

Councillors Monthly Report July 2021

The condition of our roads remains a major concern – and is likely to remain a major concern for some time to come. The Leadership at the Council is well aware of both the problem and the public's complete dissatisfaction. I have asked for a strategy that can be shared as I feel that the sooner the Parish and Town Councils know what can be expected over the coming months the better. Lezley Picton has described what needs to be done as similar to turning an oil tanker – but oil tankers are eventually turned.

We can expect 3 actions: complete resurfacing; surface dressing (which is designed to make the existing road last longer nb the B4555) and most commonly temporary fixes. There are several issues around these fixes: how temporary is temporary and why fix only some of the potholes when those nearby need fixing as well! I intend to continue working with the Highways team to ensure we receive long term fixes and all potholes in a selected area are fixed when the team is on site. Do use the 'Fix My Street' app – if for no other reason than the app does keep a record of communication that both the Council and the Public can see.

While it may be tempting to send e-mails to everyone in the Highways Department to get a particular pothole fixed, I regret this maybe counterproductive or just ineffectual. It is probably best to just keep reporting the problem on 'Fix My Street'.

During the Lockdown Shropshire Council has distributed £150m of business grants to more than 9,000 businesses. However, at the present time the opportunity to access these grants will cease as at 31 July 2021.

This means that the Council team that has been redeployed to work with businesses applying for grants will now return to their pre COVID duties. In our case we will now have our Place Plan officer back. She has been unable to assist with updating the Cleobury area Place Plan in recent months – but hopefully she will soon be ready to help us review the Plan. The Place Plan is a dynamic and rolling Plan and can be updated whenever required – which means that the Parishes can uplift their own Parish Plan 'action points' into the Place Plan; with her assistance. This is good news as if the 'action point' is in the Place Plan it is more likely to get traction from the Council. Maybe, as we look for a new post COVID beginning in our local community now is the time to take another look at our own Parish Plans – and how we wish to support our constituents.

Litter – across south Shropshire and indeed across the country there is a huge increase in community-based litter picking groups. The Council can assist with litter picking equipment. The Keep Britain Tidy website is worth a look as it shows that this 'disgusting' problem is a shared problem and it offers plenty of encouragement. The recent 'Spring Clean' cleared over 1 million miles of roadside.

Although the cold weather may seem a long time out into the future it can be a very real worry. The Council has a scheme to ensure that this winter will not be a cold winter:

For more information and to apply visit: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/warmer-homes-shropshire> or call: **0333 202 4481**. You can also call the team at Keep Shropshire Warm on **0800 112 3743**, the council's free and impartial energy advice service.

Simon Harris
Councillor Cleobury Mortimer Division