

Unitary Councillor's February 2026 Report

Dear Councillors

It has been a very busy month. My husband David was admitted to Worcester hospital as an emergency case with difficulty breathing and heart trouble. This has been going on for some time. He has received excellent surgical treatment and is now recovering. I am very fortunate that my sons have been helping with the feeding and bedding of our cattle.

Cleobury Mortimer

Regarding the speed watch, I have chased up again, and I am waiting for the volunteer forms to be forwarded to me. Once I receive these, P C Jade Ives will be able to start the process of vetting and training for the safety of the volunteers.

I have applied to have a traffic warden visit Cleobury, to show presence, and hopefully help as a deterrent to alleviate the parking problem. The parking enforcement supervisor, Shaun Sutton, has since confirmed that Cleobury has been visited several times a week over the past three weeks. The problems are due to the lack of, or incorrect parking restrictions. He has spoken with Nick who is the Traffic Engineer and they are going to arrange a site visit, in the near future, to look at what possible changes may improve the parking problems identified.

I recently had a police drive-around, with P C Jade Ives. It was a very useful and informative experience which has enabled me to appreciate the varied work the police have to deal with. Jade is very keen to visit the town and parish councils' when she can make time from her busy workload.

The state of the Cleobury Mortimer to Tenbury road, just as it leaves Cleobury, has been reported again by myself. I have requested on fixmystreet, that it be planed off and resurfaced, not just the odd pothole filled in.

The road from Cleobury to Tenbury, the route has been highlighted for capital funding. At the moment, there is no timescale for when this will be done however, but I am assured that safety inspections will be carried out as per policy, and any repairs identified will be undertaken.

I can appreciate how frustrating it is with all the works that are needed to be done. It is the same in all the other parishes. Shropshire County Council staff are doing the best they can with limited staff and funds. I am constantly chasing up issues, but nothing happens quickly enough! The weather we have had has obviously delayed some progress.

The Cleobury Leisure fundraising is slowing down. Now at £34,000. There is still a long way to go. I have sent a number of letters, requesting possible donations, and I am still waiting on a reply. I attended a county wide leisure centre meeting, where I asked if Shropshire County Council could help in any way. I heard back from James Owen, that they had looked into costings and the possibility of taking over the running in the interim, but it would, actually cost more.

Just to remind those who want to donate and have not got around to it yet, you can via Unity Trust Bank, Sort 60 83 01, a/c 20540427. I thank those who have already donated.

I also asked about the current staff and the safety of their jobs. I was assured that if the centre continues to operate, whoever is employed there will have their jobs transferred via TUPE to the new

operator. The risk is that if there is a temporary closure due to a lack of funding in the interim period, where Teme Leisure would likely look to make the current staff redundant. This would be Teme Leisure's decision.

The existing contract ends July 2027. Shropshire County Council will be seeking a contract for the long term – 1st August 2027 – 31st July 2037 which is ten years with an option of a five year extension. One contract with economies of scale, an improved quality and financial offer. Pre-market engagement started September 2025. Tender submission by end of May – June with proposals for best and final offers for evaluation. New contract starts 1st August 2027.

Coreley

I have requested that the road through Coreley, used by the school bus and carers visiting vulnerable residents be put on the gritting programme. I have also requested a grit bin and grit. Before this can be dealt with, I need a map showing which roads need to be gritted, also, the fixmystreet numbers requesting the grit bins and their location please. The last snow event took all limited resources keeping the main roads as clear as possible which is always takes priority.

I have reported the tree overhanging and stressed how dangerous this is. Andy Keyland came back and said that it is not the property of Shropshire County Council, but the responsibility of the housing association, as it forms part of the boundary hedge for the property. Regardless of this, he instructed their Arboriculture team to assess the tree with regards to its safety. The outcome of this was that the tree was in good health and not a safety issue, therefore they have no grounds to serve notice on the owner of the tree to undertake any works. I have reached out to the housing association myself and expressed my concerns over safety.

Boraston

I have requested that the slow signs be repainted, also, the give way road signs be repainted. It is programmed to be done when the weather is more favourable, and also when there are other jobs in the area to save on finances.

Severn Trent water will start their renewal programme. Phase II of the Burford to Trapnell Inn junction which is due to start the end of January until July. Now delayed by two weeks, due to a bridge being damaged by a tractor, so highways are doing the repair first.

Phase I will be from July – August from the Peacock up through the village.

I have asked for the Cleobury Mortimer to Burford road be re-classified from a C road to a B road as it is a very much used road with increasing traffic. I believe this is supported by the local police.

Neen Sollars and Milson

On my way to Neen Sollars parish council, it was a case of, pothole, pothole, and pothole. A very proactive parish council. It was a very enjoyable and informative meeting. Thank you. If you need me to chase up long outstanding fixmystreet requests, please let me know the reference number and I can push to get sorted.

Shropshire County Council

The financial situation for Shropshire is bad, but, at the moment it does look like Shropshire Council will not have to declare bankruptcy which is good news. The council is going to have to undertake very significant borrowing in the way of what is called Exceptional Funding Support (EFS). The council has asked to borrow just over £71 million to balance the budget for this year and have asked to borrow another £130 million next year and probably more in years to come. Whilst our situation is bad, we are part of a group of around 100 councils that are going to have to go to the Government for EFS. It is no longer 'exceptional' funding but is becoming the only way local authorities can balance their budgets. Adult and children's social care account for roughly 76 – 78% of our total spending as a council. Inflation in these areas is a lot higher than CPI, but central Government funding simply doesn't cover the cost of providing these essential services. Local authorities have all of the responsibility but totally inadequate funding to provide the necessary services. The Government have tried to say our funding has increased, but the vast majority of this increase is them insisting on the council raising council tax to at least the 4.99% rate. A 1% increase equals £2 million more income from council tax. The Government has removed the 'remoteness adjustment' that we used to get which helped to cover the additional costs associated with supplying services to rural areas. This has reduced our funding by £4.4 million. The Government have also taken the Rural Services Delivery Grant from us. In total this means that our Government funding has reduced by £13.3 million this year. Urban councils are receiving significantly more funding per head of the population than rural counties.

I have to mention fly tipping which has occurred in other local parishes. This has been dealt with, but I would ask, if you notice anything, please try and capture the number plate information, so long as it doesn't put you at any risk. You can report this on [fixmystreet](https://www.fixmystreet.com) as well. There is only one team of two people who deal with fly tipping for the whole of Shropshire! Also it is more cost efficient to deal with several issues in the same area, hence why it may take longer to deal with.

Shirehall update. I have been to visit the Shirehall and will update you on the final outcome. At the previous full council meeting, a Task and Finish group was formed, to look into the financial viability of keeping or demolishing it. All 74 Shropshire County Councillors were invited to attend the inspection to see for themselves the condition of the building. It was attended by almost all the Reform councillors and four from the other parties. It is only when we have the full costings of both options – demolish or reinstate, can an "informed" decision be made.

It is an iconic building that needs some maintenance and updating, not at all the depressed condition we had been led to believe. There are plenty of car parking spaces and the car park does not flood. It is a very substantial building compared to the Guildhall.

I will not be attending the Saturday Cleobury councillor surgery, or the town and parish meetings during the month of February, so I give my apologies. I am visiting my sister in Canada who has not been well. I have put a message on my council laptop emails to that effect.

Kindest regards
Pamela