

July 2022 REPORT

Cllrs Gwilym Butler and Simon Harris: Cleobury Mortimer Division

SHROPSHIRE UNITARY COUNCIL

1. Shropshire Council is in the process of rebating £150- to property owners whose property falls within the Council Tax bands A-D. Initially the rebates were made to those that paid their Council Tax by direct debit. However, not everyone pays in this way and furthermore some owners that are exempt from paying at all are still entitled to the £150 – which is designed to alleviate the rising costs of energy. Shropshire Council will write to all those that are entitled to a rebate but do not pay by direct debit and request that they apply by completing a request form. These forms are in the process of being distributed and another batch will be sent out in the last week of June 22. If any property owner feels that they are entitled to the £150 and have somehow slipped through the net please let us know.

2. Shropshire Council is currently reviewing its library service – a service which is in fact a statutory obligation. A six-point plan has been proposed to transform services over a three-year period. We benefit from a library at Cleobury Country as well as the mobile library service. The intention is that the library service works towards: Improving opportunities for reading, literacy, culture and creativity; Improving health and wellbeing of communities; Promoting economic recovery and growth; Supporting communities that are resilient and inclusive; Offering more innovative and sustainable services and Enabling discovery of the digital world. If you would like to have an input to the future of our library service the consultation runs to the end of August 22 and can be found at: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/shropshire-library-strategy-2022-to-2027/>

3. There is currently a ‘big push’ on to introduce people to careers in social care. The Council has been running a series of events in the larger towns which may not have reached out to Cleobury. As we are reaching that time of year when young people (or for that matter not so young people) maybe looking at their career options post exams this recruitment site may be of help: <https://orlo.uk/fCD4j>

4. There are now 21 Ukrainian refugees staying in the Division. St Mary’s church has organised a ‘drop in’ on Thursday mornings and the Community Hub is working on arranging a designated time for them to meet there – menus have been printed in Ukrainian. A WhatsApp group is now in place for the hosts. If you know of anyone that needs assistance a level of local expertise is being built – feel free to contact us and we can point you in the right direction.

5. Shropshire has proudly offered more hosts (approximately 250) for Ukrainian refugees than any other county in the West Midlands. Where we are struggling however is recruiting Foster carers for our children in care currently at 618. If anyone wants to help change a child's life for the better and put something back whilst having a huge support network and financial rewards please take a look at www.shropshirefostering.co.uk .

6. The Council has just gone through a Financial Peer review from the LGA (Local Government Association) which has confirmed that we are a well run organisation but also have to change to meet the future. There is wide acknowledgement post Covid there will be no fairer funding for rural authorities and if anything urban authorities will be benchmarked down to our funding levels as Government funds are tighter than ever. Therefore to balance our budget with a predicted deficit of circa £30 million next financial year the Council will have no Option but to become smaller and do less. The role of Partners and Town and Parish Councils moving forward will be crucial should communities wish to maintain some services and we are in the process of looking at our statutory responsibilities and what we can stop doing. This will be an evolution of Local Government and community working and we will keep you updated as things change.

7. The Cleobury Mortimer Mens Shed CMMS finally officially opens on Saturday 2nd July at 11 am. It is located on the Tenbury road Business park in Cleobury and all are welcome . Thanks goes out to the support from businesses and individuals within the community and the Town and local Parish Councils who continue to financially support this great facility. Details can be found at www.Cleoburymortimermensshed.co.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Gwilym Butler 07801099015 Gwilym.Butler@Shropshire.gov.uk

Simon Harris 07833094145 Simon.R.Harris@Shropshire.gov.uk