

Wickhamford Report September - County Councillor ELIZABETH EYRE

County Council - A Focus on the environmental work of WCC - please let me know if you wish to learn more.

Environment Improvement Plan: producing an Environment Improvement Plan which will be a clear overarching framework and vision for the Environment, bringing together several separate policies such as the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan. The Plan will be considered by the Member Advisory Group (MAG) and Cabinet before consultation.

Tree Planting: our Corporate Plan pledges to plant 150,000 trees. To date, 50,000 trees have been planted, at New and Ashmores Farms, Norton, Evesham, and at Netherton Lane, Bewdley. Further sites at Upton Snodsbury and Dodderhill, near Droitwich, winter 2023/24 are currently being designed and Forestry Commission grant schemes have now been applied to fund the planting. A further site will be announced very soon.

Member Advisory Group: A cross-party group has been set up to advise the Cabinet Member for Environment on carbon reduction and water quality (arising from a Council motion).

Water Quality: Severn Trent Water outflows are known but the majority of pollutants come from industry and agriculture. We are seeking more knowledge on this to work with our partners and influence effective action as County Council has no direct powers it can exercise in this area. We have met with Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency and had positive conversations regarding their approach. Monitoring data is also being obtained to ensure that we have a framework to monitor progress and highlight issues.

Flooding: four main Environment Agency schemes are being supported

- Beales Corner, Bewdley
- Tenbury Wells
- Severn Stoke
- Toronto Close, Worcester

Local Nature Partnership: a partnership made up of volunteers and agencies to improve Worcestershire's green and natural landscape. One such project was the Diglis Fish Pass which is a part of the Unlocking the Severn project funded by Heritage Lottery and EU LIFE. 158 miles of the river to be restored, improving the habitats for biodiversity and in particular for the twaite shad. At Diglis in Worcester, a fish pass was constructed and opened in 2021, with the full river becoming open to the twaite shad again in 2022, including a public viewing area. Other key areas of focus for the Local Nature Partnership in the coming months are:

- Net zero initiatives
- Biodiversity and nature recovery including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain
- Water quality & flood prevention

Local Nature Recovery strategy: A requirement of the Environment Act 2021 is for nature recovery and WCC has been appointed as the Responsible Authority for Worcestershire to work with partners and designated Supporting Authorities in developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy; this will become a statutory spatial plan which sets out the County's biodiversity priorities and objectives for the restoring our natural environment. We are proposing to have an Issues and Options early version of the plan for Cabinet consideration in late 2023, setting out challenges for nature recovery and proposed actions to address them. Public consultation will follow on this document before the full strategy is written in 2024.

Green Infrastructure: On behalf of the county's Green Infrastructure (GI) Partnership, the County Council has consulted on an updated county GI Strategy. This document showcases Worcestershire's outstanding environmental assets, describes the need for GI in the county, and sets a vision for GI delivery. It highlights how this can be achieved through housing, employment, infrastructure development, and land management. A consultation response document and the final strategy will be published later this summer.

Net Zero Business Support: In June of this year, previously WCC-led, European-funded Business Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Opportunities Programmes came to an end. Details of a new energy efficiency and net zero business support

programme for Worcestershire Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) will be announced soon. Since 2016 these programmes have helped more than a thousand local SMEs review their energy use, reduce ca. 14,000 tonnes of carbon emissions, install ca. 4MWp renewable energy systems, and develop new products, processes, and services to help others go green. Over £5m in grants have been awarded to more than 530 businesses for measures such as smart LED lighting, solar PV, energy-efficient plant and heating and cooling systems, as well as for the development of new products such as a carbon-negative heat battery, portable wind turbine, conversion kit for low/zero carbon fuels and remote sensing methane detection. Energy advice saving an average 30% reduction in energy use has also been given. For more information on the new net zero business support programme email netzero@worcestershire.gov.uk

National Energy Efficiency Award: WCC has been shortlisted for a [National Energy Efficiency Award](#). The National Energy Efficiency Awards recognise outstanding achievements in the energy industry and celebrate successes and best practices. We've been shortlisted in the 'National Council/Local Authority of the Year category. We're delighted to be recognised for our commitment to sustainability. Our efforts include our support for businesses (mentioned above) as well as initiatives implemented to tackle fuel poverty, support public sector organisations and the community to improve energy efficiency, as well as improvements made to our estate.

