

## **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 7.00pm in the Pump Rooms, Tenbury Wells.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Cllr G. Price, Deputy Mayor Cllr M. Willis, Cllrs S. Bowkett, M. Brennan, S. Corfield, J. Da Costa, M. Drummond, J. Fielder, E. Hudson, D. Ingram, J. Morgan, E. Weston, J. Watson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** WCC Cllr K. Pollock, MHDC Cllrs P. Grove and A. Penn, West Mercia Police PC Wood, Town Clerk, 1 Member of the Press, 13 members of the public

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr M. Brennan (would arrive late)

### **1. Apologies**

Cllr M. Brennan who would arrive late. There were no apologies for absence.

### **2. To receive the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of proceedings.

### **3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None

### **4. Mayors Opening Remarks**

The Mayor Cllr G. Price opened the meeting as follows:-

*"I would like to begin by welcoming members of the public to tonight's statutory Annual Town Meeting. This is an opportunity for the electorate of Tenbury to question their elected representatives on issues relating to Tenbury.*

*I also welcome our District and County Councillors, and of course your Town Councillors, whom I thank sincerely for their support for me personally over the last 12 months, and also for the dedication and hard work they, both individually and collectively, have put into the many issues that have come before us during the last year, some of which I will refer to in my annual report.*

*I must also thank our Town Clerk Dawn Worgan for the incredible amount of work and effort she puts in every day to help make this council run efficiently and effectively. As well as her day to day duties as Town Clerk she is also the Council's Financial Officer and has been responsible for designing and introducing a system of monthly budget reporting that has enabled us to monitor individual committee budgets and the overall financial position of the council in what can only be described as a forensic manner.*

*During the past 12 months, my wife and I have attended many civic events. From Bridgnorth to Bewdley, from Pershore to Worcester, from Kidderminster to Upton, from Ledbury to Bromsgrove, and I think most towns in between. We have both always done our utmost to represent and promote this wonderful town of Tenbury Wells to the very best of our ability, and I know I speak for both of us when I say it has been a privilege to do so."*

### **5. Mayors' Annual Report**

Attached (Appendix A)

### **6. District Councillors Report**

Cllr Grove's report attached (Appendix B) –

Cllr Tony Penn

South Worcestershire Development Plan – plan still in place – inspector has ruled on revised figures and plan is progressing through to the next stage. Plan is still deemed to be sound but must now include a further 6260 dwellings. Looking to get to stage 2 in Autumn. Public hearings will be announced 6 weeks in advance. Having made this progress an Inspector will have to give more credence to the emerging plan in any appeal process.

The NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development (Clause 14) is still the cause of much difficulty.

### **7. County Councillors Report**

Attached (Appendix C)

Cllr Brennan entered the chamber at this point in the meeting.

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### **8. Local Police Report**

PC Wood gave an overview of the last 12 months. In this year Tenbury had seen a change in policing with officers for the town now working out of Leominster. There has still been no decision on what is to happen with the Police Station. The local policing team remains the same but now reports to Sgt Ian Blanchard.

There had been varied incidents in the town over the year. Lots of damage to Town Council property in June. A CCTV camera (on loan from MHDC) was installed in the car park overlooking the play area and incidents stopped immediately.

There was Disorder following the Agricultural Show at the TRFC event. Catalytic converter theft has increased significantly with 11 incidents over the last 12 months – a marking event held in Tenbury was very successful; 40 security kits were fitted on the day and a further 40 were sold on the day to be fitted by vehicle owners at home.

There had been criminal damage in town to various properties. 5 burglaries – two of which were into local pubs. 5 non-dwelling burglaries - including the Groundsmans hut and the church food bank. There had been the theft of a planter from Teme bridge, 4 pedal cycles had been stolen and batteries were stolen twice from the HRC site. 5 positive drug warrants had been issued. 2 section 27 notices (24H ban from the area) had been issued.

18 level 1 ASBO notices (for comparison 42 in Malvern in same period) but no level 2 which was good news.

Recently there have been reports of cars causing nuisance on Palmers Meadow car park late at night. This is currently being investigated. Targetted patrols are also working with skatepark users to try and identify those responsible for glass being broken on the skatepark overnight. Generally Tenbury remained a safe place to live.

PC Wood also noted that Party in Park was very successful in 2013 but sadly there is not enough funding to run the event in 2014. It is hoped that it will be possible to run it again in 2015 and on a biannual basis thereafter.

PC Wood was thanked for attending and giving her report.

