

## **Report of Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst**

Representing the fabulous parishes of Llangarron, Marstow, Peterstow, Bridstow, Sellack, Welsh Newton and Llanrothal.

April 2025

Cllr Phil Cutter, a colleague and a constituent, recently passed away. I have such fond memories of Phil – he always had a cheeky smile and brought a light heartedness into any meeting. He served his local community as a town and county councillor for many years and was totally devoted to the community he lived in. He was welcoming and supportive to me in my early years as a councillor when I was on the planning committee and he was the chairman. A good hearted person, may he rest in peace.

## **Watch out for Lambor-greenie and Ronald the Recycler**



Local schoolchildren had the chance to name our new refuse collection fleet – we had some great suggestions including Binnenium Falcon, Recyclosaurus Rex, Recyclabull and Dan (named for one of the operators). Various schools took part and it was really fun to see the kids meeting ‘their’ truck, beeping the horns and sitting in the driver’s seat. It was interesting that so many of the names referenced recycling or saving the planet (literally one of the names) so I very much hope that the younger generation approve of the council’s decision to introduce food and green waste recycling.

At the moment we recycle about 40% and we have remained at that level for some time. Once the food waste introduced we should see that rise to about 45% and the garden waste will add another 13% giving us a recycling rate of 58%.

The reason we are doing this is

1. It’s the right thing to do.
2. It is mandated by government as a result of the Conservative Environment Act 2021.
3. It will reduce cost in gate fees to the energy from waste plant
4. It will provide a better service for residents.

The food waste collection will be introduced once the ‘new burdens’ funding has been received from government. We are aiming to get it underway by March 2026. The council will provide two caddies, a small one for the kitchen and a 25L one for outside. This will mean that you won’t have to

put food into your residual bin so that won't be smelly or attract vermin. The food caddies will be collected every week (unlike the residual waste that is collected once a fortnight).

Whereas the current system includes the food waste with the residual waste and takes it to the energy from waste plant (which has generated 1m MW since commissioning in 2017), this new system will take the food to an anaerobic digester in Dymock and it will be used to create biogas. The contract includes provision that the digestate must not be spread within Herefordshire in order to reduce the nutrient loading in the catchment.

The other service we are introducing is a garden waste collection which is optional and chargeable. A 270 L bin will be provided and emptied once a fortnight for a charge of £60 a year. The collected material will be composted. This will replace the current subscriber 'green sack' service which the council runs. If you use Biffa to collect garden waste that will not be affected however, they do not cover all of the county so we are offering the service to all areas. We will be flexible about sharing a bin or having more than one.

### **A bit more on 'waste'**

Just an update on the high court case regarding the council's minerals and waste plan which has been subject to judicial review brought by NFU. The High Court found in favour of the council on all grounds. The NFU asked for leave to appeal this judgement but this application has been denied. I am intending to pick up the matter with local NFU representatives so we can work together on guidance and increased understanding of the implications of the policy and judgement.

### **Roads**

The works to the Llangrove-Whitchurch road are now completed. Although the whole length of the road was not resurfaced the contractors have done a very good job and the road is now very smooth and pothole free.

I am still hopeful that we will get a surface dressing to finish it off. Thank you to those residents who have appreciated the improvement and gone to the trouble of telling me how pleased they are.

TROs The Bridstow TROs are now in the pipeline but the one at Three Ashes and Llancloudy is still to get going although I have been reassured that the speed monitoring will begin shortly.

### **The Death of Democracy has been somewhat exaggerated**

There have been a number of posts on social media criticising the council for not being part of the recent local elections. The reasons being put forward by those who are frustrated by not being able to vote are that the council is afraid and have cancelled the election (yes, really), or that Herefordshire Council (aka the Clowncil) are ignoring the rights of the masses to have their democratic say.

It is great that people care so much about democracy and the functioning of government. It is a shame that they don't understand that the reason that Herefordshire did not hold elections this time is that they are not due until 2027. We hold local elections every 4 years; those who take the opportunity to exercise their democratic right will remember that the last election was in 2023 when the council passed from Independent/Green coalition to a minority Conservative administration. One of the results of this change of administration was an increase of spending on the roads (see above) as well as a renewed effort to get a bypass for Hereford (which the previous administration cancelled).

## **Rivers**

One of the difficulties in dealing with the water quality of the rivers is knowing when things are improving. Natural Resources Wales has recently published their report on the state of the nation's rivers and have declared that the Lower Wye (downstream of Monmouth) is no longer failing for phosphate. Overall this is good news, of course, but it doesn't mean that we can be even a bit complacent. The Wye in Herefordshire is also not failing but this is due, in the main, to the effect of dilution. What is important is to recognise improvement and to focus effort where it is most needed and that is on the Lugg, Arrow and Frome – or Alf as I like to call it.

The dry weather has meant that we have had reduced turbidity (cloudiness due to soil erosion) and as a result the river is as clear as it has ever been. Fishing on the Monnow was actually quite strange as I had got so used to not being able to see my feet – it is, as they say, gin clear and it is also nice to see that quite a lot of the stone and gravel is cleaner than it has been. There have been several sightings of brook lamprey and no shortage of trout.

This month the River Wye Nutrient Management Board welcomed the river to a seat on the board. Dr Louise Bodnar is the appointed representative for the river and it will be her task to be an advocate for the river in all discussions and votes. This is a step towards giving nature rights and acknowledging that there are other interests apart from the anthropocentric that require to be considered.

It follows on from a notice on motion that I put to the full council about 2 years ago calling on Herefordshire Council to seek a way to give the river rights. I notice that the same is now being done for the W Sussex Ouse so it's good to see things developing in this way.

## **Litter**

The Great British Clean up saw lots of volunteers out and about in the county picking up other people's litter. Fipping brilliant.

I picked litter on the central reservation of the A40 near Ross – that was fun! As well as along the Yazor Brook in Hereford (thanks to the staff at KFC and the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust for inviting me along). I also did my regular litter pick on the River Monnow – some eegit has dumped a load of racing tyres into the river. I managed to get four out but there are at least two more that are now too embedded to move.

## **Other news**

A consultation was launched this week on the [Local Transport Plan](#) which sets out transport priorities for 2025–2041. We are asking residents, partner organisations, transport providers, user groups and neighbouring councils to provide their feedback to help shape the final plan and ensure it reflects the needs and priorities of communities across Herefordshire. I encourage you to share the link to the consultation through your networks please.

If you live in Hereford, or regularly travel to or through the City, please be aware that there are major gas main works planned for the A49 from Asda towards Ross, from 24 May until the end of August. As significant travel disruption is expected, please find an alternative route for your journey during this period. Full details will soon be available on the Cadent website at [Major Projects - Cadent Gas Ltd](#). Please share these details through your network.