

Much Birch Parish council

Ward member report, November 2018

Dumping issues on A49 in Much Birch

Birmingham business MJB Truck Services Limited has received fines and costs totalling £29,000, and Director Jason Bowser (45, of Old College Drive, Wednesbury) received a three year conditional discharge, following the unlawful disposal of hazardous waste on the A49 at Much Birch.

In an earlier hearing at Hereford Magistrates' Court (24 October 2018), MJB Truck Services Limited and Mr Bowser pleaded guilty to failing in their duty of care to transfer their business waste, which included hazardous waste oil from an industrial process, to an authorised person and to secure the transfer with a written description of the waste.

In December 2017, Herefordshire Council put out an appeal for information about an articulated trailer that was dumped on the A49 layby at Much Birch. Officers from the council's Community Protection Team discovered that the trailer had been abandoned containing approximately 24,000 litres of waste oil.

Although the trailer had all of its identification markings removed, following an extensive eleven month investigation with assistance from the local Environment Agency enforcement team, officers were able to trace the trailer's ownership from a hire sticker on the trailer. It was eventually established that Jason Bowser had purchased the trailer from an online auction site, giving a false company name to the seller.

Mr Bowser admitted that he instructed an unknown third party to dispose of the trailer and its contents for a £3000 cash payment. Bowser also admitted that he knew that it was possible that the third party may illegally dispose of the trailer and its contents, but he transferred the waste regardless.

Budget planning

We are going through the budget process as we always do at this time of the year; as ever money is tight – to give some perspective our central government grant (the revenue support grant) has been cut from £60,125,000 in 2011-12 to £620,000 in 2019-20.

Several of our neighbouring counties and more further afield have run into considerable difficulties due to not making savings as early as Herefordshire council. Our hope is that having made tough choices early (and therefore remaining solvent) we can stay independent as a small county and not be swallowed up by a larger more urban authority. We appreciate that times are tough at parish level too and hard conversations are taking place at all levels.

The total savings made between 2010-17/8 has been £77M with a further £13M made in 18/9. Is the age of austerity really over? Not for local government it appears.

DH – 05.11.18