### **9. Questions from the Public**

#### **Mr Tim Giles regarding parking arrangements**

Q: "What is the current situation with regards creating additional parking for the vehicles currently using the TESCO site?"

A: This had been covered in Cllr Pollock's report – there were plans to make provision for temporary overflow car parking on Palmer's Meadow.

#### **Mr Norman Wanstall regarding parking arrangements**

Q: On behalf of the people of Tenbury and surrounding areas can I ask when a positive plan to tackle the town's parking problems will be announced?

At present we have the cattle market site that is unfit for purpose on which 60 to 70 cars park on a daily basis. At any time the site could be closed for the construction of Tesco and no provision has been made to accommodate the 60 to 70 cars.

We also have cars parked outside Spar and opposite Caldicott Bros which should never be allowed because they narrow the width of the streets and cause gridlock when lorries and buses try to pass.

The pay and display car park that can accommodate 72 cars is invariably two-thirds empty because townsfolk resent paying a fee every time they drive in to make a purchase.

Question (1) Why can't MHDC be approached to make the pay-and-display a free parking area?

Question (2) Why can't cars be banned from outside Spar and opposite Caldicotts?

Question (3) When will work start to create a completely new permanent parking area either by the children's play area or near the rugby ground?

A:

Q1 – Cllr Penn responded for MHDC – the MHDC car park is closest to shops and it is important to keep it available for short term parking. It was previously free of charge and was always full of cars parked all day long thus making it impossible for anyone visiting the town to park short term. The charges made cover maintenance of both the toilets and the car park. MHDC

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continued to believe that it was right for this car park to have charges and MHDC residents could of course apply for a 2hr parking permit at a greatly reduced cost.

Q2 – Cllr Pollock responded that plans in the public realm scheme to move the bus stop from outside the Regal to in front of TSB bank would help to alleviate the issues at the Spar end of town. As there were so few busses each day the bus stop space would for the most part be clear of parked traffic on the TSB side of the road. Unfortunately motorists might still park illegally outside of the designated spaces by Spar but more regular traffic enforcement was also helping to alleviate this problem. At the other end of town there were only parking spaces on one side of the road opposite Caldicotts and again if only the designated spaces were used there was sufficient space for vehicles to pass. Bad parking did cause problems but better traffic enforcement was improving this. Local businesses had made it clear that they would not wish to lose any of the on street parking spaces in the town and it seemed contrary to raise concern over loss of parking on the cattle market site on the one hand while advocating removal of spaces from Teme Street or Market Street on the other.

Q3 - This had been covered in Cllr Pollock's report – there were plans to make provision for temporary overflow car parking on Palmer's Meadow.

### **Mr Don Woodhams regarding Teme Bridge**

Mr Woodhams had recently moved to the town and raised a concern re. the suitability of the Teme Bridge for modern traffic and large vehicles, having recently had his car damaged on the bridge. He asked whether the authorities were concerned at traffic flow in Tenbury Wells, on the Teme Bridge and also on Cross Street and whether the A4112 should really be designated as an A road?

A: Cllr Pollock replied that these were arguments which had been well rehearsed in relation to Teme Bridge in 2011/2012 when it was undergoing renovation works. It had been hoped that the bridge could be widened by removing the footpath on one side but due to safety concerns and fact that the bridge is a scheduled ancient monument, no such alterations were possible so the bridge had been made good with all its eccentricities intact. The correct approach was one of caution and Cllr Pollock regretted that despite this Mr Woodhams had suffered damage to his vehicle so soon after moving to the area. With regard to large vehicles passing through the town research had been carried out which identified that the majority of vehicles were not simply passing through but on their way to local businesses and as such vital to the town. The planned public realm works aimed to further slow traffic as it passed through the town which would be to the benefit of pedestrians and other road users alike. Cllr Pollock did not feel the designation of the 4112 as an A road made any material difference to the type of traffic which went through the town as the Teme Bridge was a vital crossing point over the river Teme whether on an A road or a B road.

### **Mr Keith Griffiths regarding the Regal**

Q: Mr Griffiths repeated his concern over the terms under which the Town Council had leased the Regal to the Regal Tenbury Trust and said that in his opinion the amount of rent being charged for the first 10 years and the subsequent years of the lease was not sufficient and did not count as good business practice especially since the lease was a non-repairing lease. He asked whether he had understood the lease correctly and whether the Mayor and the Council understood the lease.