Solar Together: Through Worcestershire County Council and with the support of Worcestershire District Councils, Worcestershire residents were allowed to take part in Solar Together, a scheme run by iChoosr offering group buying of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage.

Interested residents received their quotes in March and April and nearly 1,000 accepted their quotes to go through to site survey. As of last month, 85 installations and 414 surveys were completed. It is anticipated installations will finish by November.

Waste: We seek to develop and improve our circular flow. As we look to implement the requirements of the Environment Act 2021, we have set up a Waste Task & Finish group with District portfolio/cabinet members supporting a 'One Worcestershire' approach. We are using the important #Food Savvy campaign to try and help educate the importance of minimising food waste.

Local Issues

Enquiry 257 - Footpath to the cemetery (BB's number is 1118749.) The new footway has been placed in the accepted category at Minor Improvement Team. The current options are, cross the pedestrians twice or re-shape the carriageway to accommodate a footway on one side. The former is the cheaper option, but the amount of kerbing may be expensive, particularly as it is a conservation area. Cost 80k as of August 2023. The project is unfunded – the County Council would consider match funding.

Enquiry 256 Footway A44 Wickhamford to Broadway cost 93k for 6 sections. WCC has carried out some siding work and now some reconstruction work , pump primed by my budget. The before and after pictures are quite impressive. I wish we could afford to do more – next year we will do another tranche.

National Grid – work planned for 2023 seems to be on hold – I have requested an update and when they start again will update about the Knotweed where National Grid appears to be crossing –WCC green team keeps an eye on the knotweed; it was treated at a location near a resident's property at the end of last season. The policy of treatment is to allow growth through the season and then treat it as the plant dies. It is unable to fight the spray at this stage and then dies off. It may take several treatments to eradicate the weed so the problem will have regular monitoring.

2197 - A44 30/40 mph signs - the 30mph and 40mph roundels were completed in October. The yellow back 40mph speed limit signs are currently on order for replacement. Checking if done.

Enquiry 3787 - Bringing the two communities of Wickhamford together.

1. Dragon teeth at the start each 40mph- the Dragons Teeth and Roundels require funding around £800k.
2. Slow Pedestrians crossing signs and slow road-marking signs requested .
 - one near Sandys Avenue (would like zebra crossing but unfunded)
 - advice on other locations?

At location near 75, Pitchers Hill just south of Sandy's Avenue

Enquiry 3196 - . Refuge/Crossing pedestrian infrastructure team reference 1433156: Starting cost for a Zebra type crossing is around £80k (April 23) with a Pelican considerably more.

Enquiry 3197 – infrastructure team reference 1433157: uncontrolled pedestrian - dropped kerbs) starts at £4,200.00 (April 23)

Both 3196 and 7 and are in the accepted stage but the same applies that funds will be needed. Any extra lining or signage would need to be considered.

Enquiry 3817 – speed information R Haynes 25/3

Manor Road - SNT Sgt at Evesham – officers last asked to visit Manor Road in March .

A44 at Wickhamford the last speed data that the West Mercia Police Road Safety Team collected was in October 2019.The speeds two way were 43mph.This was below our enforcement intervention level.

A44 Pitchers Hill, Wickhamford, Murcot Turn

From 16/03/2023 To 21/03/2023	Daily Vol.	Mean Ave.*	85th %ile*
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Eastbound	5,997	38	42
Westbound	6,447	37	42
Combined	12,445		
A44 Pitchers Hill, Wickhamford, nr Sandy Ave			
From 16/03/2023 To 21/03/2023	Daily Vol.	Mean Ave.*	85th %ile*
Eastbound	6,154	35	40
Westbound	6,669	36	40
Combined	12,823		
A44 work – Gilders Lorry stop – watching brief			

Enquiry 5234 – Longdon Hill Bridleway 516B urgently needs maintenance – and giant hogweed-7/8. The Countryside Team informed BB they intend to return during the autumn and winter months to deal with the hedges.