

## Your Conservative led district council continue to invest in Kidderminster town centre

### Plan to regenerate redundant brown field sites

The Conservative led District Council are considering options for the re-development of brown field sites within the town centre. We are looking at re-development options for the former Glades leisure centre site and part of the Bromsgrove Street car park.

Marcus says, "I would like to see residential development on this site. We need to revitalise our town centre and create urban living. We are also looking at options for the redundant land in Market Street and the former Crown House site."

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Conservative led district council have opposed the new proposed standard methodology (the formula) that allocates housing figures to each area.

The Labour Government's proposals would see Wyre Forest's annual dwellings per annum rise from 276 to a staggering 617. Marcus says, "This is totally unacceptable and would see further green belt land having to be

used as there simply will not be enough brownfield land. We totally oppose unnecessary release of further green belt land."

The Cabinet have sent a formal response back to Government and they proposed a notice of motion at full council opposing the proposals in the NPPF.

### Town Centre Connectivity Project update

Cllr. Dan Morehead is pictured with Council leader Cllr. Marcus Hart in Bromsgrove Street to meet the contractors on the next phase of WFDC's connectivity project.

The contract for the build of the urban park has now been agreed and McPhillips (Wellington) Limited are on site. The project is due to be completed by Spring 2025.

This is an important link from the top end of Bromsgrove Street to the town centre.

It is part of the Conservative District Council's plan to regenerate the town centre.



The urban park is an important part of the connectivity project for regeneration projects and developments



## Update from Mark Garnier Member of Parliament for Wyre Forest

Now the new Labour government has settled

down, we can see what they are proposing to do and how they will govern. And their first policy proposal? To take away benefits from all but the poorest of pensioners - those in receipt of pension credit.\*

**Winter fuel allowance has been a lifesaver – literally – to many pensioners.** But in an extraordinary move, Labour Chancellor Rachel Reeves has taken this benefit away from hundreds of thousands of financially stretched pensioners. In another move, **the new Labour government is exploring removing the single occupancy discount on council tax.** An 80 year old widow/er will lose not just their £300 winter fuel allowance, but will see their council tax bill increase by 33%.

This is a taste of what is to come. At the end of October, Labour will present their first budget. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer is warning that it will be tough. Pensioners have been hit; single people already under attack; even many military personnel trying to do the best for their kids will be hit with a 20% hike in the cost of their kid's education. If that is just a sample of what is to come, its going to be a lot grimmer than anyone expected when we all voted just three months ago.

\*It is estimated that 1,431 pensioners in Wyre Forest who are eligible are not claiming Pension Credit (source: Policy in Practice).

If you or a family member needs assistance with a Pension Credit application, assistance is available at Citizens Advice, Age UK or contact my office.

Get in touch!

County Cllr Marcus Hart

@ spennellsconservatives@yahoo.com

07537169169

@cllrmarcushart

wyreforestconservatives.com

Mark Garnier MP

mark.garnier.mp@parliament.uk

01562 746771

@markrtgarnier

markgarnier.co.uk

Spennells

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# MATTERS

Update from your local Chaddesley Division Conservative team



Promoted by Caroline Garnier on behalf of WFCA, both at 28 Bewdley Road North, Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 8PS. Printed by Paragon CC, Unit 2B Forward Park, Bagot Street, Birmingham, B4 7BA

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## Marcus delivers on his promise to residents to have roads resurfaced



Marcus is delighted that he has been able to deliver on his promise to get the issue of the phatting up addressed by having all 53 turning heads that were originally surface dressed on the estate resurfaced with normal tarmac.

Marcus says, "Residents have consistently raised their concerns regarding the surface dressing as it "phatts up" in the warm weather exposing tar which can be trodden into homes and this has been overwhelmingly the number one issue residents have asked me to tackle, since being elected."

The reason why the turning heads have been done are because in the overwhelming majority of cases this is where the majority of the turning

manoeuvres take place and thus the "phatting up" is worse.

There are one or two other dead ends that Marcus has asked WCC highways to consider for resurfacing as part of a next phase. Marcus did successfully make the case for Turnstone Road to be done as this is heavily used by people parking their cars and walking their dogs over the fields.

