

## **BORDER GROUP WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT MARCH 2020**

As previously mentioned, I met with Paul Shipton, head of Balfour Beatty recently to discuss their road and drainage Annual Plan. Across the County there is little surface dressing/road resurfacing or drainage projects which does not surprise me bearing in mind the amount of capital money they have to spend. This Annual Plan was of course put in place prior to the latest two floodings and there may in fact be changes to this plan to accommodate the horrendous damage to many roads due to flooding. The Plan as it stands shows a small amount of surface dressing in Brampton Bryan, a little south of Leintwardine and some on the road to Kinton. There are drainage projects identified in Walford, Leintwardine and Aymestrey. I cannot give you details as to what is planned, where or when as the maps were not very detailed and Paul Shipton does not have that more detailed information.

As you know work has started to repair the junction of the A4110 and the Knighton road. This will take 2 weeks. I have spoken to Mr Griffiths of the Garage/Shop at Leintwardine who is of course very worried on the affect this will have on his business already disrupted by the flooding but he recognises that the road was so dangerous it had to be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

The meeting at Aymestrey was well attended and I hope that parish councillors came away with a better understanding of the situation. I did ask that the action points be made available to the Walford/Leintwardine Flood Group prior to their meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup>. I will support the flood group in any way they wish me to.

I mentioned to Paul Shipton that residents in Walford were during the emergency working hard to clear up the mess, in some cases on roads which in normal times would not be acceptable to Balfour Beatty. He was very sympathetic, explained that the normal rule is that unless an operative has a permit they should not work on an A or B road less than 1.2 metres from the highway. He did however recognise that these had been exceptional times but felt that local residents still needed to assess the risk, ie the layout of the road, the volume of traffic etc and at the very least obtain "Men At Work" signs and cones along with high visibility jackets. He stressed that if there was an accident then it was likely they would not be insured and if the parish council were aware of the situation they could be sued for corporate manslaughter.

As agreed at the meeting at Aymestrey, the bid for the drainage project should be submitted ASAP. Bids will, if meeting the criteria, be agreed on a first come first served basis and we do not need to wait for the appropriate paperwork.

Some residents have asked for a map of where drains are in the county, some of which may have been covered up. Balfour Beatty do have maps which need to be overlaid to give a rough idea, but they recognise that there are many drains they have no knowledge of. A new member of staff to work on GIS will be starting with them shortly and they see this as a job for them. It would help residents to identify where drains are blocked but they do not have the resource to regularly update the map when new drains are identified.

They are well aware of the problems being experienced by parish councils with regard to some land owners not accepting their riparian responsibilities and they intend to in the first instance meet with those larger land owners to discuss this matter.

I received an email from a Mr Newman regarding his permissive footpath which has been blocked. This runs from the edge of the forest down to Letton Lane. He has been up to have a look at it, and, although it is perfectly possible to climb the field gate to gain access, it is comprehensively not possible to open the gate. He says this was bought by the village some time ago, but memory of how or why he is afraid is lost. However, someone else in the village may be able to help. He wants to know why this happened. I originally passed this to the footpaths officer in Leintwardine but she has advised that is not in Leintwardine. She believes it was probably granted by NE/RPA as part of a stewardship scheme and many of these schemes have come to the end of their agreement lifetime

this year and are unfortunately being lost. I wonder whether any parish councillor can throw some light on this.