

The Gazette view



It's good to be back

AS many readers will know I have been on annual leave for the past two weeks. Returning to Ross after a short break means I am seeing the town with fresh eyes and I am also more aware of how other places make the most of their situation.

It is difficult to compare the cities we visited on holiday with Ross because of the size. However what we noticed was that there were many shops and buildings not just closed, but semi-derelict. Often far worse in appearance than many of the empty properties in Ross. However they seemed to exist perfectly happily alongside expensive, designer shops. Shoppers were not deterred at walking past scaffolding or uncared for properties, to get to where they wanted to go.

Also in Spain, in particular, there was graffiti all over the place, but there was no litter. I wondered why there is such a difference in attitudes. What makes a person think it is acceptable to spray paint designs on empty shop windows in one country but in another that fast food wrappers and empty drink cans can be thrown on any street or grass verge.

Also I noticed that street cleaning and flower bed tidying and planting is carried out regularly by local authority workers. Every morning we saw the street sweeper moving around making sure there was no litter to be seen.

I was delighted to see the Royal British Legion flower box in Broad Street looking so colourful as I walked up the road to work on Monday.

It is surprising how much of a difference flowers can make to the impression visitors get of a town.

At one of the towns we visited a group were performing their national dance in their traditional costume. They were members of a club who liked to demonstrate their talents whenever they can. They made our group feel very welcome and encouraged the younger members to take part.

I know how much work went on behind the scenes to organise the May Fayre in Ross, in previous years and I know there is plenty of effort

Residents raise concerns with Councillors at town meeting



Catherine Barkley
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THE annual public meeting of Ross Town Council was held at the Larruperz Centre on Monday, April 4th. Attendees were given verbal reports from the Mayor of Ross-on-Wye, as well as reports from the Chairs of Town Council committees, and an update from Melvin Reynolds about the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

During the meeting, residents with concerns about aspects of Ross had the opportunity to raise these issues directly with their Councillors.

During the meeting, a Ross resident, Julian Utting raised one issue, which seemed to strike a chord with many of the other members of the public who had attended the meeting. Mr Utting told the Councillors that he was concerned that Ross was not getting a fair deal from Herefordshire Council; he referenced the grant of more than £23,000 that Ross will not receive from Herefordshire Council, although other market towns are.

He asked the Councillors, especially the four who are also County Councillors, what progress was being made to get the grant re-instated.

The Mayor of Ross told Mr Utting that the Councillors would send him a written response, and any other attendees who would like to know the response to the question should submit their details and they would receive it.

RBL to open charity shop in Ross

THE Royal British Legion will be opening a charity shop on



Road collision on the A49

THERE was a road traffic collision on the A south of Hereford on Monday, April 4th, at approximately 4.30pm.

The police were called at 4.33pm on Monday evening to reports of a two car road traffic collision on the junction of A49/Grafton Lane, Grafton.

A Vauxhall Combo and a Ford Fiesta were two vehicles involved. The ambulance service attended. They treated one woman, who is estimated to be in her 40s, she was assessed and charged at the scene.

Many residents have raised concerns about amount of accidents which occur on the A49, so of Hereford. Last week, the *Ross Gazette* reported that a Hereford woman, Caroline Slough had created a petition, hoping to increase the road safety along the stretch of road.

For more details about Caroline's online petition visit www.change.org and search for A49.

Competition winner

The winners of five pairs of tickets to Garden World Live are: Mrs Warnette from Ross-on-Wye, Brenda Thrush from Ross-on-Wye, Lucy Pi from Ross-on-Wye, Peter Field from Llangrannog and Anne Morris from Orcop.

Rowing for RAC

STAFF and friends of Ross Court care home taking part in a rowing effort to raise funds for Ross Action Committee mini-bus.

John Kyrle High School has lent a rowing machine to Ross Court and valiant members staff, as well as friends and relatives of residents are taking it in turns to row the length of the River Wye. They will be rowing throughout the week with the hope of completing 215km.

The Ross Action Committee is celebrating 50th anniversary as many Ross Court residents the bus regularly they thought this was a great way to show their appreciation.

If you would like to support the rowers, or Ross Action Committee, donations can be left at Ross Court, Ledbury Road, Ross-on-Wye.

Ross Auction Centre

AT the Green Market held on Monday, April 4th

Fun despite the rain at the Wye Valley River Festival



• Creating sunshine prints and decorating the frames using natural materials was one of the activities on offer to young visitors at the River Festival



JILL Ireland was one of the visitors to the Hedgehog Festival tent. She created a screen print bag.

Mrs Ireland recently donated a wood burning set to the Hedgehog Festival. Her husband Steve is the Chair of a Wildlife Hospital in

Essex.

Yolande Watson and Caroline Utting were kept busy preparing the screen print for people to use.

They also enjoyed meeting people who often had their own hedgehog stories to tell.

at the Festival.



• Members of the Neighbourhood Plan team were on hand all day to explain to those visiting the Festival just what the Plan involves and answering questions about the Plan. Visitors to the stall were asked to list the aspects of Ross they like, these included the number of independent shops, the community hospital and the friendly community feel of a small market town. They could also list everything they don't like. This information will be processed by the team.



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Spring Flower Festival inside Walford Church brings the community together

Catherine Barkley
catherine@rossgazette.com

MEMBERS of the Walford community recently hosted a



Big steps forward for Neighbourhood Plan

AROUND 200 people – locals and visitors – called in to the recent ‘Drop-in’ sessions about the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan. These took place under the Market Hall on Saturday, April 30th and at the River Festival on Sunday, May 1st, led by members of the local Steering Group and the consultants helping them.

Most people added to a remarkable list of issues the Plan might address and offered ideas to improve the town, especially the town centre. Some suggested their valued ‘Local Green Spaces’ (the Plan could protect these), others highlighted potential new housing sites (the Plan can determine these). Some even offered to help progress the Plan.

There is a Summary Report from the event, and the full report and a report of a smaller workshop and lots of other information, on the Ross Neighbourhood Plan website: www.rossplan.org.uk.

The Plan can’t tackle some of the issues, such as shop rents or dog mess, but it can do a considerable amount to tackle others to help revitalise the town centre – the key area that people wanted the Plan to focus on.

The next events will take place between June 2nd to June 10th in Ross Library and at the summer Carnival.

Melvin Reynolds, Chair of the Steering Group, told the *Ross Gazette*: “People may have listed lots



of ‘issues’ but they clearly really like our town, so please let’s get yet more people involved, yet more comments and yet more positive ideas.”

Katie Lea, of consultants Place Studio, said: “People weren’t sure what the drop-in was all about but, once they took a look, there was real enthusiasm about contributing to making Ross even better.”

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The Gazette view



Getting rid of our rubbish

A VISIT to 'the tip' was one of the highlights of my daughter's primary school education, and is something she still talks about.

She visited a very large waste recycling centre in South Wales but many of the principles are the same at smaller sites, such as the one in Station Street, Ross.

People have rubbish they want to get rid of and they drive to the site and dispose of it in large skips, probably never giving it another thought. And when you have spent a sunny afternoon tidying your lawn or cutting back hedges the feeling of tipping your garden waste into a skip and watching it disappear is very satisfying.

However visiting the Ross site and talking to the staff who are responsible, not just for the safety of those who drive into the site to bring their rubbish, but also the final destination for their stuff, it is obvious that this is a far more complicated business than it first appears.

Although I can understand why people, especially if they live in a small property or have a small garden don't want bags of recyclable waste around, or compost bins, it is obvious from even a short visit that it is being well-used. The people who run the site on behalf of Herefordshire Council would like to see people cut down their journeys to the tip.

I have to say as someone who only uses my local tip a couple of times a year I was amazed to see just how busy the Ross site is. Car drivers seemed happy to queue to get rid of quite small quantities, but what really impressed me was how helpful the staff are. Always looking to see if any of the drivers needed a hand and

Town Council is working on the markets to make them better

ROSS-ON-WYE Town Council took over running of the Market Days from Herefordshire Council last year, and have since been investing to ensure this asset becomes bigger and better in an effort to draw even more visitors in to the town.

The council recently bought new flags advertising the Market. These colourful flags are put around the market itself, in an effort to draw people in. A banner is also displayed on market days on the railings by the Morrisons' roundabout, telling visitors that there is a market in the centre of town.

A market research survey was recently carried out on behalf of the Town Council. The results showed that:

- There is low public recognition that the Town Council now runs the Ross markets; 2/3 either got it wrong, thinking it was still Herefordshire Council, or they didn't know.
- There is very low public awareness of the Farmer's Produce Market.
- Around 2/3 of those questioned use the Ross markets on a regular or occasional basis.
- For some, however, it is just not convenient so they don't shop there.
- The most popular lines are currently fresh food and flowers. These markets are judged to be of good value.
- There is strong loyalty to the market from those who use it.

Those surveyed expressed a demand for more stalls and were particularly interested in more local produce, hot food, outdoor seating and conti-

raised by many. However, the tariffs and regulation of parking in the town are controlled by Herefordshire County Council, and not the Town Council.

The Markets Working Group of the Town Council will be using these findings to shape future markets policy and development.



Good news for trade recyclers

Jo Scrivin

jo@rossgazette.com

THERE is some good news for businesses who recycle their waste through the Ross-based charity, EnviroAbility.

Last week the *Ross Gazette* reported that the charity was having to stop this popular service due to increasing costs.

But just days after the report appeared in the paper, Paula Jones told the *Ross Gazette* that, thanks to the publicity, and goodwill of their customers, they have been able to retain the paper and cardboard recycling collection service that they offer. They will also continue to offer confidential shredding.

Paula explained that they have had to increase their prices but she said that customers had indicated that they would be happy to pay more to see the service continue.

