

Report of Ward Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst – representing Llangarron ward.

Feb 2018

It is at this time of year, when the hedges are bare and the grass hasn't started growing, that the unsightly scourge of litter is most visible. Every time I drive along the A40 and along stretches of the A49 I feel very angry at the mountains of rubbish – mainly plastic – that blights our beautiful county.

The council spends about 1m annually to deal with litter and fly-tipping – it must be said that this money is clearly not enough judging from the state of the verges from the top of Callow Hill to the city boundary. I dare say we could spend 2 million, or three, or four but then we would have that much less to look after the vulnerable members of the community or even, heaven knows, to fill the odd pot hole. It is a total waste of resources to be having to pick up after those individuals who don't know what a bin is for. Of course there is a terrible price that is paid by our environment, the oceans and the wildlife in our countryside.

The Council simply cannot afford to pick up after the thoughtless people who throw their coffee cups onto the verge, or leave plastic bags of dog faeces hanging on hedges, or allow silage wrapping to blow all over the place. There was even someone who thought it was ok to leave an entire bathroom suite on the side of the road near the Thorn crossroads. What did they think was going to happen? Did they imagine it would biodegrade? That the fly tipping fairies would sprinkle it with fairy dust? No, the council had to send a team out to deal with it – incidents like this are what costs the money that we all contribute and would probably rather see spent in pot hole filling.

There are a number of wonderful local people and groups who volunteer to pick up litter in their area. I know of residents who regularly pick up at Pencraig and Wilton, some do annual parish clean ups and, having done a few myself this is actually a great way to meet neighbours and do some good. This month I attended the Herefordshire Council Litter Stakeholder meeting for organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals who are actively working to reduce litter in the County, to ensure partnership working and to discuss the way forward.

They also launched the Litter Pledge in order to try and encourage everyone to commit to doing their bit.

There's a litter pledge for businesses, schools, community groups and individuals and the link to the pledge is here:-

https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report_a_problem/107/litter/7

Everyone who signs the litter pledge will receive a certificate for displaying in their premises/area to encourage others to do the same and will be featured on the Herefordshire Council website.

Balfour Beatty supports volunteer efforts by providing litter picking kits and they will collect bags. For more information about the Stop the Drop Litter Campaign please have a look at the Hereford Council webpages via this link www.herefordshire.gov.uk/stopthedrop

BBLP are also embarking on a round of velocity patching of c and u class roads to repair some of the winter damage. I recently went to London and have to report that the street where I was staying had numerous bad pot holes – considering the fact that Herefordshire has more mileage of roads per head of population than most, if not all, other English counties it is surprising that there is not a marked difference in the condition of the roads. I will post a photo of the road on my facebook page once I have mastered the technicalities.

https://www.facebook.com/CouncillorElissaSwinglehurst/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

Change of Leader.

There will be a change of Leader in the Council; Cllr. Anthony Johnson has stepped down and Cllr. Jonathan Lester has been elected as the new leader, the official hand over will take place at the full council meeting on the 9th March. Jonathan is very able, he is relatively young but has ample experience having served as Cabinet member for Childrens services.

<http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgUserInfo.aspx?UID=823>

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