested in receiving information.

As we roll out the vaccines and the locking eases, we must turn our minds to returning to more normal pattern of life. I will be working with Herefordshire Council, public agencies, business, parish councils and my communities to gradually, carefully, and securely build the confidence of all residents during the summer before the winter nights return. None of us I am sure would want to experience another winter like the last one.

The majority of Herefordshire Council’s budget is spent on care services for adults and children. There is a larger proportion of mature citizens in our county and while many will be self-founders there is an added pressure of providing respite and residential care. The weaker economy and low wage levels also put pressure on Children’s services. Our Children’s care services have always been under pressure and the recent high court judgement makes uncomfortable reading. It is important to understand if the actions involved were unusual or of a more consistent pattern of poor performance.

## PLANNING

The continued freeze on new development and extensions involving extra bedroom/bathroom facilities is having a significant impact on housing supply and the local

construction businesses. It is a major issue for all my parishes as they are all part of the Lugg catchment area which covers 40 % of Herefordshire. However, despite this reduction in applications the planning department is under pressure, unable to deal with applications within timescales, lacking clarity on consultation and reports, poor responding to enquiries and causing frustration amongst applicants.

The Harper development at Holmes Marsh which gained permission before the ban is the only housing development allowed to take place.

### Phosphate in the Lugg catchment

I have been lobbying Government on seeking greater priority on tackling our phosphate issue. There are two main sources of phosphate – that which comes from sewage systems (Welsh water and private) and Agriculture.

I want to see Increased investment by Welsh water in our catchment area there are no plans to upgrade any of our sewage works. The Environment Agency needs to work more closely on policing some of this regular spillage.

The council and the Wye and Usk foundation project of wetlands is an important element of phosphate reduction this seems to have been delayed and again it would appear no sites have been identified in our parishes.

Agriculturally we need to recognise that phosphate is locked in the land and it would take 50 years to lower levels, so we need to target the reduction of soil and effluent run off. DEFRA already was working on this with grants to improve drainage of farm dirty water and proper muck stores, however the council's planning department frustrates the development of this work.

I have lobbied DEFRA to influence emerging Govt legislation on Agriculture support to target those fields in highly sensitive parts of the catchment area identified in the satellite mapping as having the greatest risk of soil\_run off. (the satellite apparently goes over our catchment twice a week). These field landowners should initially be financially supported to return these fields to either permanent grasslands or have a wider field boundary also of permanent grassland. Encouragement could be given to plant species of grass plants etc to greater support wildlife. This has greater potential impact than purchasing and giving it to the wildlife trust to manage as you can return a massive percentage of vulnerable fields to a stable position in a very short timescale. Since 1947 British Agriculture has been shaped by Government /EU financial support. This could be a major feature of the Governments 25-year environmental plan in helping reduce the phosphate levels in vulnerable areas such as ours.

The council is bringing forward a potential phosphate calculation to help house building restart by offsetting land out of production. The details of all this should be published soon.

### HIGHWAYS

Although Lawton's cross is just outside my patch it is much used by my residents and was a serious accident black spot and one of my manifesto commitments. Working with officers we identified a solution of a small roundabout so that all traffic has to give way. This has been installed and to date seem to have had a positive impact. I had concerns about the length it took to build and the cost, but I know is valued by the many residents who use the junction.

The battle on highways repairs continues to be a challenge and I was pleased to be able to secure resurfacing works on the Easthampton and New roads in Shobdon, Bearwood Lane and Manley Crescent in Pembridge, and Grosty to Lower Green highway near Broxwood. Just before lock down I gained the significant investment in drainage and resurfacing of the Rhyse lane which was accessed direct from Government. However already in places the sides are crumbling reflecting the weight of vehicles over the highway.

After considerable lobbying, the Great hole of Rodd was repaired and work on the collapsed piping under the B3465 at Shobdon will be undertaken in the coming year.

Many highways still remain a priority including Horseway head lane, Noke lane, Balls corner to Milton cross, part of Burton lane and Parson walk.

The Government has cut its highway maintenance grant in 2021/22 to prioritise Care services in local government expenditure and to add to this the Herefordshire Council cabinet member has reduced the expenditure on carriageways from 60% of the highway budget to 25% while increasing the expenditure on drainage and bridges. There is only one planned drainage scheme and one bridge repair in my ward planned for 2021/22.

Since 2005 I have ensured that all traffic driving through Pembridge, Shobdon and Lyonshall has been monitored on a daily basis so we can understand the movement and growth of vehicles. This has been invaluable for me to help lobby for additional funding. Speeding is a concern in all the villages, and I have pushed for Pembridge to be the pilot project for a 20-mph speed limit – the first whole village speed limit in Herefordshire. The formal consultation has recently been run and I anticipate the order will come into place this financial year.