She added that it would be helpful if a few more traders joined the scheme. To find out more, to order blue bags for paper or cardboard stickers contact Paula at EnviroAbility on 01989 763388.

View the Plan for Ross at Library

THERE will be a display of the information collected so far for the Neighbourhood Plan, in Ross Library between June 2nd - 10th.

The workshop, pop-up events and questionnaires have started to bring in lots of information about people's issues and concerns, likes and dislikes. There have also been lots of suggestions for making the Town even better. The Town Plan Steering Group have turned all this information into some draft key aims for the Plan, and now they need you, the people of Ross, to let them know if they have got this stage right.

Come to Ross Library during opening hours, take a look at the display and give your thoughts. Information on the aims will also be available on the website - rossplan.org.uk

The Gazette view



Pokémon Go!



POKÉMON Go has been latest computer craze to hit the UK, and Ross-on-Wye. I am not a massive fan of computer games, however I will admit to you all that I have been playing along and catching the various Pokémon around the town.

I downloaded the app just to see what all the fuss was about, and a desire to beat my nephew (I am very competitive), but I was soon hooked! On a few occasions my sister and I have even gone out on a 'Pokémon Hunt'. I am sure she won't thank me for mentioning this.

A few people may feel quite negatively towards the game, however there are many positives. I have seen a large number of younger (and a few older) people out and about in the town over the past week, clearly playing the game. Yes, they may have their head down concentrating on catching the latest creature, but they are out and about, not sat at home staring at a computer screen.

Not only is it good for their fitness, it is also getting them to see and notice parts of the town they may have never have seen before.

There is also the social side to the game; groups of people are coming together to go on a Pokémon hunt and making new friends

Family opens a new business on High Street



• The Mayor and Mayoress of Ross, David and Doreen Ravenscroft, join the Bundu family, and several Ross Town Councillors at the opening of Ross-on-Wye Flooring

A NEW shop opened in Ross town centre on Tuesday, August 2nd.

The Mayor of Ross, Councillor David Ravenscroft, opened Ross-on-Wye Flooring on High Street at midday.

The Bundu family, who have been in business for 15 years, are excited to begin their new venture.

David Bundy told the *Ross Gazette* that the long term aim of the business is to regenerate High Street, and to encourage more footfall into an area of the town centre, which some shoppers may overlook.

The shop stocks a full range of carpets and flooring, including wool, synthetic and vinyl.

THE *Ross Gazette* was saddened to hear about the death of former Mayor, Jo Lane, who passed away last week. Our thoughts are with her family and friends at this time.

Next week the *Gazette* will be running a tribute to Mrs Lane. To submit a tribute, please email jo@rossgazette.com by Monday, August 8th at 12pm.

Mrs Tiggy-Winkle's Tea Trail a success in Ross

TO celebrate Beatrix Potter's 150th birthday, the committee who organise the Ross Hedge-

along the route, and children and their parents enjoyed tak-



Thousands raised at the Ross Country Music Fair



During the monthly Country Music evening, held at the Larruperz Centre on Saturday, July 30th, a cheque for £3600 was presented to Paddy Nugent, the fundraising manager of St Michael's Hospice.

Colin Gray, a member of the Country Music Club presented the

cheque to Mr Nugent. The money was the profits from the recent festival held at the Ross-on-Wye Sports Centre.

Pictured above are a group from the Country Music Club who put in a great deal of work into organising the event.

Have your say on the Neighbourhood Plan

THE Neighbourhood Plan Marquee will be at the Ross Carnival this Saturday, August 6th at the Rope Walk.

This is a key stage because many of the main proposals and initiatives that will be in the Plan are coming into focus - and the team need you to

help them finally sharpen that focus. There will be several ways to contribute, and a prize draw and something for kids to do.

Members of the local Steering Group, will be there between 2pm and 6pm so don't miss out.

Ross Auction Centre

AT the weekly market held on Monday, August 1st, RG & RB Williams reported 62 Clean Cattle and 1403 prime lambs.

They reported an excellent cattle trade and another strong lamb trade.

Rare moth seen in Ross



• An image of the Beautiful Marbled moth taken by Richard Clements

MOTH enthusiast Richard Clements from Bridstow near Ross-on-Wye had a big surprise last week when he opened his moth trap to reveal a species never before seen in Herefordshire. The moth was a Beautiful Marbled, a species not native to Britain, whose home is in Southern Europe.

First recorded in 2004, there have only been a handful of sightings of the Beautiful Marbled in the UK. These sightings tend to be mainly along the coast, and this is the second inland record.

Richard's interest in moths started as a child and he traps regularly as part of the Garden Moth Scheme; a national group of enthusiasts who, by trapping every week and recording the numbers of about 200 common species they see, are trying to collect data to enable long-term population trends to be seen.

Richard told the *Ross Gazette*: "Last Wednesday I had almost finished checking the trap and saw the moth on the one side. It was instantly obvious it was something different from the normal fare. I took a photo and sent it to Robin Hemming, West Midlands Butterfly Conservation's Herefordshire Moth Officer to con-

species that migrate and some of them are quite common, but few as striking as this one.

"It certainly gives the lie to the idea that butterflies are the pretty ones and moths are just boring little brown jobs."

Robin told the *Ross Gazette*: "This is a fantastic find in what has been a generally poor summer for our declining moths and butterflies. It is not often that a moth entirely new to the county is discovered, and such a beautiful looking moth as well.

"The end of August and into September can often be a good time for migrant species and in recent days we have had a number of reports of moths like the Silver Y and Hummingbird Hawkmoth which fly over each year from the continent, together with Painted Lady butterflies which come from as far away as North Africa. The Beautiful Marbled, however, is something very special."

The West Midlands Butterfly Conservation are keen for more people to take part in the scheme. If you are interested, details can be found at www.gardenmoths.org.

The charity is also keen to gather

Have your say on travel in the city

LOCAL residents are being encouraged to take part in Herefordshire Council's latest transport consultation. The Council is seeking views on a range of possible active travel improvements, including walking and cycling, in the South Wye area of Hereford and South Herefordshire.

The South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) comprises the Southern Link Road (SLR) and a complementary package of active travel measures. Planning permission was recently granted for the Southern Link Road and the project delivery continues.

The council is committed to progressing the complementary active travel measures in the South Wye area and will run exhibitions to set out the proposals and obtain as much feedback as possible:

- Wednesday, September 14th at Three Counties Hotel.
- Wednesday, September 21st at Hereford Business Solutions Centre, Skylon Court.
- Monday, September 26th at The Kindle Centre (next to Asda Supermarket), Belmont Road.

All sessions will run between 10am and 8pm. Council and Balfour Beatty Living Places staff will be available to explain the proposals and answer questions.

Ross Neighbourhood Plan is still on target for 2017

THERE are now 103 parish councils in Herefordshire who have had their application to designate a neighbourhood area approved. This number includes Goodrich and Welsh Bicknor, which was reported in the *Ross Gazette* last week, and is the highest proportion within a local authority area in all of England.

So far, in South Herefordshire, just Fownhope and Weston-under-Penyard have competed adoption of Neighbourhood Development Plans, NDPs. Welsh Newton & Llanrothal, and Little Dewchurch & Kings Cople are at the stage of consulting with their communities on a Draft NDP (so-called Regulation 14).

As readers may recall, the Ross-on-Wye NDP area was approved back in 2013 and then delayed by environmental work related to the unusual location as the only town within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and by-elections. However, the Steering Group leading the

process have had the benefit of many years of thoughtful preparation and planning going back to at least 1983. All that valuable work will be taken into account and updated as they move toward drafting the Ross NDP this autumn.

Melvin Reynolds, Chair Ross-on-Wye Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee told the *Ross Gazette* that they aim to reach consultation on the first Draft NDP early in 2017. Professional consultants have been guiding the group in seeking to understand the wishes of the town throughout this year.

If readers outside Ross wish to have more information on their locality they can consult the Herefordshire website.

The Ross Steering Group have been seeking to link with the NDP teams in the surrounding parishes and would be pleased to hear from any who would be interested in this.

Litter pickers clear brook



*The
Gazette
view*



Making plans for Christmas lights

WATCHING the rain lashing the windows of the *Ross Gazette* office in Broad Street, on Monday, made me very aware that the Events Committee at Ross Town Council had been very clever with their choice of date for the Christmas Fayre and Lights switch on in Ross.

Sunday, November 20th, was a chilly day but thankfully the rain held off until the lights had been turned on to illuminate the Market House and the Christmas tree.

As always, there are some people who do not think there are enough lights, and whether to have white or coloured lights is always a matter of opinion. Personally, I think the Market House is the biggest draw we have for visitors to the town, and the lighting on it is beautiful, both elegant and festive. However I do understand people calling for more lights, and especially, more coloured lights, in other parts of the town to draw more Christmas shoppers.

Surely it is possible to have both.

Ross Town Council spend a considerable sum each year replacing the lights which get damaged or vandalised, and it would cost many thousands of pounds to completely install new lights and power supplies for a festive spectacular. As the Town Council does not seem to have the will to purchase enough lights to give the town a festive makeover, perhaps it would be a good idea to think of new ways to pay for the lights for next year.

I was interested to read about the lights in Bromyard, which are paid for by contributions from local people. They fundraise all year to

Local artist campaigns for fairer treatment for retiring women

MARIANA Robinson, (62) an artist from the Wye Valley managed to get her unique proposal for bridging the gap that changes to women's pensions have caused to the Pensions All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) in July this year. Her "63 is the new 60" proposal offers to meet the Government half way by allowing women born in the 1950s to retire at age 63 instead of the new timetable which was brought in by the 2011 Act.

Mariana has set up her own Facebook campaign to lobby



• Artist and campaigner Mariana Robinson

Government to look at this much fairer proposal. She is concerned that with the Autumn Statement due this week, the Government has yet to acknowledge that these women have been treated unfairly. She said that there have been too many pensions' acts changes hitting this one cohort of women at once.

