

## County Councillor Report for Hartlebury Parish Meeting on Nov 1<sup>st</sup>.

A slightly less frenetic month so far (as I write on October 24<sup>th</sup>). I attended parish council meetings at Elmley Lovett and Ombersley, having had to apologise to you and to Dodderhill. I am attending the Hanbury Parish council tonight and will be with you, all being well at your meeting on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

I have had meetings with Sander Kristel Director of Adult Healthcare and Sean Pearce, Chief Financial Officer at County. Sander's portfolio takes the largest proportion of the County budget at around £200 million per year. Under the care Act 2004 (amended 2014) the county have a statutory duty to look after the health and well-being of adults. In the main this means the elderly in our society, in their own homes with carers calling, sometimes every day, (and in some cases more than once a day) in Care Homes funded by the county, and I was surprised to learn that the budget has to cover adults with learning difficulties, some 1300 of whom live in our county. The cost of caring for them is £52 million a year. I spent over 2 hours with Sander and only scratched the surface of the challenges he and his team face. I was really impressed with the system which now operates in the county which tells Sander's department whenever an elderly person is admitted to hospital. This means that should it be necessary social services can get involved at an early stage to prevent bed-blocking and provide care after the patient returns home.

The government has introduced a new programme called STP throughout the country. In my day STP was a fuel additive but as the NHS loves acronyms (and doesn't tend to look to see if it is in use elsewhere) this stands for Sustainability and Transformational Programme. Basically it is an acronym meaning "joined up thinking". In other words it means that GPs, hospitals, social services and other caring organisations now need to come together and work together with, and you've probably guessed this, a reduced budget !

Sean Pearce, the Chief Financial Officer (ex PWC chartered accountant) explained his department in words I could understand..mostly. He illustrated graphically how the cost of Adult Social care has risen by £15 million over the last 5 years and appears to be stabilising but Children's Social Care has risen by £25 million over the same period. These are the very real problems the county

is faced with. In some ways they put our local issues with Highways, signage, broadband, even planning into a different context.

On the subject of Highways, David Hunter-Miller came to my home 2 weeks ago for the whole morning and I got to know him and his responsibilities rather better. He accompanied me for a whole morning around Ombersley to look at a number of problems which he is now dealing with. Others I have learned on my travels I have delegated to fellow district councillors to pick up with him.

This is my first effort at trying to cope with the problems I have inherited and I know that you have problems with Highways too. I also know that Nigel is dealing directly with David and has been for some time and as soon as he, Nigel, feels he is getting nowhere then I am prepared to step in. I gather that David has approved the signage for horses along Bishops Wood Lane.

I have also had a long meeting with Keith Beech who is the new Communications supremo at county. We happen to know each other from way back in the radio days when he was running BBC WM and I was running Saga Radio....and we were getting better audiences than he was !!. It seems as if county might want me to begin contributing to their work by using my experience, such as it is, in helping Keith improve communications.

A final word if I may. As your county representative my job is twofold. I have of course to represent your interests to the best of my ability at county, and at times this will mean sorting out problems which may occur at parish level but which are the responsibility of county. At the same time I have a duty to play my part in helping the officers of the county fulfil their statutory duties. Many of those as you now know may not affect our parishes which are comparatively affluent compared to the areas of deprivation which do exist in this county. I will try to play my part in involving myself in both duties and hope that I achieve some form of balance !

Cllr Peter Tomlinson Oct 24<sup>th</sup> 2016