A: The Mayor said that the lease was understood by all and that these points had been taken into account by the Town Council when the decision was made and that the Council continued to stand by its decision and felt fully vindicated in its support given the evident success of the Regal and the added benefits achieved by other businesses in the town who received trade due to the Regal's success and residents who now had a thriving venue on their doorstep. All members concurred on this point. Cllr Hudson observed that Mr Griffiths had made the same points at the Town Meeting the previous year and had received a comprehensive written response from the Council explaining the decisions taken in June 2013. (see minutes of 03-TC 010713M)

### **Mr Alan Dale regarding Tenbury Pool**

Mr Dale thanked the Mayor for his support for the swimming pool and asked that the Council appoint a representative to the new Tenbury Community Pool Ltd.

A: The Mayor replied that this item was on the agenda of the Annual Council Meeting which would follow.

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### **Mr Tim Giles of DHJH regarding utility works in the town**

Q: When utility companies dig up the pavement and do not put things back as they were who had powers to get things made good. In a recent example outside TSB the brick pavements had been replaced by tarmac which was unsightly.

A: This was a County Highways Matter so complaints of this nature should be directed to Worcester County Council in the first instance. Cllr Pollock could also be contacted and the Town Clerk would be happy to pass on such complaints. The utility companies were required to reinstate in a like for like manner so any failure to do so adequately should be reported.

Meeting closed at 8:28 pm

Signed.....

Date.....

### Mayor's Annual Report 2014

Three years ago, when this council was first elected, it soon became clear to us that forward planning had previously not been a priority. It was also evident that many of the facilities in the council's ownership were in urgent need of repair or replacement. We decided that it was essential to make forward planning and financial stability one of our top priorities. To achieve this, it has been necessary to increase the council precept for each of the last 3 years. District and county councils receive funding from central government. However, town councils do not, and therefore we only have the precept paid by Tenbury residents to enable us to provide the many services and facilities that we are responsible for. Because this council now has a sound and prudent approach to financial matters, we are in a position to plan responsibly and securely for the future. I look forward to seeing vastly improved services and facilities in the coming years.

Over the last year, TTC have been involved in an unusually large number of very important and sometimes controversial issues. The town council have worked closely with both the district and county councils on many of these issues. I am sure our district and county council representatives will refer to some of them in their reports.

I would like to spend a few minutes, if I may, to explain the town council's involvement and the representations we have made on behalf of Tenbury.

I will begin with Tenbury swimming pool. TTC are the owners of Palmer's Meadow and this includes the land on which the pool is built. When the pool was opened in 1968, TTC gave Tenbury Swimming Pool Guild, the trustees of the pool, a lease on the land at a peppercorn rent. TSPG was dissolved this year, and a new charitable company was set up and a board of trustees appointed. TTC have worked very closely with the new board in trying to secure the long term future of this very important facility. Our district councillors are well aware of the town council's concerns regarding the financial contribution currently made by MHDC which is under review as part of the District's Sport and Leisure Strategy. I take this opportunity to once again urge them to oppose any proposal to withdraw this funding. If it is withdrawn, it will threaten the sustainability and long term future of this valuable community asset.

I will now refer to the development of the old cattle market, the relocation of the household waste and recycling site and the impending public realm works. I've put them together under the same heading, because all 3 are, in many ways, linked.

I will begin with the supermarket development. The former cattle market is currently used as an unofficial car park by 60 plus cars most days of the week. When the supermarket development is completed, there will be over 100 parking spaces provided, and we understand from Tesco's that 2 hour free parking will be allowed. But clearly, many of the cars currently using the site will need to find alternative parking arrangements. To this end, TTC have been in discussions with both the county and district councils to find an alternative site for the household waste provision, currently located on the town council-owned Palmer's Meadow car park. These discussions have been successful, and we anticipate a planning application for the new facility in Bromyard Rd being submitted imminently. When the facility is relocated it will result in freeing up space for an additional 30 plus cars on car park. We are also in discussions with the county council investigating the possibility of providing additional car parking on part of Palmer's Meadow. I will leave it to Cllr Pollock to give an update on this.

To summarise, the town council are well aware of the car parking issues in Tenbury, and have been working hard for the last 12 months to find solutions and ways to mitigate the loss

of the unofficial car parking spaces on the former cattle market. A positive outcome of the work done around parking has been the changes made following an MHDC working party that I was part of, which produced a report that included a recommendation that civil enforcement of parking restrictions be introduced in the town centre. This has been welcomed by traders who report an increase in business.