She told the *Ross Gazette* that she, and her fellow campaigners, are not against womens' retirement ages being brought into line with men but it should be done more fairly for those women who it will affect.

Mariana claims that there are huge anomalies between the age women can retire although there may be just a few months difference in ages. She proposes that women born between April 6th, 1953 up to April 5th, 1960 should be allowed their full state pension at age 63. She says that the 63rd birthday is a fairer point than the government timetables. For more than 60 years, women have retired on their

60th birthday. However the first that the majority of women knew that they were being brought into line with men retiring at age 65, was within 18 months of their expected retirement at 60. Mariana said: "This dreadful lack of communication meant it was far too late for them to make alternative retirement arrangements. Some had taken redundancy or decided to retire early to look after elderly parents, expecting their pensions within a couple of years, only to find that the goalposts had been moved not once, but sometimes twice or three times. That's why these women have risen up and are fighting for justice."

If you are a 1950s born woman and wish to support Mariana's campaign you can find it on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/marianarobinson/ Their aim is for people of all political persuasions with a simple strategy of getting their state pensions before they wear out or become destitute.

More people in employment

THE amount of people claiming job seekers allowance (JSA) in Herefordshire has dropped substantially since this time in 2010. The total number of claimants in the parliamentary constituency is 690; of those who are 18 to 24, there are 160.

Employment Minister, Damian Hinds, comment-

ed: "Yet again we have a strong set of figures, with employment continuing to run at a record high and unemployment falling to a 11-year low. Growth is being fuelled by full-time professional jobs while wages are continuing to perform strongly, which underlines the resilience of the UK labour market.

Defib installed at Merton House

THE latest defibrillator to be provided by the charity, The Oddfellows, has been installed



Neighbourhood plan update

CONCERNS were raised about the Neighbourhood Plan for Ross by Councillor Phil Cutter at Ross-on-Wye Town Council's Full Council meeting on Monday, November 14th.

He said that the process was costing the Council a lot of money to employ consultants. He said: "Local involvement is vital. We need local knowledge to get these things to work. It's all very well bringing in consultants, but they don't know the area."

Cllr David Ravenscroft said: "The consultants have done a tremendous amount of work. They have pulled together the work that local volunteers have been providing. Without that I don't think we'd move forward."

Fire Authority funding gap

CONCERN is growing that funding gaps between government grants to the Fire Authority and what it needs to enable it to continue to provide its current level of service, cannot be bridged.

The Fire Authority has been acting to deal with the reductions in funding for some time and has managed to balance its budget for 2015-16, but there will be a small gap of £300,000 in 2016-17. The Authority said: "Closing this gap is very unlikely to have any impact on frontline response."

However the future is less secure for 2017-2020. They report that "All indicators suggest the period of austerity is likely to continue and there has been no suggestion that the grant reduction trend of the last four years will be any different.

"Work is currently underway with partners in other emergency services and local authorities to collaborate in the provision of back-office support functions to provide savings to meet these future gaps.

"It is too early to say with certainty how much of the gap these measures will meet."

In the past few years, fears that Ross and Whitchurch will lose fire crews have been allayed, largely due to fierce public opposition to these proposals. Suggestions to house the ambulance

Sometimes it is easy to forget the wonderful independent shops we have in Ross, and I was delighted with the help I received at both shops last week.

During my first day off on Wednesday I happened to have the news on while I was doing my housework, and was shocked to see the breaking news regarding the terrorist attack in London. I was watching from the moment when the news first broke, and saw the resulting confusion as the full story started to unfold.

The first coverage reported it as a stabbing of a Police Officer, but it then became clear that this was a bigger incident. A number of people had been injured after a car had driven at them on Westminster Bridge and knocked them down. A short while later the reported deaths started to come in.

I stopped my housework and sat on the sofa, and didn't move for a few hours, completely shocked and compelled by what I was witnessing.

I do not want to get into what the reasoning can be for the behaviour of those individuals that commit these attacks, but I will say I do not, and never will, understand why someone can

the public, who despite witnessing the awful attack, had stopped to help those that were injured. MP Tobias Ellwood was one of those who tried to save PC Keith Palmer, which has been widely publicised, and I think the image that was all over the media of this will stay with many of us for a long time. Despite the dangers to those around, the public had come forward to help where they could. This is what should be remembered, alongside those who lost their lives.

I was watching Comic Relief on Friday evening, and during the Red Nose Day Actually sketch, Hugh Grant's character made a speech, which said "Wherever you see tragedy, you see bravery too. Wherever you see ordinary people in need, you see extraordinary people come to their aid." Although this was for Comic Relief, I couldn't help but feel how poignant and apt it was after all that had happened in London a few days before. He ended with "Good will win" and I think this is a good thought to end this column with.

*Charlotte Reynolds,
General Manager*

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Four onions help Ross Christ Church

PLANS for a new building for Christ Church on Edde Cross Street, Ross-on-Wye, have taken an exciting leap forward, and the church have enlisted in the help of the Onion Collective, a team of consultants, who have been involved in several community projects.

The Somerset-based 'Onion Collective' are a team of four. They founded when plans to regenerate their home town were brought to the community's attention, and the team recognised the importance of consultation sessions for people to express their opinions, thoughts and aspirations.

Christ Church will utilise the knowledge and experience of the Collective to bring forth additional changes to the plans for its own redevelopment later this year.

Internationally-renowned architect Piers Taylor, who is working on the designs for the brand new centre in Ross,

introduced the team at Christ Church to the 'four onions,' having worked with them on various projects across the West and South West previously.

A feasibility study, with a vision to demolish the dated 1960s building and replace it with a brand new centre, was recently submitted for pre-planning. It was warmly received by the County planners and Town Council.

To take the submission to the next stage, the Christ Church project team, in conjunction with the Onion Collective, will be engaging with different communities around the town, those already involved with the church and those without a prior connection, to see what benefits a new church building would bring.

Revd Deborah Cornish, minister of Christ Church, commented: "We are delighted that Piers Taylor has introduced

us to the ladies of the Onion Collective, and look forward to working with them to progress the plans for a brand new church which will benefit the local community."

The Christ Church team and Onion Collective will be running a series of consultation events in late April and welcome any community groups to get in touch at this early stage to express an interest in coming along. The team is excited to hear from all members of the community as to how a new church building could work for the whole town and become a real hub for the community.

For more information about the project, or to find out more about the forthcoming community consultation events, please contact Reverend Deborah Cornish via email: deborah.cornish@btinternet.com, or Rachel from the Onion Collective, at rachel@onioncollective.co.uk

'Nearly' there with the Ross Neighbourhood Plan

THE chair of the Neighbourhood Plan, Melvyn Reynolds gave a report on the progress of the plan at the Annual Town Meeting on Monday, March 27th. He said that it is nearly there but not quite.

He said that the committee had, thanks to various consultation exercises and through articles in the *Ross Gazette*, completed everything they needed to do when they started the plan.

He added that as time has gone on, different factors have cropped up, which means they still have work to do.

He said that Herefordshire Council is looking for a possible site for a new

school which will have to added to the plan. The new housing development at Hildersley, which was recently approved, also has to be taken into account and the future development at Model Farm is unclear, although Herefordshire Council had bid for funding from the government, this had not been received.

He said: "Herefordshire Council Officers won't let us go to consultation until these things are clear."

He added that he is looking forward to a meeting with council officers to get a clearer idea, then the plan will go to examination, which is the last formal process before a referendum.

Ross Auction Centre

AT the Green Market, held on Monday, March 27th, RG & RB Williams reported 100 finished cattle and 2,054 hoggets and spring lambs.

They reported an excellent cattle trade and a much improved hogget and lamb trade, up £10 on last week.

Steers to 230p - £1,629

Heifers to 239p - £1,343

Cull Cows to 174p - £1,171

Spring Lambs to 286p - £114.50

Prime Hoggets to 210p - £96.80

Cull Ewes & Rams to Av - £71.20 - £110

Ross on Wye Weather Report



For the week beginning Monday 20th March

Fire crew called after collision

ROSS-ON-WYE firefighters were called to Lea on Thursday evening (January 19th) at 4.20pm, to reports of a road traffic collision on the A40.

The fire crew made one vehicle safe, following the collision. They had been told that there was smoke coming from the bonnet, and it was discovered that this had been caused by a blown engine.

Driver arrested

RORY John James, 23, of Smallbrook Gardens, Ross-on-Wye, was arrested on Monday, January 23rd and charged with aggravated vehicle taking and dangerous driving, using a motor vehicle on a road/public place without third party insurance, driving a motor vehicle otherwise than in accordance with a licence and failing to stop a mechanically propelled vehicle when required by constable/traffic warden.

This follows an incident in Ross-on-Wye on August 6th last year.

He was bailed to appear at Hereford Magistrates' Court on February 23rd.

Wildlife becomes main attraction

SEVERAL local residents have contacted the *Ross Gazette* recently to say that the vast amount of fish in the Rudhall Brook, which were spotted near to the swimming pool and gym, seems to be diminishing.

The huge number of fish sparked a great deal of interest among residents and visitors, as the *Gazette* has reported in previous issues. It is believed that the cause of this decrease in fish population could be due to the large number of birds, including two herons and an egret, who have been seen on the roof of the swimming pool and in branches nearby. They think the fish have probably made an easy dinner for the birds.

Help Neighbourhood Plan protect local Green Spaces

WORK on the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan is reaching a key stage. One thing the Plan can include is small areas of land (even private land) that might qualify as 'Local Green Spaces'. Very importantly, if they qualify they can be protected from all future development.

Local people have already suggested six possible areas but the steering group is hoping that they will receive more suggestions over the next few weeks.

