

Report from Cllr Stef Simmons – Ward Councillor Ledbury South

1. Introductions and thank you

As your new ward Councillor for Ledbury South I would like to firstly thank my predecessor Helen I'Anson for all her work in the Ward and the wider area on vital issues such as Children's Services. I would also like to congratulate her on her appointment to Mayor and thank Cllr Howells for his service as her predecessor.

For those on LTC I have not yet met or who have not seen my campaign newsletters I have spent the last 20 years working in the UK and overseas in environmental planning for large residential and infrastructure projects. I have lived in Herefordshire for 16 years after many moves as a military spouse, and alongside my career I helped my husband set up a successful local training and leadership company when he left the army. I have volunteered with youth age groups at Ledbury rugby club for the last 6 years, spent 5 years supporting the elderly and isolated in rural communities as part of the Good Neighbour Scheme network, I am an active member of Sustainable Ledbury, and regularly undertake rural litter-picks.

My priorities for the coming 4 years will be to push for more services in the Ledbury, Eastnor and Donnington area with a focus on youth provision, improved transport connections and resurfacing of key local roads – and I'll continue to call on the Government to provide more funding for vital local health services.

2. Council Update

I formally commenced work as a councillor on 10th May and have spent the last few weeks in mandatory council training and in discussions with my colleagues trying to form a working administration after the electorate returned no overall control. On the 19th May at Full Council the Liberal Democrats declined to form a coalition with the other parties, leading to a minority Conservative administration. Councillor Lester was duly elected as Leader of the Council, Cllr Phillips was elected Chairperson. I was nominated and appointed Vice Chair. Chairs and Vice Chairs of the seven scrutiny committees were appointed on block vote with seats on the scrutiny committees allocated proportionally by political grouping. I have been appointed to the Planning Committee given my background in environmental planning.

Mandatory training will continue for another few weeks, timetables for committees are being published and I am being notified of upcoming civic and local events I may be asked as Vice Chair to deputise at for the Chair.

3. Ward Activities

In addition to attendance at this evening's Town Council I attend Eastnor and Donnington's Parish Council meeting on Tuesday. Over the coming two weeks I also have meetings arranged with Andy Evans, Head of John Masefield School; Tony Hodder (LYAS/LEAF) to discuss youth service provision; and AgeUK reference Men's Shed opportunity in Ledbury. I am also intending to arrange a meeting with the Head's of Eastnor and Ledbury Primary Schools, TBC. I have also spoken to a representative of Ledbury and Colwall Community Station Partnership with regard to their aim to improve rail and bus services in the area. I am also conducting casework for residents who have contacted me regarding issues or concerns they have.

4. Contact Arrangements

Ledbury South ward residents can contact me via stef.simmons@herefordshire.gov.uk or on 07854437451. I will be commencing a monthly surgery at Ledbury rugby club to coincide with Community Rounders (Thursday 6-7:30pm by appointment). I recognise this may be difficult for some residents to get to so I will be continuing to knock on doors across the ward or people are free to contact me if they would like me to come to meet them about an issue.