

# Staffordshire County Councillor David Williams' Report

## Presented to the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 Full Council Meeting

- The County Council and its partners continue to work hard to ensure everything is in place to welcome refugees from Ukraine across Staffordshire and to support them when they are here.
- With the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, refugees are continuing to arrive in the UK. The Minister for Refugees, Lord Harrington has this week announced that the Government is asking hosts to consider extending the stay of their Ukrainian guests.
- As of 28 June 2022, there were **334 Staffordshire sponsors** who had come forward and agreed to accommodate a total of **862 Ukrainian refugees**. Of this number, **513 have now arrived in Staffordshire**.
  
- Covid 19 testing is still taking place as is immunisations around the County supported by SCC and I am sure members will agree that the programme as a whole with the roll out and the great work by volunteers including SCC staff proved to be a great piece of work for all our communities, in fact the volunteer group here in Penkridge set up by Cllrs Mr and Mrs Adams, which is still going strong was a beacon and an example to all.
  
- I am hoping to bring an "Road to Employment" jobs fayre to the village in September partnering with AMEY to take place in the Monkton Centre. This will involve several agencies who will help those looking for work, or seeking other employment to produce up to date C's and learn important interview techniques. We will also be involving the local schools to offer a School oriented approach to enable students to identify their preferences in employment and suggest ways of getting there. I helped organise a trial fayre at the new Codsall Business hub which saw several people offered employment on the day and others who are going on to modern apprentices.
  
- The current utility works on Lower Drayton Lane are to relocate an existing water main which clashes with the proposed works. There is also a medium pressure gas main at the junction and a small feed that runs down Lower Drayton Lane which needs to be moved to facilitate the new road works. The developer is currently in discussions with Cadent gas to confirm a start date for the gas diversion.
  
- In terms of the road works they cannot start until the affected utilities are moved. There is a provisional road space booking in for the 5 September 2022 to commence the highway improvements, working with the nominated contractor to phase the works and traffic management. Once the start date is confirmed the relevant communications will be issued to local residents and businesses.
  
- I have been working with district colleagues and Housing associations to assist residents with housing issues and these have been successful in our efforts along with the assistance of Housing Plus.
  
- Haling Road defects reported by my officers at the beginning of the year on the regular site visits carried out with myself were scheduled for repair on 31/05/2022 for 30/06/2022. Further works are planned and we hope to tie these in with proposed plans for water works with South Staffordshire Water. The works and the plans will be forwarded to the parish an out via social media shortly.
  
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- The recent utility works on Lower Drayton Lane were to relocate an existing water main which clashes with the proposed works. There is also a medium pressure gas main at the junction and a small feed that runs down Lower Drayton Lane which needed to be moved to facilitate the new road works. Therefore the road works cannot start until the affected utilities are moved. There is a provisional road space booking in for the 5 September 2022 to commence the highway improvements, working with the nominated contractor to phase the works and traffic management. Once the start date is confirmed the relevant communications will be issued to local residents and businesses. The main works for Lower Drayton Farm have been sent out to tender by the developer who are currently waiting for this process to be completed. Once this has been carried out they will then put forward the preferred contractor so that we can assess the suitability of the tender. As this is the developers process it is difficult to say a start date. It is likely to start later this year with the works taking approximately 6 weeks to complete.
- The traffic order and signs on Boscomoor Road have been completed following collaboration and help from Cllr Kelly. Funding from my DHP, the Parish and Persimmons allowed for the final road in the village to be 30mph.
- The pathway work along Wolgarston Way has been completed.
- Cherrybrook works continue and having been made aware of damage by utility vehicles we are looking to address this with the company to affect a repair whilst on site.
- Penkridge and Huntington are receiving works paid for with my DHP to address cat 3 potholes on Filance Lane, Haling Road and the surrounding area along with several roads in my ward utilising the Road master velocity patching machine where this vehicle can repair some Cat 3 non main road defects. Filance Lane currently has 12 reported Cat 3 defects and with the time allotted with my financial contribution should be able to address and repair these and the ones on Haling Road. Should the parish want more of these type of repairs by financially contributing this could be arranged to address Cat 3 defects further around the parish. The cost is around £1500 per day and should the parish wish to look into this I can liaise to sort this out.
- Following works carried out by my officers on my request Pottal Pool Road will this financial year receive pre-patching work with a new surface dressing scheduled for the next financial year.
- The reflective bollard and new white lines have been replaced on the A449 outside the Chip Shop layby following a site visit with the Chair and several members of the parish with myself where the work was agreed on safety concerns.
- The bollards outside TFM have been fitted with monies from TFM following Cllr Kelly's very helpful liaison and my DHP. These were requested by Cllr Isabel Ford who I wish to pay tribute to following her recent passing, she will be missed.
- Finally I have promised much of my DHP to aid my parish's with their ambitions. As such Acton Trussell are receiving sharks teeth and speed roundels at the entrances to their village where, following assistance they are installing Sis's at their expense with licenses from SCC.

- **As Cabinet member for Highways and Transport:**

- Since taking on the role of cabinet member for Highways and Transport I have assessed the methods and contractual obligations and decided that changes are required therefore Staffordshire Highways is currently going through a full transformation programme.
- As such the local teams are being re-organised into Community Highways teams and highways works will be agreed with local County Councillors who can liaise directly with parish and Districts to identify priorities and look for mutually agreed and cooperative working plans, after all I suggest we all become Councillors to ensure our residents receive the best services possible with the finances we have available.
- We are carrying out a pilot scheme in South Staffordshire DC and Cannock BC to enable their street Scene teams to address identified overgrown hedges belonging to SCC, pathways and cycle ways and clearing more detritus from roads with an extra £50,000ea of funding this year. If successful this will be considered for roll out across the County.
- I would therefore like the Council to consider that as Staffordshire has one of the lowest Council Tax precepts in the Country, funding has reduced by £8.7 million this year and for the next 3 concurrent years, and inflationary costs have risen around 40% on materials and services has meant that dealing with priority based highway issues is more important now than ever, and as such I would ask Councillors to consider what their realistic expectations are regarding Highways works in and around the village and when the Highways meeting next convenes, they look to prioritise their ambitions around works required, continue to report defects and consider utilising some of the Parish funding provided by residents in the precept to help address some of these issues working with SSDC and SCC in Partnership.