Any suggestions need to be for small areas important to a local community and that are special or distinctive in terms of, any or all of the following; beauty, wildlife, history, recreation or tranquillity.

It is a tough task to get them through a demanding planning

process, so they will eventually need more than just a list, but that can be dealt with later.

If anybody wishes to suggest a possible Local Green Space please email details to Melvin Reynolds chair@rossneighbourhoodplan.org.uk or c/o Ross Town Council, Corn Exchange, 7 High Street, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5HL.

You can also go online to visit the Neighbourhood Plan website www.rossneighbourhoodplan.org.uk and either suggest a new site or comment on those already suggested.

For new suggestions the steering group needs to know exactly where the suggested area is and why you think it might be special or distinctive. And you need to leave your name and contact details please.

Police on poacher alert

POACHERS have been using dogs to kill and harm deer in Ross-on-Wye, the Forest of Dean and Monmouth, local police have said.

Monmouthshire Gwent Police Constable Chris Butt said: "Poachers have little regard for the countryside or the farmer's land that they trespass on. In the Monmouthshire area, concerns have been raised of poachers targeting wildlife, including deer and boar by using dogs and weapons.

"High visibility patrols are being stepped up in forestry areas to target poachers and to send out a strong message and act as a deterrent that this criminal behaviour will not be tolerated in Gwent. We are stopping

any suspicious vehicles and signs have been erected in prominent forestry entrances warning poachers of police activity and the potential for prosecution."

Tri-Force Joint Operations are taking place between Gwent, Gloucester and West Mercia police forces assisted by partnership agencies; Natural Resources Wales and the Forestry Commission of England.

PC Butt added: "I would urge anyone to contact us with any information that would help in catching poachers by calling 101 or 999 in an emergency. Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111."

Christmas Fayre boost for St Michael's Hospice



MEMBERS of Ross Town Council's Events Committee, Councillor Hannah Lerego and Councillor Valerie Coker visited St Michael's Hospice last week.

The purpose of the visit was to present a cheque to the charity on behalf of the Committee following the Christmas event in Ross-on-Wye. The Councillors were also pleased to be invited on a tour of the Hospice to see the work the charity is involved with. Committee Chairman Cllr Lerego said: "It was very impressive and very humbling."

The Committee's Working Group worked for many months to ensure the Christmas Fayre was a great suc-

cess and they have been delighted with the many positive comments and feedback received.

They presented St Michael's Hospice with a cheque for £435.

The Councillors said that the Hospice is a very tranquil place, with lovely art work which incorporated lots of wildlife and outdoor scenes. As well as the ward, they visited the education section, the Library for medical professionals, the room of remembrance, a teenage chill room and children's playroom, along with a new cafe, gift shop and bereavement rooms.

By election called for Ross West Ward

Flying Colours Design, Print & Marketing Your local print shop... Architectural Plans

The Gazette view



All aspects of life and death

IT IS always difficult to predict just what will happen during the course of a week at a local newspaper. Last week was a prime example. In addition to covering a number of schools who were sending their choir members to perform in front of an audience of thousands, I also visited a bleak country church to see the bones of villagers who had died hundreds of years before.

Meeting some of the children who were so excited about their chance to take part in Young Voices was really life affirming. Seeing the final resting place of a group of residents who had possibly lost their lives due to disease and are now not remembered evoked very different emotions.

At least now their story will be told, research may continue and perhaps there will be more information about the lives of those people to come.

The discovery of bones in a churchyard may not seem that surprising but the discovery of a large number of previously unknown skeletons in a church in Sellack has sparked interest across the county.

The bodies were buried in shrouds as this would have been the period before coffins came into regular use. These bodies appear to have been buried quite quickly, as they were placed in a very shallow grave, and also very close together.

Sellack has always been a small settlement of about 200 so it was probably a close knit community. Some of the skeletons discovered were children and it is possible that due to the way they were placed several of them

MoD oppose Hildersley plans

THE Secretary of State for Defence has backed the MoD's objection to the planning application for more than 200 new houses in Hildersley.

The proposal is an application for approximately 212 houses to be built at Hildersley Farm, including affordable housing, public open space and associated works.

The site is near to land owned by the Ministry of Defence but the MoD said that this statement is slightly misleading. They said: "The MoD firing range is not just within close proximity of the application site, it immediately adjoins the western boundaries of the application site."

The MoD published full details of its concerns on January 24th, mainly regarding how noise will affect new residents and questioning the agent's record of the frequency the firing range is used. They request that the Local Planning Authority refuse planning permission for the proposed development.

Ross Town Council has reiterated its request for a roundabout to be installed to allow access to the site and to ensure that traffic approaching Ross along the A40 slows down.

In their comment submitted to Herefordshire Council on January 18th, 2017 the members of the Planning Committee at Ross Town Council said: "Members reiterate again their concerns about

access to and from the A40 and are of the opinion that a roundabout would be the safest means of access and would ensure that traffic approaching Ross slows down. Having made this request twice before, the council would like to know whether this has been considered or if and why it has been rejected."

NHS England asked for a contribution of £54,256 in capital contribution to enable the delivery of services to the new residents, when the application was for 250 houses in 2015.

The consultation ends on Thursday, February 9th. There have already been many responses from interested parties and many local residents.

Before the original application was submitted the project team from RPS Planning and Development held a public consultation event at the Larurperz Centre in November 2015, which more than 80 people attended.

Many visitors welcomed new homes being built but the main issues raised were the potential impact on local services such as schools and GP surgeries. The site is identified in Herefordshire's draft core strategy as a strategic urban extension to Ross-on-Wye and suitable for development.

If you would like to comment visit the Council's website at www.herefordshire.gov.uk and search for the planning application 150930.

New clinic to help with winter illness

WINTER is a busy time for the NHS, mainly due to the additional burden of viral illnesses causing sore throats, coughs and colds. These symptoms are almost always due to the same groups of viruses, which change over time to get past your immune system.

Alton Street Surgery recognises that people get worried about these symptoms and are trialling a new Minor Illness clinic each afternoon, run by a GP and a nurse, so they can see patients quickly if they are concerned. Patients can still ring to speak with a GP for advice as before, but they will also be offering extra appointments for winter illnesses.

If you have a sore throat or runny nose, then a cough is likely to be part of the same viral illness. Luckily, complications are rare, though symptoms can go on for an annoyingly long time – a cough can last for up to three weeks. Children are more susceptible, and can catch up to 12 colds a year, getting less frequent with age, as the immune system builds up resistance to the viruses.

The best advice for coughs and colds is to treat the symptoms. Paracetamol and/or ibuprofen help to reduce pain and fever, but there is little evidence to support the use of decongestants, cough medicines, vitamin C or herbal products such as Echinacea. Unfortunately modern medicine still does not have a cure for coughs and colds, as antibiotics do not work, and are more likely to cause side effects than help. A pharmacist will be able to provide advice about treating symptoms.

The excellent website; whenshouldiworry.com explains which symptoms in children may need medical attention. You should seek advice if you become more short of breath, or a cough persists more than three weeks or so.

A false alarm

A CREW from Whitchurch Fire Station was called out on January 28th. The caller thought it was a car fire, but instead the crews discovered that it was controlled burning outside a workshop. The crew said it was a false alarm with good inten-

Twist in the tale nets £800 for charity

LOCAL author, Hilary Orme was thrilled to be able to present a cheque for £500 to Macmillan Cancer Support at the Alma Inn, Linton, on Thursday, January 26th.

This represents the amount raised in royalties from the sale of her book, 'Twisted Tales: A Collection'. Since then Hilary has received another £50 and a further £254 was raised by Linton Village Hall, which held a book



CAMRA award for Yew Tree Inn

THE Yew Tree Inn at Peterstow, has been named Herefordshire CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year for the first time. This will not be a surprise to those who know their real cider, as the lease to the pub was taken on by Mike Johnson of the Ross-on-Wye Cider Company in 2014.

At the recent Award Presentation Mike said that he was 'very honoured and proud'. He said that his aim had been to create not just a good cider pub, but a good local community pub too.

Mike and his family have been making cider at Broome Farm for as long as anyone can remember, and have picked up many awards including Champion Cider Maker at the Big Apple in 2009 and 2011, CAMRA's Pomona Award in 2009, and more recently the Queen's Diamond Award for Excellence in Food and Drink in 2013. They still make cider the tradi-



tional way – no water, yeast or artificial sweeteners – just juice.

Broome Farm hosts the Ross Cider Festival each year on the first weekend in September, and new for 2017 is the Yew Tree Cider Challenge and Festival, due to be held in June.

The Yew Tree even has a Cider Shop onsite, and for those wanting to stay the night, the Yew Tree even has its own caravan and campsite.

Exciting day at Red House Nursery



Bus in collision

THE Emergency services were called to a road traffic collision at Woolhope on February 1st, just after 3.30pm. A car and a bus had collided outside Wessington Court.

However, there was only one person on the bus, the driver, and two people in the car. A spokesperson from the West Midlands Ambulance Service told the *Ross Gazette*: "None of them were seriously injured and they were all discharged at the scene."

Ross-on-Wye, Hereford and Ledbury fire crews also attended the scene and made the area safe.

Ross Neighbourhood Plan's 'Green Spaces' interest grows

FOLLOWING an article in the *Ross Gazette* two weeks ago, a number of residents have responded to the Local Green Space questionnaire and others have asked what sites are currently being consulted on.

Residents living adjacent to the following sites have received questionnaires about existing open spaces that have been proposed for designation as 'Open Green Spaces': Roman Way/Archenfield Road, Redwood Close, Redhill Road/Hawthorne Lane, Greytrees Road, Fernbank Road (paddock), Mayhill Road, Mervivale Lane (paddock) and Falaise Close.

Also proposed for designation, but for which questionnaire distribution has not yet started, have been Cleeve Orchard, Duxmere Drive and Bluebell/Primrose Close.