Marcus will lobby for any defects as a result of the resurfacing work to be put right over the coming months. Some mess and minor scuffing is inevitable and Marcus has been advised by the engineers that the scuffs will fade and the new tarmac blend in with the existing road in time.

## New VAS signs with solar panels

Marcus is delighted that he has had two new VAS speed signs installed on Spennells.

Speeding on the estate is an issue that residents constantly raise. Marcus has funded solar panels from his divisional funding which means there is no down time for battery changes and they can be permanently deployed on the estate. Speed enforcement is undertaken by the Police.



Solar powered speed signs have been installed to combat speeding on the estate

## Himalayan Balsam - Local residents will have seen this invasive species growing on the nature reserve

**Himalayan Balsam is an invasive non native species and is listed under the provisions made within Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to plant or cause Himalayan balsam to grow in the wild.**

It is vital not to take action to cause the spread of the plant into the wild but a landowner has no legal obligation to control in most circumstances. Himalayan Balsam is a national problem and has spread to dominate a large proportion of UK waterways and wetlands.

It is difficult to remove or control Himalayan Balsam, as the plant produces copious amounts of long lasting seed that can be regularly replenished for upstream seed sources. WFDC does manage the plant on Spennells.

**Spennells Valley LNR has been grazed by cattle since 1999 to assist with the control of Himalayan Balsam and is currently grazed as four separate grazing cells. Four to six cattle are**

**timed to arrive when the Himalayan balsam is coming into flower, the point at which it is less likely to re-shoot and produce extra growth from the base. This timing and relatively small number of animals allows the majority of our native flowering plants to complete their life cycle unhindered. Annual grazing of these areas has meant that Himalayan Balsam density is reduced to scattered plants and a few fragmented patches during the important marshland/wet woodland flowering period.**

The herd visit each parcel on a cycle, arriving at the first one in mid June. They eat the Himalayan Balsam out of preference over any other plants, so their time spent in each parcel of land can be quite brief (generally two weeks). Once the balsam is consumed, they move on, this again reduces any potential impact upon our native flora.

This year an additional fence line was added to separate the marsh (with some balsam) from the open meadow habitat



Himalayan Balsam is managed and contained locally by grazing cattle - a recognised good practice procedure

around the pools. This allows WFDC to specifically target the area that is affected by Balsam while not trampling the flower rich meadow that requires a later graze.

Grazing is by far the preferred option as manually hitting/cutting is extremely time consuming and can often result in the plant reshooting from any cut material left in contact with the floor. Alternatively, it would need to be pulled up and hung to prevent it re-rooting.

Access with machinery is often impossible due to the marshy nature of the land or steep streamside banks, there is also a risk of machinery transporting viable nodes around the district.

The area around the pools is targeted last as this does not suffer with Balsam, the grazing here is to reduce the dead vegetation in readiness for next year's growing season.

WFDC are looking at ways to hopefully fund one (ideally two) extra grazing cells next financial year to target an additional zone of priority habitat.

Spennells Valley grazing was cut short this year due to antisocial behaviour. Most of the Himalayan Balsam areas were visited, but the area of marsh adjacent to the pools needed a little longer and the meadow has not been done. The cattle will be back in October once the nights have started to draw in to target the meadow.

## Changing Rooms Demolished

Marcus is delighted that the changing rooms have been demolished, funded by WFDC.

Marcus says, "These were a redundant eyesore." WFDC are working with the local Scout Group regarding a land allocation on largely the footprint of the former changing rooms for a new Scout HQ with wider community use.



The demolition of the changing rooms will bring new opportunities for a Scout HQ

## Local updates in brief

### Dropped Kerbs

Marcus has had numerous requests for more dropped kerbs across the Spennells Estate. These have to be funded out of Marcus' devolved funding which is fully allocated in 24-25. Marcus plans to look at these in 25-26 in strategic locations.

### Overhanging Trees Heronswood Road

Marcus has reported overhanging trees, between Captains Pool Road and Sandmartin Drive, to WCC highways to request that they are pruned to ensure they do not obstruct the pavement.

### Linnet Rise Road Surface

Marcus has asked WCC to inspect this road to ensure all defects are rectified. Marcus has seen recently that there are a number of potholes that need attention.