

# GREENLANE POST

County Councillor - Alan Davies



## YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR WORKING ON YOUR BEHALF.

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Firstly I would like to inform you all that for a variety of reasons (which I won't go into here) I am no longer a member of the Labour group or party. I will be serving the rest of my term as an independent member. During the period leading up to the next council elections I will decide whether to stand again and if I do, what ward I will stand in (green lane ward is being removed from the list of Caldicot wards due to electoral boundary changes). Until this time, I will, as always continue to represent you to the best of my ability.

### Town Centre Regeneration

#### Cross Destination Space

The contractors have made good progress since works restarted following release from lockdown in June. The scheme was recently opened before any of the required signage was in place. This in my opinion was a grave error and should not have happened, several near misses have occurred since then. Concerns about the risks to pedestrians associated with this new development have been forcefully communicated to the officers at M.C.C. There appears to have been no consideration given to the high risks (particularly for those with sight issues) that have been created by this development. Whereas we previously had a safe pelican crossing for public use at the Chepstow Road end and a keep left sign where pedestrians could stand at the Sandy Lane end.

We now have no safe crossing area for pedestrians with traffic coming onto the space from three different directions. I am hopeful that M.C.C. officers will listen to common sense and address the safety issues that remain. If they don't I fear there will inevitably be a serious accident at this location.

The delays caused by the pandemic also mean that the programme for tree planting has also been delayed until November.

#### Newport Road

£155k of Active Travel Funding has been secured to progress design and technical detail for the remainder of the Town Centre with a view to applying for implementation funding next year. The funding includes an allocation to complete an access audit of the section of Newport Road from Waitrose to the B4245 that will inform a future design process that will improve western access into the Town from the bypass.

Topographical, ecology and other site surveys will commence over the next few weeks during which Urban Design services will also be procured in the anticipation that the successful company will be in place and commencing consultation in October 2020

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## Church Road

Public consultation on draft plans was undertaken over the summer.

MCC received 148 comments of which the vast majority felt that the proposed scheme would result in considerable benefits, with:

- 87% of respondents feeling that the proposal will create a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists
- 91% approving the improved footway widths,
- 81% seeing improvements for Llanthony Close residents.
- 66% of respondents agree with the use of build-outs and trees/planting to slow-down traffic with
- 75% in favour of trees and landscaping. 19% of respondents object to the proposed off-street car parking within the grounds of the Country Park.

At a meeting held recently with M.C.C. officers we were informed that the next phase of the development will be taking place from the cross to Grove Gardens. At the Castle public house and the extension of the Car-Park adjacent to the Church Road entrance to the Castle. The culvert which has collapsed near Caldicot Printers will also be repaired at the same time.

I raised the issue of traffic gridlock and the lack of a safe crossing for pedestrians on Church Road.

At school start and end times we frequently encounter cars, lorries and buses mounting the kerb in an effort to extricate themselves from the traffic chaos. This represents a high risk to the safety of children from the school, parents and the general public. The residents of Church Road raised a petition in September 2017 highlighting the danger. We also provided photographs of vehicles mounting the pavement. We asked for a safe crossing to be installed, which once again appears to have fallen on deaf ears. With the commencement of a new housing development off Church Road the volume of traffic using Church Road will inevitably increase. Ideally the County Council should have provided a drop off facility for parents who now park on Church Road and cause chaos in the area.

In the absence of any such facility we once again hope that the officers of the council will address the issues. Professional Risk Assessment should be a key element of any new facility. Sadly, that appears to have been inadequate on many of the recent developments.

### **\*Public safety should be the Councils number one priority\***

*87% of respondents feel that the Church Road proposal will create a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists*

### Property Enhancement Grant

Property Enhancement grants remain available to businesses in Caldicot Town Centre provided they can complete works and claim by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Although ten expressions of interest have been received together with four application forms progress has been curtailed due to the lockdown restricting access and availability of contractors and professional services.

Consequently, given the likely shortfall on spend, the Welsh Government have allowed Councils to spend the grant on outdoor adaptations that help businesses meet the requirements of social distancing whilst improving the safety and amenity of our town centres. Investigations are taking place into how to access the grant to improve the presentation of the town – including improved planting and designated food areas in the pedestrianised areas. MCC have also launched a Town Centre Outdoor Adaptation Grant which will allow businesses to apply for up to £8k for eligible improvements. Currently, six businesses in Caldicot have already expressed an interest in receiving grant support.

## Wellbeing Centre

£5k of Welsh Government Funding has been secured to undertake a feasibility study for the provision of a Wellbeing Centre in Caldicot. The Study will inform our understanding of the need for such a facility in the area and whether such services could be housed in the currently vacant Housing/One Stop Shop building by the Community Hub. Consultants have just been appointed with the report to be received by November 2020.

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## Castle Lea Estate Flooding

Following the extensive flooding and damage to property which took place at the estate I have been in contact with the flooding manager at M.C.C who has been producing a report on the incident. I have raised several areas of concern and asked that the agencies involved, Highways England and Natural Resources Wales provide me with assurances that inspection and cleaning schedules have now been established in order to prevent a reoccurrence this winter.

The Sluice gate close to the River Severn was blocked (Highways England), also the lack of clearing and removal of debris from the feed watercourse (including Caldicot Castle) was also a contributing factor. The flooding Manager at Monmouthshire County Council has passed on my concerns to Natural Resources Wales. I have been told the report is due to be published shortly.

### Chepstow Road Electronic Speed Indicators

As I previously reported, after considerable effort I had agreement that electronic speed indicators would be fitted on Chepstow Road. After what seems like an eternity of waiting, I am now assured that the equipment will be in situ by the end of October 2020.

I am also told that consideration is being given to establishing a 20mph speed limit on Chepstow Road.

### Pathway From Cae Mawr Road To Green Lane

This footpath was blocked again with overgrowth and I once again arranged for it to be cleared.

I would again urge residents with gardens adjacent to the path to take action to prevent overgrowth from their gardens onto the pathway.

## Unadopted Roads Castle Lea Estate

As requested by a Castle-Lea resident. I once again raised this issue and asked for some estimates of the potential cost of repairs. County Council Officers have prepared an estimate by way of example to resurface the Castle Lea road (from Chepstow road to the first major right-hand junction – by number 65). This is an area of 1400 sq m and with a single course of tarmac would cost £31,500.

**However, they also emphasise that this does not indicate** that the Council would thereafter adopt the highway and drainage in Castle Lea. If residents wished to proceed with resurfacing the road then the residents would be responsible for the cost, so we would have to come up with a method by which all Castle Lea residents would contribute (and possibly look for quotes from private contractors).

I understand that the issue of adoption of the Castle Lea highways and drainage has been investigated on several occasions before, but both the council and Welsh Water have declined to adopt the estate, so the roads effectively remain private. I believe Welsh Government are investigating the extent of unadopted roads in Wales and what might be done to address the problem for householders, but any options may well be a long way into the future.

## Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council

In April, this year I had the privilege of being appointed as the chair of the above organisation. The Aneurin Bevan Community Health Council is an independent organisation that represents the interests of patients throughout Gwent. I have attached a leaflet to this newsletter which outlines the role of the community health council and the services it provides for you.

If you have any issues or concerns about any aspect of care you or a relative has received do not hesitate to contact the health council. All such matters are dealt with confidentially. They are there to help and your experience's can help to improve the level of service for everyone.

## **FINALLY, AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME, PLEASE KEEP SAFE**

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