Additional suggestions are wel-

come; they need to be for small areas that could be built upon but which are important to a local community and that are special or distinctive in terms of (any or all of) beauty, wildlife, history, recreation or tranquillity.

To get them through the demanding planning process is tough, so demonstrable local support is essential.

To suggest, support or oppose a possible Local Green Space, either collect a form from Ross Town Council, Corn Exchange, 7 High Street, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5HL (completed forms can also be returned there), request a form via email to Melvin Reynolds, chair@rossneighbourhoodplan.org.uk, on Facebook @RoWNdP, or at the Plan's Consulting You website rossneighbourhoodplan.org.uk

Full steam ahead for the new Ross Dementia Centre

PROGRESS is going well for the new Ross Dementia Centre (DMC) which is planning to open its doors for the first meeting on March 1st. Dr Simon Lennane of Alton Street Surgery, Reverend Deborah Cornish of Christ Church, and Alan Harrison, a Ross resident, are all delighted with the progress of the DMC.

Based in Christ Church, Edde Cross Street, the new Ross DMC is a modern version of a

lonely activity at home. At Ross DMC carers will be respected as expert care partners and will have access to the integrated and personalised services they need to support them in their caring role.

As Dr Lennane is supporting the Ross DMC, initial members will include some of the





Funding worries

ALMOST every council in the country is currently considering, or has already decided to increase Council Tax. Despite huge cuts to budgets in previous years, which have already been put into practice, there will still not be enough to fund the demands made on councils. This is largely due to the ever increasing costs of social care, for both adults and children.

Everyone wants to think that they, their parents and grandparents, will be looked after, or supported in old age, with dignity and care. However, this is very expensive and as people live longer the costs are increasing.

And Council Tax is not the only increase many people face, businesses are concerned about an increase in their tax too. Then plans to change the way the Health Service is organised, due to financial pressures, is adding to the stress many people feel.

We are all aware of the demands on a diminishing pot of money and have to hope that those with the power to make decisions make the best possible use of the money they have.

Jo Scrivin, Editor

CAB funding

LAST week the *Ross Gazette* reported that the CAB service at Ross Library is being well used and has helped several local residents. Ross Town Council provided the funding to bring a outreach of Hereford CAB to Ross. To clarify the funding situation, the Town Council awarded the CAB

New coins will cost Councils

THE new 12-sided £1 coin is being introduced on March 28th and the round coin will no longer be used. All one pound coins need to be spent or returned to your bank before October 15th.

The introduction of the new pound coin is an historic event as it is the most secure coin in the world. However, introducing a new coin is not without



other costs.

The pay and display coin machines situated in car parks in Ross-on-Wye will all need to be adapted. A Herefordshire Council spokesperson told the *Ross Gazette*: "It costs £95 to upgrade a pay and display machine. In Ross there are 12 pay and display machines, of which nine will need to be upgraded at a total cost of £855."

New bollards for Skate Park

MEMBERS of Ross Town Council agreed to spend up to £1,000 to install bollards at the Skate Park in Wilton Road.

Councillor David Ravenscroft explained that there had been a lot of trouble at the Skate Park recently. The new bollards will include removable ones for service vehicles.

The Councillors were unanimous in their agreement to the expenditure which they discussed at their meeting on Monday, February 13th.



NFU critical of Council's handling of decision to sell smallholdings

HEREFORDSHIRE Council has been accused, by the NFU, of failing its tenant farmers by selling off its entire smallholding estate, despite a recommendation that part of it should be retained.

Herefordshire NFU levelled criticism at the council after the union successfully fought to make further details of a Fisher German report public. The report was commissioned by the Council in 2014 to inform its review of its smallholdings policy.

The Information Commissioner's Office, ICO,

and many tenants are still facing uncertain futures."

NFU Deputy President Minette Batters said: "Seeing this report provides those tenant farmers in Herefordshire with vindication in terms of their view of the importance of the county farm estate; but its cold comfort as it's too late to reverse the Council's heart-breaking and short-sighted decision.

Dairy farmer Graham Clay, out-going NFU regional tenants' group chairman, said: "The council's tenants have lived through nearly three years

Last chance to choose Ross 'Green Spaces'

THE Ross Neighbourhood Plan 'Green Spaces' consultation is reaching its closing date, and residents only have until Friday, February 24th to make further suggestions.

Following the recent *Ross Gazette* articles there has been an excellent response by residents to the consultation on Local Green Spaces. However, a number of residents have asked if there are current development plans for these sites; to which the answer is 'not that we know of' – but that designation in the Neighbourhood Plan would ensure that none would take place at least until after 2031.

Residents living adjacent to the following sites proposed for designation have received questionnaires about existing open spaces that have been proposed for designation as 'Open Green Spaces': Redhill Road/Hawthorne Lane, Cleeve Orchard, Duxmere Drive, Roman Way/Archenfield Road, Redwood Close, Falaise Close, Fernbank Road (paddock), Merrivale Lane (paddock), Mayhill Road, Bluebell/Primrose Close and Greytrees Road. Responses to the consultation on these Local Green Spaces need to be submitted by March 3rd 2017.

Additional suggestions for sites are welcome until Friday, February 24th, 2017; they need to be for small areas that could be built upon, but which are important to a local community, and that are special or distinctive in terms of (any, or all of) beauty, wildlife, history, recreation or tranquillity. To get them designated in the demanding planning process is tough, so demonstrable local support is essential.

To suggest, support or oppose a possible Local Green Space please either collect a form from Ross Town Council, Corn Exchange, 7 High Street, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5HL (completed forms can also be returned there), request a form by email to chair@rossneighbourhoodplan.org.uk, message on Facebook @RoWNdP, or complete the questionnaire at the Plan's Consulting You

ids to £40,000 target



A new vehicle. The Ross Action Bus was the priority of the year, the charity that we hoped to which would be put of buying this new bus. are not yet halfway the *Gazette's* fundra-

ay Fayre



new equipment for their outdoor play pictured above are all the helpers, staff, s, parents, volunteers and grandparents just he doors opened to welcome the parents dren who had come to support the event.

Art on its way to London

A ROSS-ON-WYE artist, Mary Deaville, is delighted that a piece of her work, entitled 'Something Fishy' will be exhibited at The Strand Gallery in London between Tuesday, June 20th and Saturday, June 24th.

The artwork was chosen to be a part of the Pêbéo Mixed Media Exhibition 2017. There will be a private viewing on 20th June, which Mary will attend, and the exhibition will be open to the public for the remainder of the week.

The Strand Gallery was selected to be the exhibition's venue, as the event organisers thought it was in a good, central location, near the Embankment underground station, and it possesses a "perfect ambience." Mary told the *Ross Gazette* that



• Something Fishy

she has never had her work exhibited in London before and she is very excited.

Winners of the £500, £250 and £100 Cass Art vouchers will be selected by the international judging panel and the winners will be announced at the Private Viewing on June 20th.

In addition to these prizes, one artist will be given the People's Choice Award. To select the winner, there will be a public vote on Facebook, showing all the works exhibited at the gallery.



• Mary Deaville who runs Chapel Creatives

Public meeting for the Ross Plan

THERE will be a public meeting of the Ross Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and its associated Working Groups at 7pm, this, Thursday, May 25th, at the Larrupetz Centre. It is open to all.

The text (the maps and illustrations have yet to be added) of the first draft Plan has been positively reviewed by Herefordshire Council officers, so a revised draft now includes some of their suggestions for improvement and prompts where more work remains to be done.

As reported at the recent Town Meeting, land allocation for any replacement school that Herefordshire Council officers might propose, and of housing and employment land, still remains somewhat open.

The uncertainties around these will have to be addressed before the Plan can be finalised, but the hope is that a near-complete version will be available for initial public feedback by the time of the Ross Carnival weekend.

It would be appreciated if notice of intent to attend could be given by email to participate@rossneighbourhoodplan.org.uk; by message on Facebook @RoWNdf; or by phone to Melvin Reynolds at 01989 763120.



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Now available from Tudor Sweets and The Ross Gazette Office.
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The key



MEMBERS of Ross-on-Wye Lions Club were at the R stand on Sunday, July 14th to mark the official handover of electricity key to the Town Council.

The 'key' was presented to the Mayor of Ross, Councillor Nigel Gibbs, as well as a larger version for the photo. As well as Lion President Jenny and members of the Club, former member John Plant and Jo, the wife of

Councillor tr

A ROSS Town Councillor was left feeling highly frustrated when he was told that a pothole, that he has been campaigning to be repaired since October last year, was deemed not to be a hazard by Balfour Beatty.

The dip in the road is on High Street, which is a major road in Ross. Cllr Bartrum said he was angry and disappointed that it was not considered worthy of repair.

Cllr Bartrum reported the pothole through the Herefordshire Council website. When nothing happened at the beginning of the year he contacted the Council again. Then, last week he contacted the Council again, which was when he was told that it is not a hazard.

Win a Double Bed

COURTESY OF FURNITURE

Local company, furniture.co.uk are offering one lucky *Ross Gazette* reader the chance to win a Juliette Shabby Chic White Double Bed in the antique French style, as featured in the Channel 5 show, Big Brother.



This lovely bed with upholstered headboard and beautifully curved foot end and sides will look fantastic in any bedroom. This bed has not control

School projects hold up Neighbourhood Plan

Jo Scrivin

jo@rossgazette.com

MELVYN Reynolds the Chair of Ross-on-Wye Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Sub Committee, offered to stand down at the recent meeting of Ross Town Council on Monday, July 10th.

Once the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted it will help to influence the use and development of land in any part of the Ross Town Council area. However, there will be a delay in the process, which Mr Reynolds told the Town Council, was due to a lack of information from Herefordshire Council. This means that the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan is behind schedule.

