

WIGMORE GROUP PC WARD COUNCILLOR REPORT FEB 2026

I am really sorry that I was unable to attend your last meeting.

Barry and I were delighted to attend, Wigmore, Elton and Pipe Aston Carol Concerts which were well attended. As Wigmore Church is now part of the diocese which includes Aymestrey there were a number of Aymestrey residents present. In total Barry and I attended 8 Carol Concerts.

As a result of a query from another parish I can now provide you with as much information as possible about the new Public Realm contract.

Services transferred to the council will include the following functions:

- Asset Management Team
- Network Management
- Locality Stewards (incl Highway Inspections)
- Design / Project Management / Quantity Surveying
- Customer Services (enquiries and complaints)
- Communications
- Fleet management
- Health & Safety

An initial assessment has identified that in the region of 60 roles will transfer to the council for the functions listed.

We were asked by officers to provide a list of the roads in our ward which were in the worst condition and they will be inspected as soon as possible and will be considered for work performed outside of the new contractor framework. This is similar to the work carried out by Tarmac during this finance year. I have received lists from all 5 of my PCs which is great but I have made it clear that this does not necessarily mean that some if any of the roads identified will be included as there is a finite pot of money.

We are at present consulting on our draft revenue and capital budgets and proposed Directorate savings to Cabinet and Scrutiny for comments. The final budgets and savings will go to Full Council on Friday 13th February.

The proposed draft revenue budget is £234.1 m for 26/27 which includes a 4.99% Council Tax increase, 2% ring fenced for Adult Social Care which on a Band D property is an increase of £8.19 per month. The government "Fairer Funding Scheme" which in Herefordshire is an UNFAIR scheme has been calculated to the best of our knowledge as showing a gap of £17.3 million by 28/29 not including the Rural Sparsity grant which was lost when the Labour Govt set the first Local Authority Settlement. Ultimately we are one of the lowest funded authorities per head of population of anywhere in the country. The final figure will be confirmed in February.

In order to deal with the funding gap and increased demand savings across all Directorates' amounting to about £20 m are also proposed. You will however be pleased to know that the lengthsman scheme, drainage and PROW grants will still be available for the coming year and we have also allocated £50,000 for little picking on A roads.

As I reported last year our Chief Executive is leaving and it was envisaged that this would be at the end of May. Our Employment Panel interviewed a number of candidates last week and none were seen to be suitable and therefore we are going out to advert again. This may delay the present Chief Executive's departure.