Listening to Local Voices and Championing Our Communities

It was a real pleasure to welcome Tanya Miles, Chief Executive of Shropshire Council, to our area for a special *Walk the Wards* visit, giving residents, businesses and community groups the opportunity to share their views, raise concerns and put forward ideas directly to the Council's Chief Executive.

For David and me, it was particularly important that Tanya had the opportunity to hear firsthand from the people who know our communities best. We wanted to make sure local voices were heard, local challenges were understood and constructive ideas could be taken back to Shropshire Council.

We began our day at **Hobsons Brewery**, where we were joined by a fantastic cross-section of local businesses and community representatives, including Nigel Reid from Save the Manor House, representatives from the Fountain, Ashley's Bakers, Mumfords and Anchors Away children's play centre.

Everyone had the opportunity to speak individually with Tanya, sharing their experiences, concerns and suggestions. Some really positive ideas came out of these conversations, which I am keen to explore and take forward. A special thank you to Marc at Hobsons for generously hosting us free of charge — and for the chance to sample some of their non-alcoholic beer!

Our next stop was the **Market Hall**, where we brought together chairs and clerks from all eleven parish and town councils. This was an incredibly valuable discussion, ensuring that the voices of our surrounding villages and parishes were represented alongside those of the town.

Tanya listened carefully and took notes as everyone had their opportunity to speak. The meeting was so productive that there was even a suggestion to make gatherings like this a more regular occurrence — something I would very much welcome.

David and I then took Tanya to our **Leisure Centre** to meet the dedicated Friends of the Leisure Centre and demonstrate just how important this much-loved facility is to our community. We were proud to highlight the extraordinary fundraising efforts that have helped keep it going, as well as the BBC radio award the Friends received in recognition of their achievements.

Finally, we visited **Hopton Court**, where we were warmly welcomed by Chris Woodward and his daughter Charlotte. There, we met another excellent mix of local businesses, including Cleobury Golf Club and Turners Gates, giving Tanya further insight into the opportunities and challenges facing businesses across our area.

The whole day reinforced something I feel very strongly about: the best decisions are made when councils listen to the people and communities they serve.

As local councillors, David and I believe our role is not simply to raise issues on residents' behalf, but to create opportunities for those voices to be heard directly by the people making decisions.

I am incredibly grateful to everyone who took the time to attend, contribute and speak so passionately about our town and surrounding parishes. Your views, ideas and concerns matter, and I am determined to ensure the conversations we started help inform the work of Shropshire Council going forward.

Thank you also to Tanya for taking the time to visit, listen and engage with so many people throughout the day.

We have so much to be proud of across our communities, from our independent businesses to our dedicated volunteers and community organisations. I hope Tanya left with a real sense of that pride, determination and community spirit.

For David and me, this is what local representation is all about — listening, bringing people together and making sure our communities have a voice.












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