He said it has not been possible to publish the anticipated update and the committee cannot proceed to the public consultation stage. The Plan is dependent on knowing Herefordshire's School policy for the future.

He said that there is a possibility of locating a new school at Broadmeadow but without any certainty there is nothing the committee can do except put the Plan on hold.

They will stop all work with the consultants, as continuing could incur considerable costs which might later be redundant.

Councillor Hannah Lerego thanked Mr Reynolds for the hard work he had already done, and asked if there were any financial implications for the Council if the work had to stop. "Would grants have to be repaid?" she asked.

Mr Reynolds said that the only money that would have to be returned, if not used this year, would be to the Town Council, but he added that it could be asked for again the

following year.

Councillor Nigel Gibbs lead the Councillors in a unanimous vote of confidence in Mr Reynolds and they asked him to continue as Chair despite the frustrations.

Councillor Jenny Hyde said that she was not making excuses but purchase had caused delays and the election had stopped work.

Councillor Cutter said moving a school is a major operation which takes an enormous amount of time to organise.

He said the County Council is still considering how it can be done, he apologised if this meant that the Neighbourhood Plan has gone awry. He added that the County Council is the leading council in the country for the number of Neighbourhood Plans being advanced.

According to the Neighbourhood Plan website Herefordshire Council may be seeking a site for a replacement, top quality, modern Ashfield Park School. The school may stay where it is but other sites are being looked at, including a small part of the area behind Morrisons.

The website adds: "With permission now granted for the large development at Hildersley, the pressure on housing numbers is slightly reduced. However, the Model Farm scheme did not secure any government funding to bridge its viability problems, so Herefordshire Council are currently pondering the future of that whole area."

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee is planning to attend Ross Carnival in August to show members of the public how advanced it is. They hope to have a formal, finished Plan ready mid autumn, a few months later than originally planned.

ed project at Ross Court



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Hold ups continue with Neighbourhood Plan

THE Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Ross-on-Wye is facing more delays as the Town Council has been asked to decide whether to continue with an approach based on site allocation or a criteria-based approach.

The Ross-on-Wye NDP steering group's latest report to the Town Council was discussed on Monday, January 8th. Mr Reynolds, the chair of the group, which is made up of a team of local volunteers and supported by the Town Council, said that information had been very slow to come from Herefordshire Council. He asked the Town Councillors to decide whether they should keep on with the allocated site approach, which would take longer and possibly incur more costs, or adopt a criteria based approach.

NDPs aims to give communities more power to shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built and have a say on what those new buildings should look like. Neighbourhood planning helps local people get the right types of development for their community aligning their desires with the needs and priori-

ties of the wider local area.

NDPs can either be criteria based, site based or a mixture. When sites are allocated for development this is almost like having outline planning permission for a site, it covers the number of houses which could be built on that specific area and is counted by the government as part of the five year housing supply.

A criteria based only plan will not have the same weight as a site allocation plan and developers would be able to apply for planning permission on random spaces.

In the report Mr Reynolds said: "Unfortunately, however, we have not had useful responses from Herefordshire Council to a number of our questions – meaning that there are too many unresolved issues for us to place proposals before the populace with any confidence. The costs to the Town Council of getting the information that should be forthcoming are probably not justifiable. Given that the gestation period of the plan is now getting unsustainable and the anticipated CIL returns to the Town Council remain uncertain, the NDP sub-committee have had to consider an alternative to

site allocation to take the plan forward."

Councillor Jane Roberts said: "When this process first started we were strongly encouraged by Herefordshire Council to embark on Neighbourhood Planning. But I am concerned about the likelihood of getting all the information we need."

The Mayor, Councillor Nigel Gibbs said that there seems to be two views at Herefordshire Council, those held by the education department and those held by planning which is causing a delay.

The report also referred to the 'replacement school proposals'.

Mr Reynolds told the *Ross Gazette* that the education department is very aware that Ashfield Park School is an 'old building' which needs attention. He said that the planners are more focused on achieving the five year supply of housing but the different departments need to work together as more houses will mean more children and possibly more school places.

Councillor Jenny Hyde suggested that the Councillors could talk to the Neighbourhood Planning team leader at Herefordshire Council, Samantha

Banks as she has been very helpful to other councils. The *Ross Gazette* has contacted Herefordshire Council but had not had a response as we went to press.

Councillor Julian Utting asked if it would be possible to have a time line, they could discuss it at a further meeting with Mr Reynolds and then set a date to make a decision. The Councillors agreed that they needed to discuss it again after a meeting with Mr Reynolds but did not set a date for a decision. Originally it had been hoped that Ross-on-Wye would have a plan by the start of this year, it is now looking increasingly unlikely that it will be ready at the start of next year.

Mr Reynolds told the *Ross Gazette*: "It is going frustratingly slowly, but it is just that creating a NDP for towns is much more complex than for villages. Once the draft Plan has been drawn up it will have to be submitted to Herefordshire Council. Then it will go out for Public Consultation, then time is allowed to resolve any issues before it is submitted again. Finally a Referendum would take place and at the moment it is thought that this could take place in late 2018/early 2019.

10 ■ The Ross Gazette, Wednesday January 17th, 2018

Letters to the Editor

Send your views about local issues

✉ 54a Broad Street, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7DY

@ editorial@rossgazette.com f The Ross Gazette 🐦 @RossGazette

The Editor welcomes letters on any topical subject but reserves the right to edit them. Please restrict letters to about 200 words. All letters must include the writer's name and address even when submitted by email.

Use It Keep It

Dear Editor,
FURTHER to Gr on December 20th around Ross to s state, with paveme gealed leaves, roa and branches bloc ROAD, pavemen done by local worl tion companies,

Full steam ahead for NDP

Dear Editor,
I wish to thank you for the promise given to the Ross Neighbourhood Plan in last week's *Ross Gazette*.

The article deals well with some of the complex technical aspects of the Plan relating to housing site allocations and the paper is to be congratulated on that. However, by emphasising the historical background in the report, it comes across as critical of Herefordshire Council's officers, whereas my report, and the update to it presented verbally in the meeting, I hope made it clear that they have generally been most helpful in recent months.

The delays with policy resolution relating to any replacement of Ashfield Park School (described as "a 50-year old temporary building" not an 'old building') have largely been due to staffing issues within Herefordshire Council, and some departments (notably Balfour Beatty Living Places) seem simply not to be resourced to provide answers in a way that enables parish councils to avoid wasting some work when producing Neighbourhood Plans. These things are frustrating, but

we have been able, with the support of Herefordshire Council's officers, Ross Town Council members and staff, and our professional guides to develop a strategy that will keep costs minimised while enabling delivery of a Plan that is robust enough to ensure that most of the required development goes ahead in a way that represents the consensus wishes of the locality.

For that reason the headline "Hold ups continue with Neighbourhood Plan" in the present tense was a tad pessimistic; it may have been more realistic to have said "Council backs completion of Neighbourhood Plan".

With my thanks again for tackling an important but complex topic, I trust that this clarification sets at rest the minds of *Ross Gazette* readers; we are making all haste to have an early public consultation on the draft Plan.

Melvin Reynolds

Chair, Ross-on-Wye Town

Council's Neighbourhood Plan

Sub Committee

Editor's note: The *Ross Gazette* stands by the article published in last week's newspaper as fair and accurate.

Film company looking for memories

Dear Editor,
TESTIMONY Films, an award-winning documentary company is keen to speak to men and women for a new BBC4 documentary series

arians and supercentenarians who still vi remember family life at the time, along archive footage and testimonies from those family

The Ross Gazette



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Corrections and complaints

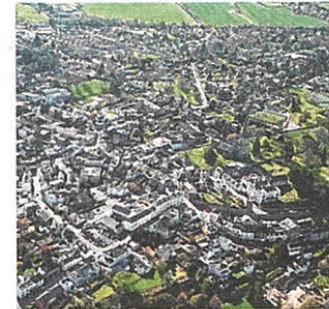
Neighbourhood Plan ready for viewing

AS we went to press on Tuesday, November 6th the Ross Gazette discovered that the long awaited go-ahead has been given for the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan to start six weeks of Public Consultation this Friday; the consultation period will therefore end on Friday, December 21st.

The full text, all supporting information and comment forms will be available online, at the Town Council offices and the Library; other locations may also be available.

More details of the Plan's contents will be available in next week's *Ross Gazette*.

From Friday, the Neighbourhood Plan can be accessed through the Town Council Website at <http://www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk>



Ross-on-Wye
Neighbourhood Development Plan

Inaccurate information

THE Ross-on-Wye Liberal Democrats recently published a leaflet titled 'Let down Again', which criticised Herefordshire Council for their lack of spending on Ross-on-Wye roads between 2017 and 2018.

However, the figures they used, provided by Herefordshire Council following a Freedom of Information request, were incorrect. A spokesperson for Herefordshire Council told the *Ross Gazette* that this misinformation was due to a 'technical error'.

The Liberal Democrat leaflet stated that: "Research by Ross Lib Dems has shown that the Tory County Council spent precisely nothing on re-surfacing Ross roads in 2017/1018."

The figures for spending were listed in other areas of Herefordshire near Ross-on-Wye, including Bromyard, which received £166,024 and Leominster, which received £195,745.

A spokesperson for Herefordshire Council told the *Ross Gazette*: "Herefordshire Council made an investment of £36,700 into road resurfacing in

Ross in 2017/18, which relates to the resurfacing of the B4234 Walford Road on March 21st to March 22nd, 2018. This work was part of our countywide programme of highways works."

Councillor Chris Bartrum told the *Ross Gazette* that a spend of £36,700 was 'terrible' compared with the spending in other areas. He said: "It's hardly any different. Instead of spending nothing, it turns out they have spent next to nothing."

"We asked for information, they provided it, but Ross was not included. It was presented in an amateur way. We went back to them to check, and again they did not include Ross. Herefordshire Council gave false information."