Staying with the supermarket development, Tesco's have been very reluctant to give a date when they will start work. As well as being very frustrating, this has also had an impact on the planned public realm works. As you may know, Tesco's are responsible for the public realm works from Teme Bridge to the Regal. Because of their reluctance to give a start date, the county council have not been able to schedule the works in their programme. In view of this, the town and county council have agreed that instead of starting work in Teme St, the work will now begin at the other end of town as soon as the County Council Highways Dept can include it in their programme. And again Cllr Pollock will give an update.

The town council have also been actively involved in arguing the case for retaining the 291 Tenbury- Kidderminster bus service which is currently on the at risk list of subsidised services the county council are considering withdrawing. I organised a survey and a petition of users of the service. Then on behalf of the town council, I attended the Overview and Scrutiny committee at county hall to argue the case for keeping this crucially important bus service, to report the findings of the survey and to present the petition. We hope that the case presented and the reasons for retaining the service will have been taken into account when the county council finally make a decision on this matter.

We have been equally involved in actively arguing the case for the retention of our second fire tender at Tenbury fire station. On behalf of the council, I attended a meeting at the Guildhall in Worcester, to address Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Policy and Resources Committee where I put forward the town council's opposition and expressed our grave concern about the proposed cut. We are still awaiting a final decision about our second fire engine.

And finally, most people would agree that the town council's decision to transfer the management of the Regal to Tenbury Regal Trust was the right way forward to secure its sustainability and long term future, and I believe the obvious success of the Regal proves that this was the right decision.

Councillors, members of the public...it has been both an honour and a privilege to represent Tenbury as your mayor over the last 12 months, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to do so.

Cllr. George Price  
May 2014

Annual Report to Tenbury Town Council.  
MHDC.

I wish to thank Tenbury Town Councillors for all their support and for good working relations over the past 12 months, and I look forward to working with you all over the next 12 months.

A new recycling service was introduced 11 months ago, using wheeled bins; this has been a big success. The recycling rate has jumped to 38% from 31% and overall satisfaction with the service has increased.

Civil Parking Enforcement was introduced for on-street parking and, despite early concerns, it has been deemed a success by local traders and motorists, as more parking spaces are now available for short-term use.

Fewer calls and visits to our Customer Service Centres (CSCs) were made as improvements to our website made it easier for customers to serve themselves online. Customers using the CSCs had their queries dealt with more quickly.

Sports and Leisure Strategy is ongoing, with interest being expressed in the Tenbury Swimming Pool. MHDC continues to liaise/work with the newly formed company.

The Civil Amenities site is to be moved to Tenbury Business Park. This is presently with Worcester County Council, and Cllr Pollock can give you an update.

**This year we plan to:**

Undertake detailed reviews of our corporate, planning and waste management services to identify further opportunities to reduce costs and improve or maintain service quality.

Seek viable opportunities to increase revenue through innovative and enterprising use of our resources and assets.

Actively support District and Parish Councillors to address local priority needs in their area in line with plans for revised community engagement.

Improve the health and well-being of all residents.

Develop and implement a Sport & Leisure Strategy across the district in order to meet people's needs in an affordable way.

Begin reviews of our key partnerships to ensure that they provide value for money and improve outcomes.

It's my intention here in Tenbury to stimulate the local economy by providing and advertising employment sites, implementing the Local Plan to support delivery of housing and economic development needs, to further increase visitors numbers and tourism spend and to facilitate access to faster broadband.

The 2013 Halifax Quality of Life Survey, based on a wide range of statistical data, identified Malvern Hills as the second best place to live in the West Midlands. Our own Viewpoint survey showed that over 90% of residents are satisfied with Malvern Hills as a place to live and that over 70% are satisfied with the way the District Council runs things.

These results demonstrate that Malvern Hills District Council is getting much right – but we are not complacent and are determined to make things even better.

Your two local District Councillors, despite restraints on MHDC finances, have worked hard to retain all grants in 2014-15, including Tenbury Swimming Pool, Museum, TIC, Café 27 and CAB. Many will know that the CAB moved to the Tenbury Library some weeks ago.

Housing SWDP - Cllr Penn.

## TENBURY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

06.05.14

### COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

#### 1. Introduction

It is good to have the chance of reporting on the year just gone. The Tenbury Division covers a lot of territory and 18 different councils, so it is difficult to meet residents regularly. I endeavour to attend most Parish and Town Council meetings and send written reports if not, which are often published on the internet.

