

CREDENHILL PARISH COUNCIL



MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT CREDENHILL COMMUNITY HALL ON 18th DECEMBER 2024

PRESENT:

Councillor Mr. Martin Leaton Chair (ML), Councillor Mr. Paul Beechey (PA), Councillor Mr. Andrew Slater (AS), Councillor Miss. Deanna Pennington (DE), Councillor Revd. Rana Davies-James (RD), Councillor Mr. Paul Burrige (PB), Councillor Mr. Chris Lewis (CL), Councillor Mr. Dan Fellows (DF), Councillor Mrs Dot Pullen (DP), Councillor Mrs Sandra Cheasley (SC), Councillor Mrs Kelly Edwards (KE).

Ward Councillor Mrs. Charlotte Taylor (CT)

Parish Council Clerk/RFO – Mr. Lee Harper-Smith (Clerk)

3 Members of the Press /Public present.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.33 pm.

1. Apologies for Absence - To receive and accept apologies for absence.

Councillor Mr Paul Warrington (PW).

2. Declarations of Interest & Dispensations

2.1. SC declared interests in agenda items 6.5, 11.2 & 11.3.

2.2. No written applications for dispensation considered.

3. Speakers

Opportunity for visiting speakers to address council and the public in attendance.

3.1. Update from Ward Cllr Charlotte Taylor received, see Appendix C.

AS asked if the bypass was still on the agenda? CT confirmed that plans are still being discussed.

Karen Stocker (KS) – Asked why the landowner has not improved the drainage to the rear of the Glebe Close properties with surface water issues? ML confirmed that the matter is being dealt with by CT/Herefordshire Council.

4. Public Question Time

Opportunity for members of the public to raise issues or ask the Parish Council questions.

None raised

5. Minutes

DP proposed to approve and sign the minutes of the Ordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 20th November 2024 and seconded by RD.

6. Matters arising since last meeting:

6.1. TRO Dovecote Lane/Station Road is currently in public consultation that closes on 6th January 2025, following this a final decision will be made.

6.2. The top 3 priorities for policing for the next quarter (January - March 2025) were agreed as per the previous plan with the addition of speeding traffic in Dovecote Lane at school drop off/pickup times.

6.3. Noted that the Herefordshire Council 2025/26 Budget Consultation will remain open until 3pm on 20th December 2024.

6.4. Proposed by PA that the parish council make sandbags available for public use during extreme weather, seconded by PA. Clerk to order 3 pallets, 1 for Mill Farm paid for by PB and 2 for the Community Centre.

SC left the meeting

6.5. Roman Park fence collapsed at the rear of 3 glebe close properties. Clerk to get costs for replacement or removal and demarcation of the boundary.

SC rejoined the meeting

CREDENHILL PARISH COUNCIL



- 6.6. The parish council considered a request from The Life & Soul Kitchen for permission to develop a small pond and to keep chickens. Clerk to obtain more details before the Parish Council will sign off however in principle is supportive if both are removed at the end of the lease.
- 6.7. AS proposed not to rejoin HALC (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils), seconded by PA. All voted in favour of the proposal.

7. Financial Reports – Appendix A

- 7.1. Confirmation of Bank Balances
- 7.2. Receipts
- 7.3. Invoices for Payment
- 7.4. Comparison of year-to-date actual spend compared to budget.

PB proposed to approve the financial reports with the addition of an £80 invoice received from Marches Grounds Maintenance for grass cutting /weed control at Backhouse Park and the final Grass cutting payment of £488.57 to be held subject to final cuts being complete. Seconded by DF.

8. Final Draft Budget 2025/26 – Appendix B

- 8.1. The final draft budget for 2025/26 was presented and adopted by the Parish Council.
- 8.2. AS proposed to approve the gross precept for 2025/26 to be set at £47,459 and submitted to Herefordshire Council, seconded by DF. Supported unanimously.

