

REPORT of Ward Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst – Llangarron Ward. April 2018

Since my elevation to the role of Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing I have been pretty busy. There is a great deal of information to get around and I am on the steep, nay vertical, learning curve.

Whilst I can take no credit at all for this bit of good news I am happy to report that Herefordshire Council is one of only 19 councils across the country to have made a successful bid to create a new special free school which will provide places for 50 young people aged 16 to 19 years old with severe and complex learning disabilities, including autism.

Barrs Court Trust has been selected to run the school which will create a new centre of excellence for young people with special educational needs (SEN). It will

- Provide high quality teaching and learning
- Offer high quality information, advice and guidance
- Provide a community facility outside of school hours
- Enable internships and work experience
- Support students in other educational facilities
- Provide a resource hub for staff working with special educational needs children and their families.

Barrs Court Academy has a proven track record for high quality education and support for children with severe and complex learning disabilities. They will be able to build on the county's existing high quality post 16 opportunities and develop a broad range of special education provision to meet the needs of young people with SEN so that they will all have the chance to realise their full potential.

Local News.

You cannot have failed to notice the works being carried out by National Grid. There are reports that this is creating a problem with mud on the road and with damage to the highway. If you are aware of any such problems in your area please let me know.

POTHOLES

I attended a BBLP briefing session this month. According to the presentation BBLP have fixed 3000 cat one potholes 'without fail' and 88% of cat 2 within the timescale. The winter weather has tested the response of the main and sub contractors as they went out on over 100 gritting runs (42 contractors working 24/7) and you will know that they are still struggling to catch up with the pot holes.

I thought you might be interested in some more detail about potholes and the time frames for repair:

Cat 1 repair within 24 hrs, Cat 1 A& B 7 days

Cat 2a 28 days

Cat 2b 2 months

Cat 2c 'forward programme'

Due to the weather there has been a massive spike in Cat 1 and Cat 2 potholes – almost doubling the number to be done.

Roads are inspected on a regular basis:

Strategic roads every month

Main Distributor road every month

Secondary Distributor road every month

Link roads every 3 months

If your car has been damaged by a pothole then you may apply to BBLP for compensation but the claim will be judged against the contractor's duty of care (to do all that is reasonable in all the circumstances). So if, for instance, your car is damaged by a Cat 1 pothole that has not been reported it is not reasonable for BBLP to have to take responsibility for not having fixed a problem they were unaware of (all the more reason to report potholes). If, to take a different scenario, your car is damaged by a pothole that, at inspection, was graded a cat 2b and which is still within the 2 month timeframe then it is not reasonable for BBLP to have fixed it faster than they are required to. The Cat 2b pothole may suddenly worsen in condition between inspections but, again, BBLP would not be in breach of that duty of care since the worse condition would not be known about unless it has been reported. I hope that is helpful – I am not an expert but this is the opinion of an informed lay-person and I hope goes some way to explaining the situation.

I read a suggestion in the Hereford Times that it would be a good idea if the potholes were marked with fluorescent colour coded paint so a driver can see at night which ones are likely to be damaging. I put the suggestion forward to BBLP and they took it on board.

Anyway, at the moment the jet velocity patcher ('The Velocerator') is squirting black stuff into potholes in the north of the county. Needless to say I put in a strong request for a visit to the south but that would be dependent on additional funding. For comparison, the Velocity patcher can fill a hole for £12 against an average of £67 for conventional filling (National averages).

Every year BBLP have delivered within budget (both revenue and capital). Next year the revenue budget will be 6.5m and the capital budget 21m. An investment of 6.7m is planned in road resurfacing including the balance of the Challenge Fund money for specific main roads like the A44.

That's it for now. If you have any questions, issues, problems or matters of concern that you would like to raise with me please get in touch.

Cllr. Elissa Swinglehurst

Ward member Llangarron Ward

Cabinet member Young People and Children's Wellbeing Directorate.