

**District Councillor's report to WFPC 08/03/2022**

**From**

**Michael Gay Postlebury District Councillor**

## Ukraine

As Leader of the Green councillor group, I have recently sent a request to David Warburton, our MP, that he uses his influence to require the Government to provide a safe route to the UK for Ukrainian refugees, a fast-track asylum system with proper support for these asylum claimants (not only family) and a substantial humanitarian package for Ukraine to be put in place with first shipments arriving this week.

We have received a response, but sadly not one that demonstrates his work on this, or provides assurance on these key issues, so we are going to continue to request his best efforts. In the interim I note and applaud local people who are contributing and organising collections, and the opportunities to donate cash via appropriate funds such as the DEC appeal and the Red Cross. Both routes are essential.

Our thoughts are with those who are suffering; let us hope for a swift end to war.

## Covid

Further to the relaxation of restrictions, I note that Covid cases went up last week. I see reports of Lateral flow tests being readied for sale at Boots for £4.99 each, so must repeat my advice to go online and get a pack on your shelf via the Government website. We must continue to be mindful of the most vulnerable people in our midst, for instance those for whom the vaccines are far less effective, who must continue to shield themselves.

## Elections

I understand that the Notice of Election should be published on March 21st and that nomination papers should be hand delivered to the District Council Offices between Tuesday March 22nd and Tuesday April 5th.

Before the pre-election period, I would like to thank and commend all parish councillors who have served the community so well during the current term, and wish them well whether they are standing again or retiring from office.

## LCN

Work on the LCN concept is continuing, I attend meetings at both the Bruton and the Frome pilots. The next Frome Pilot meeting will address social isolation.

Feedback from these pilots will inform how the Unitary officers set out their draft showing how LCN's will work. The timescale currently suggested is that the draft will come out to parishes for consultation in the summer, for finalisation by (say) October. Please note this will include boundaries, showing which group Witham Friary will be in: if you don't like what you are allocated, you must make firm representations, and please, let me know.

## Planning

I see no further documents since Highway's recommendation to refuse of the 9<sup>th</sup> December on 2021/1430/FUL Bindon Lane. a topological survey from the applicants has not been added in the last month.

Should the Parish Council have planning concerns outside those on the minutes, please let me know.

## Work at Mendip

At the last full council, I amended the capital finance paper to continue to commit MDC to funding appropriate schemes for issues such as economic regeneration, renewables and social housing for rent. The Green group amended the treasury management scheme so that investments made by the Council have to yield above the bank rate prevailing at the time, anticipating further bank rate rises during the year.

We also forced an agreement from the administration to increase their hardship fund to cover people who may struggle to pay their council tax bill this year, in line with our concerns for people's welfare, and after two year's fighting, that the LD administration would publish its budget headlines on the website so that all can see how their money is being spent

I also had a motion passed requiring MDC to ensure that phosphate mitigation off-sets met certain criteria including that they should be proven to be effective throughout their claimed operational life, and that MDC must write to the Ministry (DLUHC) to ask that should treat any agreed scheme as a two-year pilot to see if it works, during which the vastly increased housing requirement would revert back to previous figures (thus giving back Mendip's five year supply). Finally I seconded a successful motion to support the Climate (CEE) Bill in Parliament.

Regarding my Audit role, I'm sorry to say that the external auditors are still not able to supply a report on the finances for the financial year before this, due to an objection to the accounts. It's unclear at this point whether any benefit from this complaint will outweigh the cost and delay caused.

Thanks, and Kind Regards,  
Michael Gay  
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