Sept 2020 average 5-day figure

	Shobdon	Lyonshall	Eardisley	Pembridge
Motorcycle	97	62	45	57
Car or Light Van	3516	1616	3221	1885
Car + trailer	97	34	87	46
Rigid, Heavy Van or Minibus	606	424	903	587
Articulated HGV	170	51	217	144
Bus or Coach	10	29	12	3

Highway surfacing in Bearwood Lane, piping on the Rhyse Lane and surfacing at Lawton`s cross.

## Broadband

I am committed to ensure as many households and business in my ward have the potential to be connected to fibre optic broadband with high speeds. Following on from the completion of the Shobdon contract this year so the start of the Pembridge and Lyonshall contracts. This involved traffic diversions and impact on many residents and businesses with a great deal of care been taken in Pembridge with the recent installed surfacing. The rural elements still progressing.

Hardwick was included in the Pembridge build and the remainder of Eardisland will be done under their own contact this year. The Broxwood area will be covered by the Ameley build this year.

I was particularly pleased to get the Titley build contract agreed in the last 12 months and that should also be rolled out this year. I had agreed extensions to Knill and Nash and some of the most isolated residencies in the ward. We also secured 175K to ensure broadband was supplied to the businesses on the Shobdon Aerodrome.

The Gigaclear contract continue on our highways.  
If you have any concerns on the works, please contact  
networkbuildcare@gigaclear.com or tel. 0186 5591 137

I have given all parish councillors maps of local highways and they receive a weekly note from our local Balfour Steward on all the works done in the parishes. As ever on other highway or footpaths concerns, please report any problems using the links below or phone 01432261800.

Go onto Herefordshire Council website and download the pothole App to help report potholes  
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/maintenance/potholes>  
<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole>

Footpaths  
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/footpaths-byways-and-bridleways/cg-report-prow-problem>.

Report fly tipping it will be dealt with in a much quicker time frame. by either calling the Contact Centre on 01432 261800 or by logging the fly tipping via the council website on the links below as your [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report\\_a\\_problem/98/fly\\_tipping](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report_a_problem/98/fly_tipping)

If you wish to make a claim as a result of damage to your vehicle <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/2>

I thank all the Parish clerks for their work during the year and to all of you who have supported me during the last 12 months. It remains a privilege and pleasure to represent the communities of the Arrow ward.

Cllr Roger Phillips  
Arrow ward – Herefordshire Council

### **Police Representative – Dean Wall**

No attendance however a short report was forwarded: -

Following a search on the Lyonshall area for the last month, only highway incidents and miscellaneous reports were returned.

### **Footpaths Officer – Kate Lomax**

The Parish Footpath contractor has been continuing work to upgrade the Lyonshall network of public rights of way. He has fitted 5 gates, direction signs, cleared undergrowth on road access and public areas. One gate and some minor work will soon be completed to make a circular footpath route from Holme Marsh fully gated.

Balfour Beatty has repaired 2 footbridges, provided way markers, and undertaken some minor works.

Farmers – one bridge required a temporary permissive path diversion, many thanks to the farmer for their assistance. I would also like to express my thanks on behalf of walkers to all farmers who keep their footpaths clear. It is particularly noticeable on the many distinct paths through crops.

The Footpath Working Group was unable to meet because of Covid restrictions. However, volunteers continued to do minor clearing of footpaths on their walks which has been very much appreciated. The Group is planning to resume minor maintenance work on the footpaths when Covid restrictions allow.

There are plans in the current year to replace more gates as well as continuing the regular maintenance.

#### **Lyonshall Mums & Tots group -Tanya Gouldby**

Tots group commenced on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and was held weekly with between 10-12 parents and their children until we were forced to close on 12<sup>th</sup> March in light of Covid-19 pandemic.

We resumed briefly for 3 weeks in December 2020 with 4 adults and their children attending.

The group was able to re-open on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021, with 4 adults returning in the first week and 7 last week plus children. Tots' funds are very low at the moment, however the group has always proved popular and with the renovation of the hall I am confident that we will be able to regain numbers.

#### **Lyonshall Memorial Hall – Chairman Kathy Thompson**

The Memorial Hall has remained inactive through most of 2020 and into 2021, due to enforced lockdown because of Covid 19.

Whilst our doors have not been open to our faithful user groups, we have not been idle during lockdown.

The hall was due to close for 8 weeks for refurbishment in March 2020, so the first lockdown coincided with this.

We were fortunate to obtain the building materials we needed, and our team of local contractors were happy to continue with the project, so work got underway as planned.

We were unable to utilise our team of local volunteers as hoped, but with the extended timescale, we were not under any pressure to complete within the 8 weeks.

The extra time enabled additional improvements which had not been planned, and we now have a super new main hall.

It has been totally transformed with a new floor, new ceiling, modern LED lights and wall radiators. It is now bright, airy, and modern, and with insulation throughout, it is warm and comfortable.

We look forward to welcoming back our existing users as lockdown restrictions ease and hope to encourage a wider and more diverse set of activities to utilise the hall and offer more to the community.