A spokesperson for Herefordshire Council said: "Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty Living Places apologise for the error in the information supplied, and have identified the cause of this to ensure it does not occur in future."

The Lib Dems hoped to retrieve the original leaflet and plan to issue a new leaflet showing the accurate information.

Abandoned trailer costs business

A Birmingham business has been fined £29,000 after abandoning a trailer on the A49 and sparking the largest prosecution fine for unlawful waste disposal.

MJB Truck Services Limited has received fines

may illegally dispose of the trailer and its contents, but he transferred the waste regardless.

David Hough, Herefordshire Council's Trading Standards Service Manager, said: "This is the largest fine Herefordshire Council has been

Outbreak of Norovirus

DUE to cases of diarrhoea and vomiting, Community Hospital's two wards were closed to visitors on Tuesday, November 6th.

The outpatient clinics at the hospital were taking place as normal.

This followed the news that three wards at Hereford County Hospital had been closed to visitors due to Norovirus. Redbrook, Wye and Case wards at Hereford County Hospital had been closed to visitors due to cases of diarrhoea and vomiting.

As a preventative measure visiting to the ward has been stopped to prevent the further spread of diarrhoea and vomiting which is affecting patients.

This kind of outbreak comes from within the community and is often seen at this time of year. Experience has shown that restricting visiting to the ward lessens the chance of spread to both patients and to other areas of the hospital.

It is very important that any visitors with diarrhoea and/or vomiting do not visit other areas of the hospital until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours.

Importantly, visitors to all areas of the hospital are requested to practice good hand hygiene and use the alcohol gels available in all wards/departments in order to prevent any further spread of infection.

Alison Johnson, consultant microbiologist at Wye Valley NHS Trust, said: "We ask that only those who are well visit the hospital if you really need to. Particularly young children, vulnerable elderly visitors and anyone who has experienced symptoms of diarrhoea and or vomiting in the previous 48 hours must avoid visiting any of the hospital wards."

Consider the Women's Register

THE National Women's Register is an organisation that started in 1960 to enable women to connect with other women locally, to share and exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences, and to enjoy life, stimulating conversation, broaden their horizons and develop new friendships. There

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Taking gifts to Uganda

Jo Scrivin
jo@rossgazette.com

SUE and John Casson are volunteer missionaries in Uganda and are on their way back to the country after a short stay in Ross.

They will be taking with them as many bags as they are allowed, containing clothes, medical supplies and other donations which they have collected during their time in Ross. This will help them continue their work there.

Sue said: "We take as much as we can but the easiest and best thing to take is money as we can buy the things the people need in Uganda. It is just they have no money."

Working for the charity Equipe Global they are running a vocational training school, Merantha Gateway, on the Sesse Islands. They also oversee a child sponsorship programme which currently supports 100 children and they have established links between four Ugandan primary schools and several UK schools.

For more information about the charity they work with visit www.equipeglobal.org or follow Sue and John's latest newsletter you can contact them on maranahagateway@gmail.com



Consultation underway for NDP

This is your chance to have a say on planning and development in Ross

THE Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan started six weeks of Public Consultation on Friday, November 9th; the consultation period will therefore end at midnight on Friday 21st December. This is your opportunity to look at and comment on the plans being put forward as suitable and desirable for Ross.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) give communities substantial influence over future development. They give legally enforceable power to local communities and in a national hierarchy they are the third tier below National Policy and (for Herefordshire) the Local Plan of 2011. The Ross NDP could guide development in the town until 2031-2. However, only local knowledge, with local understanding of challenges and opportunities for Ross and the local area can inform and shape a truly local Plan. The preparation of the NDP has been led by a steering group, with the support of Ross-on-Wye Town Council, but the aim is to engage widely with individuals and groups in Ross to produce a Plan that will properly reflect local aspirations; that is why this consultation is important.

Melvin Reynolds, chair of the steering group said "This Plan is key to shaping the future of Ross-on-Wye but is big and the steering group recognise that could appear daunting. Because it is so important that as many people as possible read it and comment it is worth trying to explain the style and structure of this draft plan. "First, Ross is a large market town with lots happening and local people raised lots of different issues for the plan to address. "Secondly, for the plan to gain its full legal status

there are a number of things it must contain and some, especially the policies, have to be written in formal planning language. So we've come up with what we hope is a useful guide."

The Introduction (p. 8-23) sets the scene with lots of basic facts and figures. The Vision (p.24-25) describes, hopefully in a very accessible way, what Ross-on-Wye could be like in 2031 if the plan is as successful as hoped.

The really key section is next – the Policies (p.27-75). For each policy there are detailed objectives, some explanation of the why and what of the policy, then the policy itself. The policies are the most important part of the Neighbourhood Plan because, once the plan is fully agreed, it will then be Herefordshire Council planning officers who must take account of it when deciding if future planning applications satisfy (or not) the policies in the plan. The policies must be right for Ross and also strong enough to prevent inappropriate developments getting through. The Development Strategy and Sites section (p.76-94) is a summary of how the key objectives will be achieved, especially what new developments will happen where. The last section, starting on page 95, lists an array of practical projects that will be set in motion to support what is in all the earlier sections. How to comment on the Plan – The full text, all supporting information and comment forms are available online at <http://www.rosshc-herefordshire.gov.uk>. For those who prefer to read paper copies and comment on paper the Plan, its Appendices and Comment Forms are available at the Ross Town Council offices, the Ross Library and the Larrupetz Centre.

Protecting youngsters from harm

A POWERFUL play which tackles the difficult subject of child sexual exploitation, and has been seen by thousands of children over the past three years, was once again hosted at John Kyrie High School.

Students were also provided with an information sheet which had been designed with input from young people on where to go if they are worried

Consultation begins on NDP



THE Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) started six weeks of formal Public Consultation on Friday, November 9th. Melvin Reynolds, Chair of the Plan Steering group, told the Ross Gazette that a common question asked is: "There's already planning permission for all the homes that are allocated, why allocate more sites?" Melvin says that it is worth backing up a bit before attempting to answer that. National government sets targets for all local authorities to meet. Herefordshire Council's overall Local Plan commits to delivering 16,500 new homes (plus a contingency) by 2031.

The Herefordshire Local Plan includes a specific target for the delivery of 900 homes, again plus a contingency and 10 hectares (about 25 acres) of employment land in Ross-on-Wye.

Around 900 homes are already built or have permission, so about 90 to find in order to meet the combined target including a 10% contingency.



The local input indicated that the NDP should include as much as possible because the contingency allowance may need to be increased to 15% to cover changes in central government requirements, because the five-year land supply is not currently being met and this leaves developers room to push through proposals and to keep things under the maximum local control, which really just summarises the previous two points.

Some housing sites can be formally 'allocated'. After much discussion the steering groups has agreed the areas shown in purple on the plan, all of which have already been proposed in the so-called Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment – a process carried out by Herefordshire Council. The sites proposed are at 1 Cleve Field, 2 Merrivale Lane, 3 Stony Stile, 4 The Chase Hotel and 5 The Ryefield Centre. These would deliver around 70 homes (maximum 90) plus some allotments.

One big and very important area – a whole currently poor quality 'wedge' out of the town – sometimes called Broad-meadows/Tanyard and that is shown in orange on the plan. This cannot be formally allocated because of the enormous amount of expensive technical work that would have to be done to justify allocation, but it is in the plan as a development area to be supported. In total, and with considerable work, it could accommodate employment land as well as about 180 homes.

The NDP can, in principle, designate small areas of green space valued by the local community as 'Local Green Spaces'. To satisfy the legislation, these



need to be small and have valued qualities for recreation, wildlife or archaeology. There also has to be evidence that the areas are valued by local people. The plan shows the sites that have emerged from this process, after sifting through a long list to select those that met the key criteria.

Owners of these areas of land have been contacted for their views on designation; their reactions have varied.

However, when the plan is formally examined, it is the examiner who will decide whether or not they should be designated.

To view the plan online, visit <http://www.rossc-herefordshire.gov.uk>. Paper versions of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, its appendices and comment forms are available at the Ross Town Council offices, the Ross Library and the Larrupetz Centre. All comments must be received by email or on paper at the Town Council offices by midnight on December 21st.

Advice

can't work for viral 1 as a cold or flu and ics when you have a will strip away your erta, making you more iber infections. It also ibilities are less likely future for you or your have a minor illness. arm, drink plenty of dehydration, and visit armacy instead of your on medicines you can

son, Wye Valley NHS sultant microbiologist, predicted that in just s, antibiotic resistance re people than cancer combined and could risk of infection for egoing routine oper-) replacements."

'Burglary trick'

A CONCERNED resident who lives on Brampton Road, Ross-on-Wye recently had their experience shared on a message on Facebook to warn others about a burglary trick.

The message urged people to check the locks on their front doors in case it had been tampered with. This came after the resident found a tack inside their lock which prevented it from being locked properly.

Following this, the resident went on to have to have their door locks changed.

Warning other people, they said: "It's an old burglary trick still being used today, so just a heads up to families out there especially at this time of year. "Check your locks as this has only just happened up on Brampton Way. Stay safe!"

Blanket testing this winter

AGGE Concern

Ross-on-Wye & District
Palma Court, 27 Brookend Street
Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7EE
Tel: 01989 567165

ELECTRIC BLANKET TESTING FOR OVER FIFTIES IN ROSS THIS WINTER

Age Concern Ross-on-Wye along with Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service are



Losing hair to raise money



By Aliya Shibli

BRIDSTOW Primary School pupil, Elin Winstanley, who is nine-years-old, was excited to be taking part in Children in Need, 2018. She shaved off all of her hair on Friday, November 16th, to raise as much money as possible for those in need. She is pictured with her father, Matt Winstanley.