9. Planning (PA, AS)

Reference	Details	CPC Status	HC Previous Status	HC New Status
	Currently no applications			

10. To receive reports from working groups

- 10.1. Finance & Asset Management (AS, ML, PW, PB) - See item 8
- 10.2. Community Hall (SC, AS) – SC was unable to attend the last meeting due to work commitments. Also, the next meeting in January is again, on my workday so I have sent in my apologies and advised work a Tuesday and Wednesday.
Christmas Fair went well with good attendance despite Storm Bert. I have not heard how well they did but when I left at 4.30pm the raffle alone had made a £150. It was a new formula this year with a joint venture with L&S so opened mid-morning until 7pm. The Hall Trustees felt it went on a bit long for us but could not close early as L&S were expecting people after they finished work at 5pm. Perhaps a rethink for next year is necessary to suit both parties.
- 10.3. Footpaths (SC, DF) – Hedge trimmings left on the path near Headway. Clerk has already followed up with the contractor.
- 10.4. Shops/Businesses (DP, KE) – The proposed Pharmacy is still going through the various consultations, at present there have been several objections raised by other Pharmacies.
- 10.5. War Memorial (ML) – Solar light post toppers have been installed, posts to be painted once conditions allow.
- 10.6. Schools (RD) – Carol service was well attended. Junction repainted to rear of school. PA provided an update regarding a tree falling into the gardens and garage of 2 properties in Centurion Way. School have been working to resolve the matter with them and remainder of tree to be assessed by tree surgeon as there is a TPO in place.
- 10.7. Roman Park (DF, ML, SC) – No update
- 10.8. Social Club (PA) – Club is in a much better position this year and now breaking even which is much better than last year's £11.5k loss. The club will be open on Christmas Day and the usual New Years Eve Party is the next big event.
- 10.9. Climate Change (SC, DF, EJ) – No update
- 10.10. Credenhill Community Club (PW) – No update

CREDENHILL PARISH COUNCIL



11. To receive reports from sub-committee

11.1. A progress update from the 2020 Flood report Investigation sub-committee was provided. (PA, KE, AS, DF) – An initial meeting had taken place, and the sub-committee required a decision to be made by the full council to decide the next course of action.

11.2. It was resolved to move into closed session to consider legal matters in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. Proposed by AS, seconded by KE.

SC, the clerk, public and press left the meeting.

11.3. Proposed by PB to take legal advice prior to responding to letter received. Seconded by DP. Clerk to contact solicitor.

SC, the clerk, public and press rejoined the meeting.

12. Public Question Time

Further opportunity for members of the public to raise issues or ask the Parish Council questions

No further questions

13. Confirmation of the next Meetings, Time, Date & Place.

The next Ordinary Parish Council meeting will be at 7.30 pm, 15th January 2024, at Credenhill Community Hall. A summons and notice will be provided nearer the time.

The Chair declared the meeting closed at 20:42.

Councillor Mr Martin Leaton Chair

Signed.....

Date.....