I hope I have been appropriately responsive to enquiries, ideally coming by email, but I am happy to deal with queries from letters or phone calls. Please let me know if the communication is not working properly.

#### 2 General Economic Situation for WCC

At the Parish Conference last week, the outgoing and incoming Chief Executives gave a summary of the situation concerning the Council. In general, the financial situation is serious but under control, although how we are to save the £25 million or so in a couple of years is not clear.

Fundamentally, Children's Services and Adult Social Care are demanding more money, making it difficult to maintain services in the other sectors. The aim is to keep those two areas below 60% of total expenditure. Broadly speaking, the Council wants to shift from being a provider to being a commissioner of services, using a variety of organisations to take over the services.

This is part of the Act Local approach where we seek to involve other operators and District and Parish Councils, expanding schemes like the lengthsmen. The important aspect of that scheme is that it is administered locally but paid for by the County, indicating that solutions don't need to mean other people paying for the work.

You will be familiar with the devolution of Positive Activities money to the Districts, where it is allocated by the County Councillors. In Tenbury, the money supports Cafe 27 that continues to do an excellent job.

Whatever scheme is used, it will not remove the County's responsibility for being the accountable authority and a lot of work is going on to see how this can be organised to be effective. There has been a task group studying the whole operation, and its report will go to the Cabinet on the 21<sup>st</sup> May and it can be read on the WCC website now.

#### 3 Digital Council

At present some 85% of all contacts between residents and the Council are by telephone. It is the aim of the Digital Council project to switch to digital reporting through the website, so that in future 85% of all such contacts are by that route.

A new system of reporting problems is being trialled starting today, as a way of replacing the verbal reports to the Hub. It will make the system much easier, allowing multiple reporting at one visit, easier location of faults be they potholes or faulty street lights and the system will keep those who report problems up to date with emails that will detail every step of investigation and remedy.

It all happens under the same "Report it" section of the website and can be tried out now. The Council would welcome any feedback on how it is working before the public announcement in June.

#### **4 State of the Roads**

One of the most commonly reported problems concerns the state of our roads. Recently the public satisfaction with the state of the roads has fallen and the County conducted a study to find out why. This was in the context of the objective measurement of our principal roads being of an improving standard.

The results seemed to indicate that various factors, like being held up by road works, poor information about road works and poor signage, all influence the public's attitude. Regrettably the study did not seek to find out how much the impression is influenced by the state of roads elsewhere in the country and in particular in neighbouring counties with significantly worse records on road maintenance.

#### **5 Responsiveness of WCC and the Utilities**

Whatever the state of the roads, the Council needs to be responsive to complaints and comments. Recently it has not been shown in a good light by its handling of the need to clear Rhyse Lane, just across the Kyre Brook. Your clerk has been assiduous in seeking a solution. We need to be kept up to the mark in such matters, and I would like to hear from anyone who feels that they have not been adequately treated when reporting problems.

It can be that the response is excessively bureaucratic. I passed on a request for signage to discourage lorries leaving F W Matthews from using Berrington Road to get into town and the answer seemed to indicate the need for a lengthy investigation and a Traffic Regulation Order. For me, it seemed simple. Just put up some signs. We will see if that argument carries the day.

The same applies to the utilities. The Overview and Scrutiny panel that I chair has examined this problem recently and have made clear to a representative of Severn Trent, who also sits on a national committee of all the utilities, that performance and responsiveness has not been good. The flooding problem in Cross Street that took several years to sort out was an example of that problem.

#### **6 Public Realm**

Of course, the biggest issue facing Tenbury at the moment is the Public Realm work and the relationship with Tesco's. I wish I could report that the company have announced a date for starting here. When I enquired recently, I have been told we will not hear for another month or so. They have started work in Stourport and that is a large store that we had heard was less favoured than the medium size one planned for Tenbury.

There are rumours that the company may sell the site, most logically to another supermarket, but I have no news on that.

In the face of these delays, it has been decided that we will plan to carry out the Public Realm in two phases, starting with the section from the Round Market as far as a Crow corner. That will be scheduled for later this autumn for completion in the New Year, after a pause during the run up to Christmas, to minimise the disruption to trade.

Ideally, by the time we have finished that section, Tesco's will be able to commit to their section of the work, from the Regal to the bridge, and we could then continue seamlessly to meet up with their work, as they complete the supermarket construction.

#### **7 Amenity Site Removal**

As part of the preparation for these changes, it has been agreed that the household recycling site will move to the Bromyard Road Business Park and the necessary planning procedures are in hand. These inevitably take longer than one would wish, but we do not expect any problems. This will

liberate room for about another 20 car parking spaces in the corner of the car park, as well as removing an unsightly installation, past which all visitors using the carpark have to drive.

