

Churchdown Parish Council

County Councillors Report – 10th October 2023

Please accept my apologies for being absent. I have to work away in my role with the MOD and this month I am in another “glamorous” location visiting Units.

Local issues:

- The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has made proposals for the new County Council boundaries, which will be implemented before the next County elections in 2025. I am very pleased that they propose leaving Churchdown as one seat, in line with the representation I made to them and to the Parish, and that my political group made to the LGBCE. I cannot stress how important this is to enable whoever is Councillor in future years to serve one community, without being dragged in to different geographical areas
- I have emailed the Parish Clerk about some land on Chesford Drive, and have lobbied Kendrick Homes to maintain the land more coherently. My gut instinct is that no tier of local authority will want the land, but I will persevere to explore those options
- After a series of meetings, I am waiting to see if the Parish Council want to pursue getting an additional crossing on Parton Road.

Council Business:

- The Children’s Services budget is already forecasting an overspend of approximately £6,000,000. This is despite money from reserves being moved over to the budget to stop this happening. I have raised my ongoing concerns with both Members and Senior Officers, not so much on spending the money (which is very hard not to do if the need is there), but rather the appalling financial planning which means they overspend by millions of pounds each year.
- I have attended Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Children and Families Scrutiny and Fire Scrutiny, where I had the opportunity to ask the chief fire officer questions around a range of issues.
- I am seconding a motion to Full Council in November calling for the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend Council to answer specific questions around our poor performance resulting in them being put into “special measures”.

As with a lot of County Councils, Gloucestershire suffers with a lack of Foster Carers. This has a double edged effect – it prevents children and young people finding the care they need within County; and it adds pressure to budgets by forcing the County to pay for expensive and/or out of County placements.

The Council is trying to use all its informal and formal networks to recruit Foster carers, and will hear a motion tomorrow (13/9/23) to that effect. In the mean time I encourage all Councillors to look at the GCC website and keep this issue in the front of your mind as you operate in all sorts of formal and informal networks.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering/>

Ben Evans