Although when Elin initially mentioned the idea her parents needed persuading, they are both so proud that she did it and think that her new look is great.

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her hair, Elin told the *Ross Gazette*: "I feel like this year I should play a part in Children in Need, so I'm going to shave my hair off. I'd like to raise as much money as possible for children who need help."

Elin's mother, Ali Beynon told the *Ross Gazette*: "It went really well. And I think she looks amazing. The support she has received has been incredible."

Through raising awareness locally and a crowdfunding page, Elin has managed to raise over £1300 so far. She even made it

onto the Chris Evans breakfast show, where he pledged to top up the donations even more.

Ali said: "Halo Ross swimming pool staff and customers have also been really supportive, with one aqua class making up £70 of the total alone. And all of the staff pupils and parents at Bridstow Primary School have been awesome. It's been a real community effort, and children in need will be the beneficiaries!"

Elin and her family told the *Ross Gazette* that they would all love to say thank you to everyone.

Developments for community

MELVIN Reynolds, Chair of the Plan Steering Group, told the *Ross Gazette* that there are three main reasons for Ross-on-Wye Town Council to undertake a Neighbourhood Development Plan – they are related to new developments. He said that if a community can agree where it wishes to place new homes it can avoid lengthy battles with would-be developers over proposals for unsuitable sites; with a plan in place the legal assumption is that the developments will happen firstly in the allocated places – assuming enough land is made available.

Secondly, it can enable a community to find the best option for accommodating new development. The 900 homes required of Ross may put pressure on public services and infrastructure, but Melvin said: "We have no option about the number the town has to take. Indeed, although that number are already built or have permission, the numbers will be increased by government, so a contingency of about 10%-15% is needed (about an extra 90 – 135 homes). The Ross plan

is seeking to make the "least bad" job of addressing that contingency."

Thirdly, Melvin continues to say that developers of larger sites are required to make a contribution to the Local Authority toward local service and infrastructure provision. At present this, in Herefordshire, is through so-called 'section 106' agreements; the Local Authority is not required to share this contribution with the parish in which a development is made. However, use of this old regime of contribution is now very unusual and almost all Local Authorities use the newer Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) system. Under this arrangement a parish gets a 15% share of the CIL contribution – or 25% if there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place for the parish. The attraction of this is obvious – and one of the main reasons that Ross' Town Council made the investment of effort and finance in a Neighbourhood Plan. The fact that Herefordshire Council has not yet implemented CIL is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a source of some contention between it

and the members of the Market Towns Forum and the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils.

To put that into context it is worth getting an understanding of the overall process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. It can be seen that there was, due to bureaucratic holdups, a long delay in moving from approval to undertake a plan to actually starting work. From then work went rapidly and smoothly with a good level of consensus being exhibited at the various consultation events. Then work was delayed (in Stage 4) while there was a debate about the need, or not, for a replacement for Ashfield Park Primary School. Eventually Herefordshire Council agreed that no decision would be made – which left work on the Plan free to progress. Since then work has proceeded well and the Plan is currently at the end of Stage 5. However, there are a number of steps that the Neighbourhood Plan has to go through before it can be considered for examination and finally be approved.

Positive Parking

HEREFORDSHIRE Council has agreed to become a member of the British Parking Association (BPA) and align itself with the principles of the Positive Parking Agenda (PPA). THE BPA has over 700 member organisations, and offers co-operative links and the opportunity to share knowledge in order to achieve excellence in parking. It supports local communities, members and government, and seeks to improve compliance with regulations amongst those managing

Free Christmas parking

MONMOUTHSHIRE County Council is providing free weekend parking in Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth in the approach to Christmas. This will be a welcome boost for the towns' shops, help remind people of the county's fantastic range of independent retailers and encourage shoppers to buy

locally. Free Saturday parking will be provided in Chepstow on December 1st, 8th and 15th December while Abergavenny and Monmouth will offer free parking on December 8th, 15th and 22nd.

It costs the council around £19,000 in lost revenue each year but the towns benefit enormously.

Code of conduct breached

A 'DOMINEERING and aggres- resignation.

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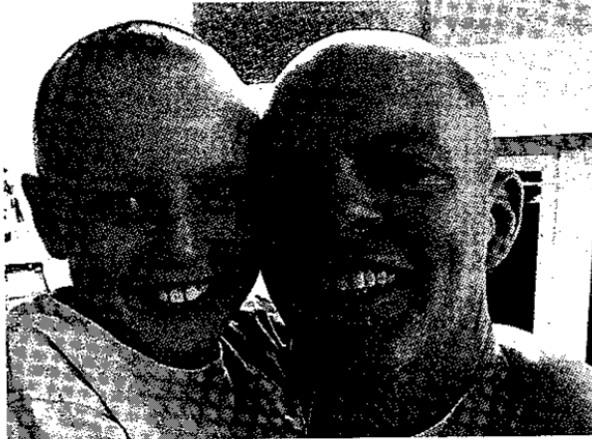
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Although when Elin initially mentioned the idea her parents needed persuading, they are both so proud that she did it and think that her new look is great.

Before she shaved

her hair, Elin told the *Ross Gazette*: "I feel like this year I should play a part in Children in Need, so I'm going to shave my hair off. I'd like to raise as much money as possible for children who need help."

Elin's mother, Ali Beynon told the *Ross Gazette*: "It went really well. And I think she looks amazing. The support she has received has been incredible."

Through raising awareness locally and a crowdfunding page, Elin has managed to raise over £1300 so far. She even made it

onto the Chris Evans breakfast show, where he pledged to top up the donations even more.

Ali said: "Halo Ross swimming pool staff and customers have also been really supportive, with one aqua class making up £70 of the total alone. And all of the staff pupils and parents at Bridstow Primary School have been awesome. It's been a real community effort, and children in need will be the beneficiaries!"

Elin and her family told the *Ross Gazette* that they would all love to say thank you to everyone.

Developments for community

MELVIN Reynolds, Chair of the Plan Steering Group, told the *Ross Gazette* that there are three main reasons for Ross-on-Wye Town Council to undertake a Neighbourhood Development Plan – they are related to new developments. He said that if a community can agree where it wishes to place new homes it can avoid lengthy battles with would-be developers over proposals for unsuitable sites; with a plan in place the legal assumption is that the developments will happen firstly in the allocated places – assuming enough land is made available.

Secondly, it can enable a community to find the best option for accommodating new development. The 900 homes required of Ross may put pressure on public services and infrastructure, but Melvin said: "We have no option about the number the town has to take. Indeed, although that number are already built or have permission, the numbers will be increased by government, so a contingency of about 10%-15% is needed (about an extra 90 – 135 homes). The Ross plan

is seeking to make the "least bad" job of addressing that contingency."

Thirdly, Melvin continues to say that developers of larger sites are required to make a contribution to the Local Authority toward local service and infrastructure provision. At present this, in Herefordshire, is through so-called 'section 106' agreements; the Local Authority is not required to share this contribution with the parish in which a development is made. However, use of this old regime of contribution is now very unusual and almost all Local Authorities use the newer Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) system. Under this arrangement a parish gets a 15% share of the CIL contribution – or 25% if there is a Neighbourhood Plan in place for the parish. The attraction of this is obvious – and one of the main reasons that Ross' Town Council made the investment of effort and finance in a Neighbourhood Plan. The fact that Herefordshire Council has not yet implemented CIL is, perhaps unsurprisingly, a source of some contention between it

and the members of the Market Towns Forum and the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils.

To put that into context it is worth getting an understanding of the overall process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. It can be seen that there was, due to bureaucratic holdups, a long delay in moving from approval to undertake a plan to actually starting work. From then work went rapidly and smoothly with a good level of consensus being exhibited at the various consultation events. Then work was delayed (in Stage 4) while there was a debate about the need, or not, for a replacement for Ashfield Park Primary School. Eventually Herefordshire Council agreed that no decision would be made – which left work on the Plan free to progress. Since then work has proceeded well and the Plan is currently at the end of Stage 5. However, there are a number of steps that the Neighbourhood Plan has to go through before it can be considered for examination and finally be approved.

Positive Parking

HEREFORDSHIRE Council has agreed to become a member of the British Parking Association (BPA) and align itself with the principles of the Positive Parking Agenda (PPA). THE BPA has over 700 member organisations, and offers co-operative links and the opportunity to share knowledge in order to achieve excellence in parking. It supports local communities, members and government, and seeks to improve compliance with regulations across those managing

Free Christmas parking

MONMOUTHSHIRE County Council is providing free weekend parking in Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth in the approach to Christmas. This will be a welcome boost for the towns' shops, help remind people of the county's fantastic range of independent retailers and encourage shoppers to buy

locally. Free Saturday parking will be provided in Chepstow on December 1st, 8th and 15th December while Abergavenny and Monmouth will offer free parking on December 8th, 15th and 22nd.

It costs the council around £19,000 in lost revenue each year but the towns benefit enormously.

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Ross Town Councilors offering chance for residents to share concerns

Thursday, 6 December 2018 - Local Edition
 by **Aliya Shibli** - Reporter
 @RossGazette aliya@rossgazette.com



Members of Ross Town Council are under the Market House this morning, Thursday, December 6th, to listen to concerns and answer questions about the closure of the Minor Injures Unit (MIU) and the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). Councilor Chris Bartum and Councilor Paul Symonds are offering local residents the opportunity to share their concerns about the closure of the MIU and sign a petition to demonstrate their objection. Councilor Caroline Uffing and Councilor David Ravenscroft are with the Chairman of the NDP, Melvin Reynolds, to offer residents the chance to comment on the plan and make their views heard.

Melvin said: "So far the response has not been huge. It is important that people get their views heard, whether it's supportive or not, before it's too late."

"So far the response has not been huge. It is important that people get their views heard, whether it's supportive or not, before it's too late."

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