CREDENHILL PARISH COUNCIL



Appendix A - Financial Information

Income & Expenditure		Lloyds Current	Lloyds Reserve	Total
31/10/2024	Opening Balance	1,606.59	47,139.08	48,745.67
Receipts				
04/11/2024	Life & Soul Kitchen – Rent	628.00		628.00
11/11/2024	Lloyds - Interest Received		42.16	42.16
18/11/2024	Hereford Centre for Natural Health CCN Advert	60.00		60.00
18/11/2024	Maid Domestic Services - CCN Advertising	60.00		60.00
22/11/2024	Freeman Homes - CCN Advertising	185.00		185.00
	Total Received in Period	933.00	42.16	975.16
Payments				
05/11/2024	Border Contracts – Backhouse Park Gate	-1,896.00		-1,896.00
05/11/2024	Curry's PC World – Laptop (for CCN Editor)	-549.00		-549.00
18/11/2024	NEST - Pension Payment	-77.70		-77.70
20/11/2024	Mrs E Jones – Wages November 2024	-357.62		-357.62
20/11/2024	Mrs E Jones – Expenses October 2024	-29.66		-29.66
20/11/2024	Mr L Harper-Smith – Wages October 2024	-907.50		-907.50
20/11/2024	Mr L Harper-Smith – Expenses October 2024	-85.56		-85.56
20/11/2024	Craig Powell – Maintenance October 2024	-37.90		-37.90
20/11/2024	Credenhill Community Hall – Hall Hire October 2024	-36.00		-36.00
20/11/2024	Magna Refund of payment received in error	-11.00		-11.00
20/11/2024	Barrington Print – CCN Printing November 2024	-515.00		-515.00
20/11/2024	Good n Property Maintenance – War Memorial Paving 2/2	-4,350.00		-4,350.00
20/11/2024	Deanna Pennington - Expense Refund - Wreath	-22.25		-22.25
28/11/2024	Valda Energy - Electricity Carpark/Changing Rooms	-70.79		-70.79
28/11/2024	Welsh Water – Water Rates Community Centre	-109.50		-109.50
	Total Spent in Period	-9,055.48	0.00	-9,055.48
Transfers				
	Total Transfers in Period	9,000.00	-9,000.00	0.00
30/11/2024	Closing Balance	2,484.11	38,181.24	40,665.35
Payments to Authorise				
18/12/2024	Mrs E Jones – Wages December 2024	-357.62		-357.62
18/12/2024	Mr L Harper-Smith – Wages November 2024	-907.50		-907.50
18/12/2024	Mr L Harper-Smith – Expenses November 2024	-118.85		-118.85
18/12/2024	Craig Powell – Maintenance November 2024	-204.92		-204.92
18/12/2024	Credenhill Community Hall – Hall Hire November 2024	-36.00		-36.00
18/12/2024	Barrington Print – CCN Printing December 2024	-488.00		-488.00
18/12/2024	Marches Grounds Maintenance – Hedges/Weed Control 2/2	-910.00		-910.00
TBC	Marches Grounds Maintenance – 7/7 Grass Cutting	-488.57		-488.57
	Total Payments to Authorise	-3,511.46	0.00	-3,511.46
Transfers to Authorise				
18/12/2024	Transfer from Reserve to Current Account	-2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00
	Total Transfers to Authorise	-2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00

CREDENHILL PARISH COUNCIL



ASSETS	Cash & Bank		Balance
	Lloyds – Current Account (after payments)		1,472.65
	Lloyds – Reserve Account (after transfers)		35,681.24
	Petty Cash		0.00
	Total Cash & Bank		37,153.89
	Debtors	No Due	Overdue
	The Life & Soul Kitchen Ltd – Rent	628.00	628.00
	RO-Stars Hereford – Roman Park Hire Fees	50.00	50.00
	Total Debtors	678.00	728.00
	Other Debtors		
	Total Other Debtors	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL ASSETS		37,881.89
LIABILITIES	Creditors	Not Due	Overdue
	ICO – Annual Data Protection Fee	35.00	35.00
	Herefordshire Council – Trade Waste/Recycling	179.74	179.74
	Total Trade Creditors	214.74	0.00
	Other Liabilities		
	HMRC - PAYE Owing (DD)	120.78	120.78
	NEST Pension Payments Owing (DD)	77.70	77.70
	Youth Club Funds	762.06	762.06
	VAT at 20% to be reclaimed from HMRC	-463.34	-463.34
	VAT at 5% to be reclaimed from HMRC	-6.36	-6.36
	Total Other Liabilities	490.84	0.00
	TOTAL LIABILITIES		705.58
	TOTAL		37,176.31
Reserves	Current Budget	Income	Expense's
			Budget Remaining
	Local Grants	6,500	6,372
	Roman Park	17,222	17,222
	Land & Buildings Improvement Fund	4,446	2,237
	Repairs & Renewals	8,834	4,146
	Resource Centre Fence	3,000	6,251
	Backhouse Park – Capital	20,150	2,237
	Blooming Credenhill	500	22,387
	War Memorial Improvement Fund	3,000	448
		2,250	5,250
	Total Projects Budget Requirement		29,340
			TOTAL
			37,176
			Operating Fund (Cashflow)
			7,836
	Less Operational Budget Balance (Rest of the year)		9,406
			Add back YTD Saving on Budget
			1,498
			Operating Budget Excess/Deficit
			-72