We have been fortunate to receive financial local restriction grant support from Herefordshire Council, which has eased the total loss of income over the past year.

The Memorial Hall is in a positive place and set to move forward and serve its growing community in years to come.

We look forward to accessing Gigaclear Broadband for the hall in July and if we successfully complete the roadmap out of lockdown in June, we look forward to a Village reunion sometime in August at the Memorial Hall.

### **Lyonshall Tree Warden Report – David Griffiths**

There was a poor response from parishioners to the offer of trees last year.

I visited a number of possible tree planting locations in the village with Rod Bevan – the field just above Burnt Orchard remains a possible site.

The previously reported dangerous horse chestnut tree adjacent to a public footpath has been felled.

I continue to work in collaboration with other neighbouring tree wardens – this winter we have continued our black poplar project with five new plantings in Lyonshall parish with the agreement of landowners, and over 200 cuttings distributed in Herefordshire. I've also maintained the previously planted trees in the parish.

I would like to look again at finding somewhere for community tree planting within the parish.

### **Royal George Update**

Mr Hern was unable to attend at the last minute as he has been called away on another matter. Cllr Avery to update.

Everybody is very frustrated about the rate of progress on the pub. In fact each time I step out I am asked what am I doing about the pub? It is important to start by setting out the reality of the situation which has got rather lost in time.

The pub has been closed for a long time originally because Punch Taverns ran it into the ground. They took increasing amounts of rent, went through tenants like water because the rent was too high, and they did absolutely nothing to repair the pub during their ownership.

When Punch finally closed it, they tried to sell part of the car park and part of the garden for housing. Their next move would have been to close the pub and seek planning to turn it into a house. The economics historically made that a very real possibility.

The Parish Council fought the application successfully, inviting the local radio station and bringing the centre of Lyonshall to a halt by parking cars on the side of the road as customers would have to if there was no car park.

Then Punch put the pub as a whole, including the car park up for sale for £265,000.

A group formed a social company for the community to raise money to buy the pub. It managed to raise around £175,000 but that was not enough to buy it let alone repair it. It was on the market and no-one was buying it. Mr Hern approached the Chair of the PC and one of the people who had committed capital to try to buy the pub as a community pub. He could buy the Pub but would need to finance it by building around 40 houses. He appreciated that it would never be a great investment, but the village needed a pub.

PC response was that we had to get the backing of the community who had already said in response to the early NDP questionnaire that they only wanted 2 houses built a year.

PC provided the community with the facts and delivered a questionnaire to every household in the Parish asking about the housing to support the pub. There was a good response, 75% of the people responding approved the concept of building houses to finance the pub. The reason for going into that is to remind people that Mr Hern was the only game in town at that time. He was the only person prepared to buy the pub and then repair it. It was always clear that he had to sell his 40 odd houses to finance the pub.

People have since said that the plans for a large pub did not make sense. Lyonshall used to have a couple of pubs and shops and a post office. Now it has nothing. The plans for the pub will provide not only a pub but also a shop, a cinema room, a café, play areas for youngsters, a party room amongst other things. In other words, it will provide at one go a real heart and centre for the village; a place where people can meet, drink, eat and buy groceries and fresh local meat. Importantly a large diverse pub provides a number of reasons for people to visit it and make it sustainable. That is not cheap, nor does it come easily.

The development of the houses has been terribly slow, but the first phase is finally taking off with many of the houses sold or well down the road to being sold. The first part of rebuilding the pub was always going to be slow because the costs of developing the site with roads and services are paid upfront before the houses are sold. The planning process has really slowed the whole project down. Mr Hern was hit first by Welsh Water and their 'Grampian Order' stopping any new house approvals for 3 years and now he has been delayed by the phosphate problems where the planners will not allow any flexibility in changes to existing plans. Herefordshire planning and the Phosphate problems have not helped and in truth it is hard to see how any houses get built anywhere at the moment.

Let's turn to the more positive side. The most complex bit of the building, ironically the hole in the ground, has almost been completed. Unfortunately, there was a leak from under the pub itself and that filled the hole with water. The leak has been located and they expect to pour the concrete spine wall next month and progress to the blockwork. The new electric connection has been agreed and paid for and will be installed once the blockwork is finished. They expect the oak frame and steel frames to be up by spring of next year and once they are up the old pub building will be scaffolded and renovated. Once the hole is completed things will be seen to move faster, but Kinsey still needs to sell more plots, and the Phosphate problems are not helping as they are an additional problem slowing an already cumbersome planning process.

Roger Phillips has been working hard to help get the planning department moving faster on the new houses and approvals to enable them to be completed and bring in more cash.

We must remember that there is little or nothing that the PC can do to speed up the process.

Mr Hern owns the land, and buildings and can take as long as he wants. However there have been 4 generations of HERNs in Lyonshall and they have always been good responsible farmers guarding their reputation jealously. I believe that Kinsey will complete the pub because as a family they could not live here if he did not. That is the best incentive that we can have for the completion of the pub.