

Much Birch Parish council

Ward member report, May 2016

A49

Signs are up on the A49 advising of night tie closures near the Pilgrim hotel, I will try to find out what these are for and will communicate any news through the clerk. I am hoping it is related to my recent meeting with Highways England.

Ward councillor Surgery

The surgery on Tuesday 03.05.16 in Much Birch village hall for ward residents was a success with a couple of Much Birch residents joining residents from other parishes such as Llanwarne and Little Birch for a chat. Issues were mainly property/planning related.

The surgery was advertised on social media, local leaflets, in the newsletter and at parish council meetings; the fact that not more people attended suggests that people are generally content with the way things are going.

Education

With regard to the recent budget announcements and the publication of the 'Educational Excellence Everywhere' White Paper, I would like to touch upon the steps the council is now taking, including consideration of the current consultation about the schools national funding formula. Given the content of the White Paper and its proposals, these have the potential to radically alter the education system in Herefordshire (including Much Birch).

Firstly, we are pleased that the funding formula consultation may result in additional funding for education in Herefordshire. We have been lobbying national government for some years about the current unfairness in the funding arrangements, and it is pleasing to see some indications that this may improve.

The contents of the White Paper will be considered and debated at council level and there will be full engagement with schools and academies about this. We will be meeting with the two county MPs to ensure they are fully aware of the implications of the consultation for Herefordshire residents, in the light of the council's initiatives in the education strategy and particularly the schools capital investment strategy.

Whatever the outcome of the White paper which reinforces the council's responsibility towards children, we will ensure that our commitment towards improving the education, health, care and economic outcomes of our young people remains central to everything we do.

Herefordshire businesses invited to apply for a share of over £11m of European funding

Organisations across the Herefordshire are being invited to apply for a share of more than £11 million of European funding for schemes which will provide support to businesses.

Applications are being invited for projects focused on research and innovation, business competitiveness, the low carbon economy and environment and resource efficiency.

The four themes have been identified as priorities for funding in the Marches European Structural and Investment Strategy.

The funding is part of the Marches LEP region's total allocation of around £92m and the maximum available for each priority area in this round of funding are:

- SME Support and Competitiveness - £3.5 million
- Research and Innovation - £4 million
- Environment and Resource Efficiency - £1,725,490
- Low Carbon - £2 million

The deadline for each funding call is May 27 2016 and the minimum application amount is £500,000. Projects will be delivered between now and 2020.

World War 1

Herefordshire First World War Centenary Committee and Herefordshire Council are holding an open day called 'the family at war' to give people the opportunity to come up with ideas of events and activities that could take place in Herefordshire to commemorate the incredible contribution to the war effort of 'ordinary' people in 2017.

The event is being held at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre on May 7 between 10am and 4pm (Fir Tree Lane, Rotherwas) and we invite community groups, schools, uniform clubs and anyone with an interest in commemorating the centenary to join us and help. Further information can also be found on www.herefordshire.gov.uk/fwwc