CREDENHILL PARISH COUNCIL



2024-2025 Budget/Actual Comparison YTD

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Notes	
	b/fwd. Reserve	Year Budget	Total Budget (inc Reserve)	YTD Comparable Budget Total	YTD Actual Spent/ Receipt	YTD Variance	Agreed Budget Movements	YTD Comparable Budget Change	Revised YTD Variance	
Wages (inc Employers NI)		16,126	16,126	10,751	11,110	- 359	361	361	2	Street Cleaner paid 1 month in advance
Employer Pension Contribution		474	474	316	327	- 11	11	11	0	Street Cleaner paid 1 month in advance
Staffing Costs		16,600	16,600	11,067	11,436	- 369	372	372	2	
Software		95	95	63	69	- 6	-	-	6	Budget incorrect should be £104
Travel & Subsistence		120	120	80	86	- 6	-	-	6	
Printing		144	144	144	163	- 19	-	-	19	New Printer Purchased with 3 years worth of ink
Telephone		60	60	40	40	-	-	-	-	
Postage		12	12	9	9	0	-	-	0	
Stationary		60	60	45	62	- 17	-	-	17	
Homeworking Allowance		180	180	120	120	-	-	-	-	
Meeting Room Hire/File Storage		540	540	280	272	8	-	-	8	
Office & Meeting Costs		1,211	1,211	781	821	- 39			39	
Website Hosting Fee		82	82	55	80	- 25	-	-	25	Budget incorrect should be £130
Printing CCN		4,807	4,807	3,845	3,975	- 130	-	-	130	Contract over budget approx 5%
Advertising & Promotion		4,889	4,889	3,900	4,055	- 155			155	
Insurance		1,700	1,700	1,700	1,674	26	-	-	26	
Internal Audit		180	180	180	180	-	-	-	-	
External Audit		420	420	420	315	105	-	-	105	
ICO Membership Fee		35	35	35	35	-	-	-	-	
Professional/Planning		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Election Costs		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Legal Fees		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Playground Inspection		134	134	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Insurance, Legal & Professional Cost		2,469	2,469	2,335	2,204	131			131	
Changing Rooms - Electric		204	204	136	223	- 87	17	17	70	
Changing Rooms - Water Rates		90	90	45	24	21	-	-	21	
Community Centre - Waste Disposal		700	700	700	719	- 19	-	-	19	
Community Centre - Water		-	-	-	235	235	235	235	-	To be recharged to utilities recharges
Community Centre - Electric		360	360	240	231	9	-	-	9	
Utility & Waste Management Costs		1,354	1,354	1,121	1,431	- 310	252	252	59	
Outsourced Maintenance Costs										
Maintenance		1,952	1,952	1,403	938	464	-	-	464	
Materials		240	240	160	130	30	-	-	30	
Cleaning		413	413	275	129	146	-	-	146	
Hedge Cutting		500	500	500	400	100	-	-	100	
Weed Control		1,068	1,068	1,068	1,020	48	-	-	48	
Grass Cutting		4,061	4,061	3,741	3,420	321	-	-	321	
Tree Maintenance		1,000	1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Outsourced Maintenance Costs		9,234	9,234	7,147	6,038	1,109			1,109	
Total Operating Costs		35,757	35,757	26,351	25,985	366	623	623	989	
Exceptional/Planned Costs										
Charitable Grant Provision		6,500	6,500	6,500	6,372	128	-	-	128	
Roman Park	11,222	6,000	17,222	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Land & Buildings Improvement Fund		4,446	4,446	2,237	-	2,237	2,237	2,237	-	
Asset Repairs & Renewals	6,681	2,153	8,834	2,106	6,251	4,145	4,146	4,146	0	
Hall/Resource Centre Boundary Fence	3,000	-	3,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Backhouse Park - Capital	18,000	2,150	20,150	20,150	22,387	- 2,237	2,237	2,237	0	Signs/Bin/Gate/Install Costs to buy £455/?/£1,580/£100 - funded from Land & Building Fund
Backhouse Park - Revenue		290	290	145	-	145	-	-	145	
Blooming Credenhill Project		500	500	448	448	0	-	-	0	
War Memorial Improvement Fund	2,000	1,000	3,000	3,000	5,352	- 2,352	2,250	2,250	102	
Exceptional/Planned Costs		40,903	23,039	63,942	34,586	40,811	- 6,225	6,396	6,396	171
Total Projected/Actual Costs		40,903	58,796	99,699	60,937	66,795	- 5,859	7,019	7,019	1,160
Income										
Precept		43,857	43,857	43,857	43,857	-	-	-	-	
Rent		7,567	7,567	5,683	5,653	30	-	-	30	
Bank Interest		540	540	360	302	58	-	-	58	
CCN Adverts		1,785	1,785	1,545	1,248	297	-	-	297	
Hire of Changing Rooms		600	600	450	450	-	-	-	-	
Donations/Other Income		-	-	-	7,011	7,011	6,396	6,396	616	Bus stop fence recharge received - to be reallocated. Magna/Hall refund for Projector and Blinds.
Grants Income		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Utilities Recharges		-	-	-	107	107	-	-	107	
Total Income		54,349	54,349	51,895	58,628	6,734	6,396	6,396	338	
YTD Budget/Actual Variance						875			1,498	

