

Ward Councillor Report: September 2023

Master's House Landscaping

Works on site continue – but I have serious concerns that cuts being made to the agreed programme and changes made to the approved design will be damaging to the overall development and will limit considerably the uses to which the space can then be put.

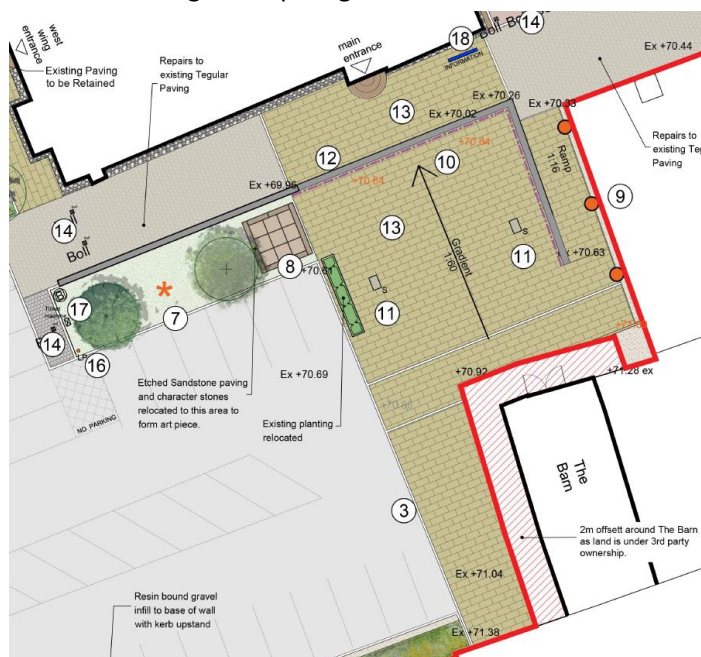


Railings proposed to edge walls/drops along two sides of the (almost) flat area are not in keeping with the aesthetic of the overall restoration and will detract significantly from the attractiveness of the space. Improved railing design will cost an additional £13,000 which the county council is presently refusing to pay – despite having frittered away more than 3x this sum in wasteful and undeliverable design work before a spade went in the ground.

Differently ugly railings – with something of the pool noodle about them (see image) - are proposed for installation along BOTH SIDES of the disabled ramp skirting the square – apparently for Health and Safety reasons. However, these railings form no part of the planning permission granted for the implemented 4th design. See plan given below.

Whilst ducting IS being installed for power hook-up and lighting, none of the cabling is now being installed – again, due to cost escalations estimated at ~£11,000. Not having power and lighting will again have a considerable impact on the functionality and utility of the space for events and markets.

I have petitioned the leader and chairman of the council to reconsider refusal of funds to undertake these design improvements and await their response.



The Town Council may wish to urgently consider whether contributing to the cost of installing electricity and lighting would be worthwhile in improving the utility of the space for community use and an extended markets offering. Or indeed, ensuring that the improved railing solution is delivered for the betterment of this public space.

Viaduct Housing Development

Works to open up the site have commenced along the Bromyard Road and at least two separate sets of traffic lights are managing traffic flow. I have received some complaints that the timing of the lights is not always set correctly and that this is causing frustration and long delays for drivers at peak travel times – and also some rat-running through Wellington Heath. I have reported these concerns on to officers liaising with the Bloor contractors on the scheme.

McCarthy & Stone Development of 'Masefield's Meadow'

Still no date has yet been set for the hearing of this application at committee. I have requested an update from the case officer concerning the applicant's failure to propose any affordable housing as part of the development.

S106 Projects

I continue to encourage the council to update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Ledbury and for councillors to attend the briefings provided on the implementation of S106 funded projects.

Funding for play equipment remains available from the Ellenscroft development on New Street, which would usefully improve facilities on the meadow at the end of the Town Trail on Oatley's Road. Funds for improved off-site play provision are also included in the S106 agreement for the Cricket Ground development, which would most appropriately improve the variety of facilities available on the Deer Park site/s.

Councillors can be assured that ward members continue to be appropriately engaged in discussions on the bringing forward infrastructure investment in healthcare facilities – via the 'One Public Estate' forum, and education provision through the refresh of the schools capital investment programme.

Consultations

There are no live consultations.

Changes to Planned Waste Collection Services

Notice of a decision yet to be taken regarding changes the minority Conservative administration are planning to make to the agreed new waste collection services has been published – but no detail is available yet as to exactly what these changes are likely to be. I fear there may be a withdrawal of support for weekly food waste collections – which would be disastrous and would significantly undermine the strategy to enable increased recycling and more separation of waste for collection. The decision is flagged to come to a cabinet meeting in early October ... watch this space.

County Council initiatives

There is now a minority Conservative-led administration in charge in Herefordshire. Still no monthly Leader's Report being provided, despite promises to do so. Talk Community and Talk Parish initiatives continue. I encourage councillors - and particularly committee chairs - to sign up for automatic alerts on issues of interest via the council's website:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHEREF/subscriber/new>

Councillor Liz Harvey

IOC & Independents for Herefordshire – Ledbury North Ward Member – 27 September 2023