

## **Annual Report for Parish Councils 2014/15**

This has been a very busy and changeable year the main points are as follows:-

**Budget** The Council has to save £80million by 2016/17, by the end of 15/16 we hope to have saved £59million which will leave £21.5million for the final year.

**Road Repairs:-** we have £16,948million in the budget for this coming year, this includes ALL urgent and planned maintenance.

**Adult Care Act:-** First phase came into force April 2015 which will bring changes into the way we care for people in the community and our partnership with the Hospitals. It is estimated that there could be upto £4M extra costs as new clients come on stream who can no longer fund themselves.

**Future Fit:-** the work continues to consult the County and on our Borders on the future of our two Hospitals at Shrewsbury and Telford. The short list of options is still being finalised and currently stands at the Emergency Care Centre which will take all the most serious health crises, at either the RSI or PRH. I do not think it is feasible that a brand new separate hospital should be built on a separate site. More important for us is to retain the Community Hospitals at Ludlow and Bridgnorth with a range of Urgent Care Facilities to deal with a wide range of less serious conditions which would not require high care level, and would also provide diagnostic and treatment much nearer to home. GP's are very much involved with any care for us in the future and it is hoped to achieve a streamlined service for us. Mental Health care is at last improving but still has some way to go.

**Ambulance Service:-** **A number of changes have been tried but response times are often** unreliable. The 14/15 Winter proved especially difficult as turnaround times were often long because of shortage of beds, not enough help in the community, and cases which could have been treated in the Community Hospitals if the skills had been available or elsewhere.

**First Point of Contact:-** Tel No.08456789044 is a new service which is proving very successful, the operators are widely trained to deal with many problems immediately or signpost the caller to the appropriate service. There is always a phone call two weeks later to make sure the persons problem has been dealt with satisfactorily.

**Housing:-** There is a shortage of rented property especially bungalows in the area, it is important that people need to register their need of the County register Homepoint 01588676246 or register on line. Private renting often require considerable deposit there is possible help if anyone has difficulty in finding that deposit please contact me. There are many houses which are poor with regards to heating, 1,100 houses are deemed to require help to achieve modern standards, there has been a Heatsavers grant available for the last 3 years and await to see if the scheme will continue.

**Planning:-** Very busy as the economy picks up. Confusion over the Governments "Five year supply of Houses" caused a deluge of speculative applications to build sites. Fortunately we seem to have escaped the worst in this area. The Policy of allowing local

people to apply for 'Affordable Housing on an Exception Site' has proved very successful and a number have been built in the area. The Key is the proof needed to be accepted as a genuine 'local' need where the Parish Councils have a key role to verify that status.

Most Parishes have now completed their Parish, Community led Plan and Parish Councils use them to update the annual Place Plan which keeps the Planning Dept upto date with any changes needed to requirements for the Parish.

The County Plan for any future development called SamDev is in the final stages of being examined by Planning Inspectors we hope to have the final report by June 2015.

There continues to be considerably differing opinions on alternative forms of generating energy.

**Schools:-** Exciting events have seen our Lacon Childe Secondary, Cleobury Mortimer, Clee Hill and Stottesdon Primary schools are all joining together in Shropshire Gateway Educational Trust which is a positive move forward for the future of our children in the area. Another step forward is the creation of the University Centre Shrewsbury which will run undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Bioscience, Health and Environment; Sustainable Business and Community Development; Design, Heritage and the Built Environment; Social and Public Sector Innovation.

**Business and the Economy;-** A considerable amount of work is being done to streamline help for new and existing businesses when they need to contact Shropshire Council. We have many and diverse businesses in the area which offer a wide range of skills experience on the jobs front. The new Leader Grant has just started which provides grant funding very much attached to Rural Enterprises, full information on line. The difficulties with reception for mobile and broadband which is so important for us all is being emphasised in all public sectors, but we need to keep the pressure up.

**Cleobury Area Youth Partnership;-** succeeded in obtaining a grant from the Police Crime Commissionaires fund which enabled Rich Morley, Mark Greaves and Chris Woodward to organise activities for the area. A number of Parish Councils have donated funds towards Continuing existing activities and starting new projects. Shropshire Council have allocated £3000 for youth activity this year and the Local Joint Committee which has representatives from all the Parishes has asked the Youth Partnership to assess applications.