CREDENHILL PARISH COUNCIL



Appendix B – Final Draft 2025/26 Budget

2025-2026 Budget - Final Draft

5th December 2024

	Prior Year Total Budget	Year Total Budget	Change	%	Notes
Clerk Wages/PAYE	11,465	12,209	745	6.5%	Based on 15 hour @£14.66 per hour plus 6.5% (min wage % inc) = £15.61
Street Cleaner Wages/PAYE	4,330	4,612	281	6.5%	Based on 8.5 hour @£11.83 per hour plus 6.5% (min wage % inc) = £12.60
Employers NI	332	1,083	751	226.5%	Autumn Statement - 15% on monthly earnings > £416 per employee
Employers Pension Contribution	474	505	31	6.5%	3% on Gross
Staffing Costs	16,600	18,408	1,808	10.9%	Staff Costs
Microsoft Office 365	95	120	25	26.6%	
Travel	120	156	36	30.0%	Estimated Travel per month
Printing	144	50	-94	-65.3%	Ink if needed
Telephone	60	60	-	0.0%	Lebara Mobile Contract
Postage	12	12	-	0.0%	Stamps
Stationary	60	84	24	40.0%	Envelopes, Paper, Folders, Dividers, stationary.
Homeworking Allowance	180	180	-	0.0%	Statutory amount of £15 per month
Room Hire	440	420	-20	-4.5%	Community Hall Hire for Meetings
File Storage Cost	100	100	-	0.0%	Hire of storage for files in Hall
Office & Meeting Costs	1,211	1,182	-29	-2.4%	Postage, Printing, Stationary, Telephone, Broadband & Travel.
Website Hosting Fee	82	120	38	46.3%	Based on actual
Printing CCN	4,807	5,541	734	15.3%	Based on 2023/24 plus CPI (970 copies)
Advertising & Promotion	4,889	5,661	772	15.8%	Website & CCN
Insurance	1,700	1,843	143	8.4%	Based on 2024 plus increase 10% (Backhouse Park)
Bank Fees	-	60	60	New	Letter received from Lloyds Fees from 14/01/2025
Internal Audit	180	190	10	5.6%	2024 plus £10 increase
External Audit	420	331	-89	-21.3%	Based on current cost plus 5%
ICO Membership Fee	35	35	-	0.0%	Actual
Playground Inspection	134	201	67	50.0%	Estimate to include Backhouse Park
Insurance, Legal & Professional Costs	2,469	2,659	191	7.7%	Insurance, Audits & Inspections.
Changing Room Costs					
Electric	204	300	96	47.1%	Based on current unit cost
Water Rates	90	90	-	0.0%	Based on 2024 + 5%
Community Centre Costs					
Waste Disposal	700	755	55	7.8%	Based on 2024 + 5%
Electric	360	480	120	33.3%	Based on current unit cost
Utility & Waste Management Costs	1,354	1,625	271	20.0%	Sulo Bin, Carpark Lights, Changing Room Electric & Water.
Village Costs					
Maintenance	1,952	2,014	62	3.2%	103 hours from Maint Plan @ £18.95 per hour plus CPI
Materials	240	240	-	0.0%	A general provision for materials needed for planned maintenance.
Cleaning	413	427	13	3.2%	1 hour linked to pitch hire @ £17.22 per hour plus CPI
