

CRADLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Here are the main points from the latest Parish Council meeting on 8th November at Storridge Village Hall and the Extraordinary meeting at Cradley Village Hall on 25th October:

Government Capping Proposals

As the deadline for responses to the Government's proposals on capping parish and town councils was so tight, we decided to hold an extraordinary meeting on 25th October to agree an official response from Cradley. Our position is that we strongly disagree with the proposals, and see them as an unnecessary attack on the lowest level of local government, working closely with the community it serves. The Government's proposals as they stand would insist that councils hold a referendum for any precept rise above a certain small percentage level. This would apply to councils with a bigger budget than Cradley's, but the strong implication is that this could also extend to smaller councils before too long. Do read the official minutes of this meeting to have more background information, but please remember that more and more duties and services are being 'dumped' on parishes. We feel that we need the flexibility to respond to some of your community needs without the massive cost of holding a referendum (take the cost of funding a lengthsman, for example). This has all the hallmarks of sledgehammers being used to crack nuts, perhaps?

Safety Issues on A4103

As, metaphorically speaking, we have been jumping up and down on this issue since recent accidents (and before that, as many of you will testify I am sure), Cathy Berkeley, Locality Steward for Balfour Beatty, came to address us and to listen to our concerns. She did remind us that the junction of the B4220 and the A4103 is not classified as an "accident cluster site" by official definitions, and that reducing speed limits does not always result in a reduction in the number of accidents. One little aside to Cathy's visit is that she pointed out that if there are dangerously dirty road signs, then we can all report them directly on the Herefordshire Highways website – we must do that. The Parish Council will continue to keep in touch with Cathy on all highway matters that affect us.

Facebook

We have experimented with a Facebook presence for the Parish Council for the last 6 months, and Councillor Sam Roffe reported that there had been 78 'likes', 1,932 visits and there had been at least one posting every week. We all thanked her for looking after the page, and decided to carry on with it. What do you think? Do you find it useful? Please let us know.

No Rise in the Precept for 2017/18

Following on from my first paragraph above, I can tell you that you will not be asked for an increase in Cradley's share of your council tax next financial year. We must be mindful of the increasing cost to the Parish of funding the Lengthsman and other matters previously covered by Herefordshire Council. However, we can hold the precept at the current level for another year at least, so don't blame us if your council tax goes up in April!

Small Donations Fund

As I stated last month, local not-for-profit organisations and individuals can apply for a grant '*for the enhancement and benefit of the area and residents*'. Please apply for a grant via the Parish Council's website or contact the Parish Clerk at 01531 635103.

Next Parish Council Meeting

Our next meeting is at Storridge Village Hall on January 10th at 7.30 p.m. with the planning meeting beforehand at 7 p.m. A Merry Christmas to you all – yes, it's coming soon!

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