## **8 Parking and Palmer's Meadow**

The other remedy for parking scarcity during the construction phase of the supermarket is to create a temporary car park on part of Palmer's Meadow. This has been approved. Your Town Council were very wise in suggesting that the car park should be permanent installation, that would only be used when necessary. This means that it will be constructed strongly enough to carry cars, but be surfaced with grass, so that it looks like the existing playing field. As it will only be in use at busy times, it will not need to be permanently fenced, so that it will in effect disappear when not in use.

Money has been found in the budget to make this possible. The first substantial use will probably be during the supermarket construction, relieving the problems of parking for shoppers during that extended period. Some loss of parking will take place during the Public Realm construction, but that will involve fewer spaces.

## **9 Bus Subsidies**

The final report of the group looking to save the cost of subsidising bus routes will be published in early June. The public consultation, where your Mayor played a significant part, resulted in the planned savings being reduced from £3million to £1.9 million. My O&S panel will examine the report on the 6<sup>th</sup> June. The critical decision for Tenbury will affect the 291 that is subsidised at present to the tune of £3.11 per journey.

I do not know the result of the review but the principles underlying any decisions give cause for optimism. The three main priorities are fulfilling the statutory duty to get children to and from school, to reflect the problems of rural isolation and to help people get to work. You will recognise the 291 scores well in each category.

Meanwhile, it is encouraging to see the progress of the Tenbury Transport Trust in maintaining the three routes that the County stopped subsidising in the last round of cuts. You will be aware that the County took over the running of these routes and then made money available to help the Trust start up their own operation, using the Teme Hopper and private cars. Now the group is keen to expand the operations, in anticipation of the substantial money to come from Tesco's when they start their operations.

## **10. Broadband Penetration and Importance**

The progress of the rural broadband roll out was also discussed at last week's Parish Conference. The BT contract, signed last August, will be rolled out in 8 phases up until mid 2016, and the first two have been announced. These include Great Witley, Hallow, Wichenford and Knightwick.

The £1.1 million Defra money is being channelled through BDUK, and will give Superfast Broadband for Abberley and Ombersley, among other villages.

The next phases will be announced as they are determined, according to the results of surveys, value for money and demand. In January 2013, just 3% of Tenbury households had expressed an interest. That number had risen to 4.5% by January this year, which is not very impressive when compared with the figures of 66.4% for Little Witley and 54.9% for Abberley. It is certainly worth seeking to increase the percentage of households registering an interest, as BT respond in part to demand!

Tenbury looks to be in line for full coverage for most of the town, with partial coverage for some parts. The relevant maps and current likely speeds can be found on the County website under "Superfast

Worcestershire". It is important to note that, uniquely, Worcestershire is covering businesses as well as residences in its £20 million programme.

More money has been allocated to increase coverage from 90% to 95% and we hope this will be forthcoming. WCC and BT will be working on a sequence of coverage in that sector and I can only suggest continued increase in demand from households and businesses, to seek to get into the 90% or 95% sectors.

## **11 Flooding**

The last year has seen serious flooding in many parts of southern England but Tenbury and its environs were spared. The investment elsewhere in Worcestershire showed its worth, with relatively few residences and industrial premises flooded, compared with 2007. As your council's working group found, Tenbury's problems are unlikely to be amenable to a barrier system, and defending individual premises would seem a more practical solution.

In the light of the apocalyptic pronouncements from various quarters, it is worth noting that rainfall in England was not at record levels this winter, as the rainfall over the 1929/1930 winter was substantially higher, and that at a time when climate change had not been thought of.

## **12 WCDF**

As of the start of the new financial year, my Divisional Fund has been replenished to £10,000 again and I am very keen to hear of suitable projects on which to spend it. My principle is to give relatively small sums to as many groups as possible, ideally involving a large number of beneficiaries and for projects that can be self-sustaining in the long term.

## **13 Tenbury High School Conversion to an Academy**

The Department for Education has approved Tenbury's application to become an Academy in association with the Ormiston Academy Trust and detailed negotiations are in progress. In the light of improving outcomes for the County's schools overall, I am confident that this move will see Tenbury turning in good results very soon, and I would encourage all who can to support the school in every way possible.

**Cllr Ken Pollock  
Martley,  
Worcester  
6<sup>th</sup> May 2014**