Hedge Cutting	500	516	16	3.2%	Once per year plus safety cut at existing price plus CPI
Weed Control (inc Backhouse Park)	1,068	1,404	336	31.4%	Twice per year at existing price plus CPI
Grass Cutting (inc Backhouse Park)	4,061	5,021	960	23.6%	Current cost plus CPI Apr-Oct plus provision for extra cuts at the start and end of the season.
Tree Maintenance	1,000	1,200	200	20.0%	Contingency/Tree Survey
Asset Management Costs	9,234	10,821	1,587	17.2%	
Total Operating Costs	35,756	40,356	4,600	12.9%	Total Operating Costs
Exceptional/Planned Costs					
Charitable Grant Provision	6,500	6,500	-	0.0%	Section 137(4)(a) of the L' G'ment Act 1972 for local councils in England for <u>2023-24</u> is £9.93 per elector. 1469 electors @ 1st sept 2022 = £14,587 limit plus RPI increase.
Roman Park	6,000	4,000	-2,000	-33.3%	(addition to reserve)
War memorial Improvement Fund	1,000	800	-200	-20.0%	2 x Metal Benches plus planters
Backhouse Park - Fencing/Wall	2,440	3,645	1,205	49.4%	Cost for fencing (excludes altering the wall)
Credenhill Bloomers	500	500	-	0.0%	
Asset Repairs & Renewals	2,153	2,000	-153	-7.1%	To continue with repairs and maint. Schedule.
Exceptional/Planned Costs	18,593	17,445	-1,148	-6.2%	
Total Projected/Actual Costs	54,349	57,801	3,452	6.4%	Total Projected/Actual Costs
Income					
Precept	43,857	47,459	3,602	8.2%	Per house impact 6.1% or £4.07 increase for band D to £71.18 per year.
Rent	7,567	7,777	210	2.8%	LSK Lease as agreed, Wayleave, Hall & Social Club.
Bank Interest	540	180	-360	-66.7%	
CCN Adverts	1,785	1,785	-	0.0%	Based on existing adverts
Hire of Changing Rooms	600	600	-	0.0%	Football/Hire of the changing rooms - agreed @ £50 per month currently.
Total Income	54,349	57,801	3,452	6.4%	Total Income
Projected Reserves Bought Forward from 2024/25					
Roman Park		17,222			Zip Wire Repairs. Changing Rooms External Wall Repairs.
Land & Buildings Improvement Fund		2,209			
Repairs & Renewals		6,729			See condition report schedule
Blooming Credenhill		52			
Resource Centre Fence		3,000			As agreed with new tenant per lease
Projected Reserves B/F from 2024/25		29,212			
Known Future Projects/Costs					
Accessible Fire Route - Hall/Club		8,000			Awaiting Legal permission
External Lights		2,000			
Solar - Resource Centre		20,000			
Club - Missed Rear Fire Door		1,500			
Club - Rear hardstanding		5,000			
Hall - Refurbish Floor - Main Hall		5,500			
Hall - Refurbish Floor - Stage/Steps		1,250			
		43,250			



