

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2018/19 – Astley Parish Council

Budgetary Pressures

Shropshire Council continues to maintain a balanced budget. In order to achieve this further cuts have been made and more will no doubt follow. We continue to try to increase income rather than make cuts and have been relatively successful in this, however it is not enough. It is recognised across England that Councils, especially rural councils, are now down to the bone with nothing further to cut. There have been strong rumours from Westminster that the local government funding package will change as from 2020/21 and it will be based on a fairer funding programme. We also await a green paper on the future of Adult Social Care funding, the outcome of which could have a major positive effect on Shropshire Council's budget. Both important programmes have, of course, been held up by the small matter of Brexit!

There have been a few one off grants from government for pot holes, high streets and litter picking which are welcome but do not replace vital core funding.

The current administration of the Council has forecast a balanced budget for the years 2019/20 and 2020/21 but with the current financial formulae to balance the budget over a five-year term until 2022/23 there is a current budget deficit of £40m.

North West Relief Road

Shropshire Council finally received Government approval for this scheme in March. The current timescales being worked on are completion of this and the Oxon Relief Road will be within five years. I will continue to update the Parish Council as more details become known.

Local Plan Review

We are now mid-way through the Local Plan review process with potential Hubs and Clusters identified, preferred sites published, and meetings have taken place with Parish Councils. The Parish of Astley will remain as Open Countryside.

The first round of consultation is now complete, and the Policy Team are currently reviewing the huge number of responses (thanks to all those who responded to the consultation). The next round of consultation will be towards the end of the year.

The Parish Place Plan will become a very important document as we move forward. It is important to capture all the aspirations for the Parish in this document. Whilst Astley is part of the overall Shrewsbury Place Plan, a new Shrewsbury Rural Place Plan area has been formed.

Highways

In the last financial year, on top of the base budget, we received additional grants from the Department for Transport of approx. £7million - this was spent on additional resurfacing works. The 2019/20 programme of work is being collated and programmed; once it is

completed this information will be shared with the Local Member and affected Parish Council.

The Highways and Transport service has undertaken a major restructure; this new structure will go live [on 1st June 2019](#). You may have different people working in your area now , so updated contact information will be shared with you shortly.

Shropshire Council's Digital Transformation team have been working with Highways colleagues and have developed the MyShropshire portal which allows members of the public to report any issues from streetlights not working to potholes directly to us from an online portal. The account you have on MyShropshire logs all the enquiries raised but it also works with our Highway systems and at each stage of the process it will update the enquiry, so you know what's happened with it i.e. work ordered, work completed etc.

Local Matters

Locally, planning issues, highway matters (or more specifically pot holes, speeding traffic, and road drainage) and dog fouling are still hot topics for my inbox.

I've very much enjoyed working with you all and I look forward to the coming year.

Lezley Picton

Shropshire Councillor for the Tern Division