

## Ercall Magna Annual Parish Meeting - 15 Apr 25

### Chairman's Report 2024 - 2025

1. I opened last year's report by saying that it had been another busy year for your parish council, with some successes but also frustration at the lack of progress with some projects. This remains true today, as I will come on to in a minute. But before that, a reminder that residents are always welcome to attend parish council meetings, which are held monthly (less August) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month. Agendas and minutes of council meetings are published on the Parish Council's website: <https://ercallmagnaparishcouncil.gov.uk>
2. Last summer we noted with great sadness the death of Cllr Graham Barrow following a period of illness. As well as being a devoted family man, Graham was a hard-working and much respected friend and colleague. It is testament to his standing in the community that his funeral in July was so well attended by family and friends.
3. In September, we welcomed Cllr Roger Higgins, who brings a wealth of experience in customer facing industries and the fire & rescue service to EMPC. Roger lives in High Ercall and is a member of the High Ercall Ward of the parish council.
4. The 2 topics that seem to most affect residents, and take up a great deal of council attention, remain planning and highways, so I'll address these next.

#### Planning

5. The long running saga of the unlawfully built barn near the Mill bend outside High Ercall came to a positive conclusion when the owner's latest appeal to the planning inspector was refused last autumn. Subsequent enforcement action by T&WC has resulted in the structure starting to be taken down.
6. In October, parish councillors participated in an appeal hearing against the refusal, by T&WC, to grant planning permission to build houses on the site known as Piddock's Paddock off Park Lane in High Ercall. This was the second such planning application; albeit for a reduced number of self-build houses. EMPC strongly supported T&WC's refusal and we were very pleased when the planning inspector agreed and rejected the appeal.
7. Decisions don't always go the way we, or residents, would like and in December T&WC granted planning permission for a poultry unit at Grange Farm in Ellerdine. This application had taken about a year to process due to concerns raised, particularly about the potential for environmental impact. Although we were successful in getting the application considered by the Planning Committee, where we could make representation in person, Committee Members were satisfied that all concerns had been addressed and so granted consent.
8. It is now about a year and a half since the planning inspector again refused permission to convert the Cleveland Arms into a residential unit, confirming that the building should retain its status as a community social facility. Our attempts to support prospective buyers by arranging an up-to-date valuation of the property have been unsuccessful. A recent communication from the building's owners asked to parish council to make proposals for the site. This is the owner's responsibility, not the Parish Council's; although we have assured the owners that we would engage in any community consultation exercise when they have a proposal to put forward.

## Highways

9. The first phase of re-surfacing of the Shrewsbury Road in High Ercall was successfully completed last summer. In order to minimise disruption, the highways authority decided to carry out the work in 2 phases, each during the school summer holiday period. Phase 2, which will address the section of Shrewsbury Road from the Phase 1 boundary to Shirlowe Lane, will take place this summer and should include an improved pedestrian crossing between Park Lane and Church Road. We have asked the highways authority for details of the scheme and the start and finish dates for the work.

10. It is beyond frustrating that there has been no tangible progress with the road improvements scheme for the B5062 through Roden. EMPC has given support, with minor caveats, to the proposals, which have been consulted on again with Roden residents. Although some pavement resurfacing has been carried out, the majority of the work has yet to be started and we will continue to apply pressure on T&WC.

## T&WC

11. These delays are symptomatic of the problems facing T&WC. In addition to the funding pressures experienced across local government, a number of key staff have left T&WC without being replaced. Remaining staff have an increased workload and may not be fully read-in to all projects. This results in excessive delays and sometimes having to repeat work. EMPC will continue to work with T&WC to deliver results for our residents. For issues such as potholes or fly-tipping, the best and fastest way to get resolution is to report the problem via the My Telford app, which can be downloaded to a mobile device or accessed through the T&WC website.

## Community Governance Review & Local Plan Review

12. Finally, there are 2 important reviews in progress that will potentially affect all residents.

13. The first is a community governance review (CGR), which is looking at Town and Parish Council arrangements to make sure they best represent local communities. The first phase of public consultation (which EMPC contributed to) has just closed. T&WC will now draft a set of proposals, which will be consulted on between 19 May and 14 July when you will have the chance to comment.

14. The T&W Local Plan, which aims to guide development across the borough until 2040, ensuring the right balance of housing, jobs, green space, and infrastructure to support sustainable communities, is also being reviewed. The draft Plan is subject to public consultation until 5 May and residents are strongly encouraged to have their say. Both the Local Plan and the CGR can be found through the T&WC website.