

## **MORTIMER VOICES WARD COUNCILLOR ARTICLE SUMMER 2021**

Hopefully we are now well on our way out of this awful pandemic and that we will experience no further lock downs which are so damaging to residents mental health, schooling and the economy. Wigmore Parish is so fortunate to have a first-class shop and a dedicated group of volunteers who have supported you all during this past 18 months. The Wigmore Huddle Hub has now been formally recognised by Herefordshire Council as a Talk Community Hub and I am sure will provide much needed support to residents over the coming years.

Road surfaces around Wigmore and surrounding villages continue to deteriorate and many are in a very poor state. The Portfolio Holder has decided that only about 30% for the next 3 years of the capital budget for Balfour Beatty will be spend on road resurfacing compared to almost 70% previously and that the other 70% will now be divided between drainage projects and bridge repairs. His thinking is that if laying water cannot be kept of the highway, then it is a waste of money resurfacing roads as the water will just lift the tarmac once again. I recognise that this is a controversial decision but I do understand the logic behind this. However, the outcome of this decision is that the resurfacing budget has been cut by 40% and only two carriageways in the whole of Mortimer ward will receive any significant resurfacing.

It is essential that residents continue to report potholes via the website as some of our C & U roads are not frequently inspected by Balfour Beatty, in fact many of the U roads are only inspected annually. You can also now via the Herefordshire Council website app also report fly tipping and upload a photograph if you wish to do so.

The two parish councillors representing Elton and Pipe Aston are working alongside myself pursuing initiatives which will slow traffic down through their villages. Both of these villages suffer greatly from inconsiderate motorists who fail or choose to ignore the fact that villagers have no alternative but to walk in the road in order to access their local church or just walk the dog, the road is narrow in places, has no pavement or grass verge and many blind bends. I would make a plea to all motorists who live locally to keep your speed down, particularly when driving through Elton & Pipe Aston and be considerate towards pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

Residents have raised a number of concerns about the mobile home park in Wigmore. I can assure residents that myself and the parish council are doing everything we can to ensure that the owner of the site complies with all the planning conditions laid down in the planning appeal decision of 2007.

Herefordshire Council has appointed a new Chief Executive, Paul Walker who commenced with the Authority at the beginning of May. His previous post was in Harrow and prior to that he was in Copeland.

Finally, as summer approaches let us hope for fine weather and that many of the events that Wigmore and the surrounding villages put on each year will once again be able to take place bringing such pleasure to the local community.