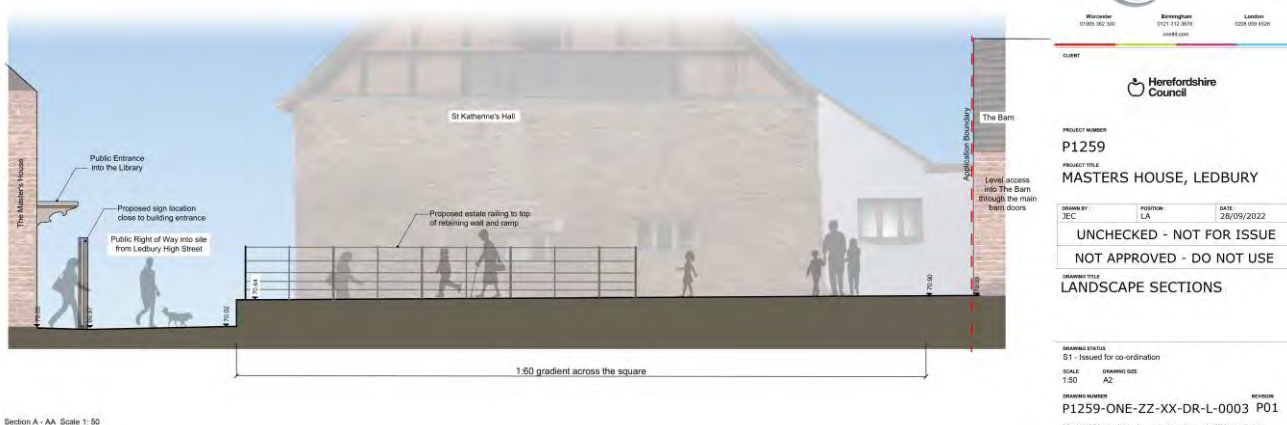


Ward Councillor Report: October-November 2022

Master's House and Levelling-Up

The Master's House Landscaping design is progressing well. Following consultation with local stakeholders and engineers there have been some minor alterations to the revised design from 2019 to improve the flexibility of the Phase 1 public space and to provide an integrated design for the Phase 2 revised layout of the car park.



The square is slightly larger than previously – and level across its area rather than on the slope. Pedestrians will use a graduated path which comes from the car park and curves round to foot of the rear wall of St Katharine's Hall to join the paved walkway from the High Street.

The standing sign for The Master's House is set to the right of the main door, with the stone map planned to be recut and located at the end of the planted garden area, and canted at an angle to be better viewed from the square without being further damaged by being set in the paving.

The layout of the car park provides a better flow for vehicles and includes some tree planting in an island to the west and additional planting adjacent to the path on the west along the Victorian wing of The Master's House.

The possibility of a disabled path from the Feathers' entrance to the square remains – dependent upon support from the hotel, but is not planned to be included at this time.

We are aiming for the Phase 1 works to be tendered before Christmas with a view to starting on site early February (funding is secure for this work). Pending funds being available (i.e. a successful outcome for the council's Levelling Up bid for the North Herefordshire Constituency), Phase 2 works should commence in July and completed in December 2023.

BBLP Public Realm

The long awaited resurfacing works on The Homend between Tesco and the station was completed in the autumn and resurfacing works on bridge Street, Lower Road and the Lower Road Trading Estate are underway. The works are more extensive than had been originally agreed and I hope will make a difference to local residents and businesses in this area of the town.

Viaduct Housing Development

Planners, representatives for Bloor and the Hereford to Gloucester Canal are meeting soon to progress discussions regarding the route and delivery of the section of canal through the development site to the edge of the Bromyard Road.

Planning applications for sign-off of conditions relating to footpath and cycleway access have been approved in recent weeks and discussions held amongst highway engineers, BBLP, planners and the Town Council regarding the extent and scheduling of works to open up the site along the Bromyard Road and to plan for the road layout, crossing and signalling works to be undertaken along the Hereford Road and at the station junction.

Presently there is a detailed application under consideration for the layout of the first phase of the housing development comprising roughly a third of the planned housing. From the outset one of the perceived benefits of this site being delivered by a sole developer was argued to be that the scheme would be designed holistically from the outset. Consequently I am disappointed that the detailed design and layout of the site is being brought forward in stages.

I have made representation to the case officer asking that they consider the merits of requiring the entire site layout to be approved in detail as a whole, even if Bloor Homes intend to phase its delivery. I feel this is important to ensure that all the people and vehicle movement, amenity areas , play-space, future access options, canal and greenspace design issues are able to be considered as a complete package. Support from the Town Council for this holistic approach to the detailed design approval would be much appreciated.