Appendix C – Update from Ward Councillor

The new Labour Government are requiring the Council to increase housing numbers from 16,000 to 27,000 in the next 20-year plan. This is unacceptable given the rural nature of the county and concerns as to how the council will be able to fund additional infrastructure to support the extra housing. The Independents for Herefordshire Group will be pushing back on this request as much as possible.

The potential bypass remains an issue. I have been told that the Department of Transport have asked the Council to provide an outline Business Case for the Western Bypass and a full Business Case for the Southern Ring Road (SRR). The SRR must stand alone and assume the rest of the bypass is never built. No full Business Case has ever been prepared for the SRR and my belief is that it is problematic given the cost and the negligible travel saving times it will produce. As a standalone project it will have little effect on traffic going through Hereford.

Storm Darragh being the fourth severe weather event this autumn and the second in a matter of weeks, felling 250 trees, causing flooding in many communities, including our own, of which I am trying my best to resolve. In view of this I would like to highlight part of the full council meeting on the 6th of December, where Pauline Crockett (councillor for Queenwood's Ward and I4H member) put questions to the administration regarding issues that we as a group are encountering

Question:

Our county's drainage system is unable to cope with the new scale and frequencies of our severe weather events and that residents need action now

This council must robustly enforce landowner riparian responsibilities and action to better manage water on and off the public highway.

The Council must also maintain the operational effectiveness of existing flood defence schemes and ensure that the Environment Agency does likewise

What are this administration's immediate plans to improve the protection of our residents and where will you be investing early?

Response:

This administration is utterly committed to addressing the serious flooding risks that have caused such hardship to residents, and disruption to our schools and economy. It is clear to everyone that the events are becoming more frequent and more intense. In response to the October and November floods, and building on the motion passed by this council at our last meeting, we have set in progress a county wide project to understand each and every flood or near-flood event, and then, where possible, take remedial action – whether that be addressing failures or capacity issues in our drainage system, resolving problems with how quickly the rivers can get water away, looking at – as I mentioned in the previous meeting of Council – our plans for new homes in light of their contribution to flood risks, and yes, as you suggest, working with landowners and where necessary taking enforcement action where riparian responsibilities have been neglected.

We will also be looking at improving our flood mitigation and emergency response services. Solving a problem in one area carries the risk of moving it elsewhere. This work will require coordination of all of those risk areas, and as the Lead Local Flood Authority we will be taking leadership of all the various bodies involved in this – the Environment Agency, Welsh Water, Severn Trent Water, The Lugg and Lower Wye Internal Drainage Boards, and so on, as well as the parish councils who we have already partnered with to map any missing assets and develop a deeper understanding of the local drainage network.

To this end we have already seconded staff into a growing flood team so that we have the ability to move forward on this across the county, and they are already hard at work. We are drawing funds from our [emergency response budget] and will be asking this council to support investment in flood response in our capital budget next month. There is much in climate change that is beyond our control. But rest assured we will leave no stone unturned in facing this.



Supplementary question:

It was not felt that the response had answered the question. If we are borrowing to fix the roads surely we should be fixing the drainage issues first. Can assurance be provided that the developments at Three Elms and Lower Bullingham will not proceed as we are aware of the flooding issues on those sites. As per my original question, what are the immediate plans?

Response:

A full flooding assessment would be undertaken as necessary as part of any planning process. In terms of the response, a team has been developed, access to emergency funding had been arranged and proposals for capital funding toward long term structural changes to ensure the phasing of response is correct. The requirement for match funding to support works had also been lifted which had been seen as a hindrance to improvements previously.