

Questions from Mr R Steeds, Bringsty Worcestershire.

1. SCHOOL CLOSURES

On March 7th the Council were asked to give schools servicing a substantial geographic area a degree of protection when considering which schools to close. Bromyard Queen Elizabeth Humanities College covers roughly 200 sq miles of Herefordshire whereas each Hereford City School covers 25 sq miles or so.

The Council's negative reply only served to sharpen the "Sword of Damocles" which the Council has uniquely hung over the Q.E. The reply also appears to be at odds with the Chief Executive's views as quoted on page 39 of the March edition of Herefordshire Life ... "The reality is that we are going to find solutions that do not involve school closure".

Prospective Bromyard school parents and current teachers need to know which policy the Council are following? This cannot wait until 2011 As determined people will seek the best long term outcome for themselves and their families and will seek to avoid uncertainty.

As it seems geographic considerations and current educational performance are not to be criteria for school assessment in the matter then it is reasonable to ask the Council to list the criteria they will consider?

2. THE GOVERNANCE OF BROMYARD DOWNS

There has been concern over the management of Bromyard Downs for nearly thirty years. The problems became public in March 1990 when Justice John Lee in the High Court found against the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Parish Council (and by inference against the Parish and District Council).

The District Council paid the legal bills and attempted to control the situation by imposing a Deed of Delegation which the Chairman of the Parish signed on May 22nd 1991. Unfortunately neither the general public nor it seems Herefordshire District Council were ever properly informed of the Deed's contents.

The District and Parish Councils' mishandling of the Crow Act signs in July 2004 brought the 1951 scheme; the 1991 Deed and its Right of Appeal to light. Thus it became apparent that both the scheme and the Right of Appeal were being ignored.

The District Council no doubt wishing to prevent personal embarrassment mishandled the subsequent appeal; ignored the procedure laid down by Malvern Hills District Council and thus perpetuated the mismanagement.

In May 2006 Mr C Grover a former Cabinet Member addressed the issue by writing to the Chief Executive and proposed simple changes to the Commons

Management Committee with the full backing of Bromyard Town Council and many others.

In December 2006 the Cabinet responded with an action plan involving proper consultation to be completed by April 2007. Nothing happened.

- 2.1 When can we expect a response?
- 2.2 Why has the District Council involved Legal Counsel? Surely this cost is not justified and if needed should be AFTER consultation NOT BEFORE.
- 2.3. Is the District Council aware that the Commons Management Committee, to whom it has been formally delegated financial responsibility, spent just £49 on the Common in the year 2006/07?
- 2.4 How much did Herefordshire District Council spend on the Bromyard Downs Common “physically and administratively” in 2006/07?
- 2.5 Why did Herefordshire Council spend anything?
- 2.6 Are the Commons Management Committee’s accounts properly audited and incorporated into the Parish Council’s accounts? If not, why not? Have the District Council ever inspected the accounts?
- 2.7 Is the District Council aware that the events leading up to the High Court case are even now being repeated? This seems a deliberate contempt of Court for which the District Council will surely be blamed.
- 2.8 Is the District Council happy that the man who caused and lost the legal case is still in the Chair?

3. LINTON TILE WORKS

Thank you for answering my questions of 7 March 2008.

- 3.1 Why does the Council say it has no right to repair the access road? Surely it has a duty to see the road is repaired. No good will come by threatening the existing owners with the law. Surely the Council should seek their cooperation and pay most if not all the costs? Has there been any joint meeting of all the parties with an interest in the road?
- 3.2 When can we expect to see the road improved?
- 3.3 As the road is so poor would the Council allow 4x4’s and trailers to use the site “domestically”?