Garden chickens and birds

Avian Flu restrictions on garden birds and poultry continue. More information on the measures to be taken can be found here: [An Important Update about Avian Flu – Herefordshire Council](#)

Consultations

Supplementary Planning Document for Agricultural Development: A new consultation has just opened on a supplementary planning document concerning agricultural development which is designed to sit alongside the current adopted Core Strategy 2011-2031 whilst the update to the Local Plan continues. Improved core policies for managing agricultural development will be drafted for inclusion in the update which is expected

to be ready for adoption in 2024. The consultation will run until 23 January and more details can be found here: [Agricultural Planning Supplementary Planning Document – Herefordshire Consultations](#)

County Council Budget 2023-24: It is likely that serious cuts will be made to county council services in the 2023 Budget due to a lack of revenue funding for core services. This is likely to affect non-safety grass cutting and other highway maintenance activities, non-statutory social care support services, technical services .

A public and online consultation on budget options is about to start, with **a face-2-face stall present at the Charter Market in Ledbury on Saturday 3 December 10-12:00**. An online survey will also be available on the council's website.

Hereford Transport Hub: A consultation on proposals for a new Transport Hub at the station in Hereford is underway and remains open until 12 December. More details can be found here: [Hereford Transport Hub - have your say on design proposals – Herefordshire Consultations](#)

Health and Wellbeing: A survey seeking views on the meaning and priorities for health and wellbeing in Herefordshire remains open until 11 December. More details can be found here: [Health and wellbeing in Herefordshire – what does this mean to you? – Herefordshire Consultations](#)

Boxing Day Road Closure and Hunt Meet

Ledbury Hunt has once again requested permission for a road closure of the High Street in Ledbury on Boxing Day for the now traditional hunt gathering. Ledbury Town Council has declined to comment on the closure request.

Separate to this request, and following on from concerns raised last year, I have been asking the hunt to confirm it has hunted lawfully over the last year. I have received written assurances from the Masters of the hunt that this is indeed the case.

However, alongside seeking and receiving these assurances, allegations of unlawful countryside practices by The Ledbury have been sent to me and to the Town Council by local objectors and observers of the hunt's actions. My enquiries regarding an explanation of this material have not been addressed directly by the Masters who have instead suggested that I direct such enquiries to the police.

The hunt are keen to separate their gathering in town on Boxing Day from any questioning of their hunting practices and pursuits. Whilst I fully support the right of minority sports to pursue their interests within the bounds of the law, I do struggle with the suggestion that there is no connection between the privilege of the hunt's free run of the town and the responsibilities of the hunt in the field. To me, providing support for the Boxing Day event carries with it tacit support and approval for the hunt itself and, by association, for its actions.

As a direct consequence of repeated first hand observation of hunting practices by its officers, The Malvern Hills Conservators banned The Ledbury Hunt last year from its land. Therefore I believe it is also reasonable that the Ledbury Town Council seek assurance that only trail hunting is now pursued, and that no live quarry is hunted, no blocking of badger sets and fox dens is undertaken, and the setting of hounds or terriers on live animals forms no part of the present practice of the hunt which enjoys the town's name.

As the ward member for the town centre I have gone to considerable trouble to ensure the Town Council is a consultee on all town centre road closure requests, due to their impact on the functioning of the town centre and their disruption of people movement, retail and transport. Therefore I am disappointed that the Town Council has foregone the opportunity to comment on this particular road closure application. Whilst

the Town Council is not the decision-maker on this matter, it is appropriate that it express a view – as it does regularly on planning and other matters where the decision lies elsewhere.

That said, the criteria against which a road closure is determined by Herefordshire Council are quite narrow and, as such, I do not believe there are grounds for the County Council to refuse the hunt request for a road closure in this instance.

Given the strength of feeling on both sides of the argument regarding the right to pursue country sports within the limits of the law, I hope the Town Council takes the opportunity to engage positively with this question in the New Year so that all sides can receive a fair hearing and any future decisions regarding tacit or explicit support for hunt activities in whatever form, can be based upon sound evidence.

County Council initiatives

I refer councillors to the Herefordshire Council Leader's monthly newsletter for July and August, and to the Talk Community newsletters which are also circulated monthly. These provide more information on developments and initiatives many of which are relevant to Ledbury and its residents. If councillors would like further information on any of the above initiatives, please contact me.

Councillor Liz Harvey

Independents for Herefordshire – Ledbury North Ward Member – 30 November 2022