

Chairman of Council report – Council Meeting **9 February 2024**



Lady Darnley with the scroll of her Freedom of the County.

Thank you to those elected members and partners who attended the reception in December to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Herefordshire Council. It was an opportunity to mix with some of our voluntary, community and business leaders in the county and reflect on some of the events and achievements during our existence.

We took the opportunity to acknowledge the four councillors who have been elected to all eight administrations of the council since 1998.

In December 2020 the Council awarded the former Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire Lady Darnley the freedom of the County. Partly due to covid the presentation was never carried out and the reception was the perfect occasion to make the presentation.

She was her late Majesty's representative in the county and carried out duties on her behalf for 13 years, supporting the local armed forces and blue light services, encouraging community and voluntary groups and promoting the success of local business.



As Chair of the Rural Services Network I met with the Local Government Minister Simon Hoare MP on 16th January to lobby on behalf of rural services. We have produced evidenced based material to support the extra costs and pressures of delivering services over a large geographical area and I was confident our message was falling on fertile territory.

The Rural Services Delivery Grant received a 15% increase to £110 million and our own county has an increase of £945K on top of the initial grant announced in December. While welcoming this increase we will still be working to ensure that rural pressures are properly recognised in any reforms of local government finance formula.

I have attended many events over the Christmas period, including a special carol service at Leominster which was approved by the HRH Princess of Wales as part of her Royal Foundation Together at Christmas celebrations. Over 400 pupils from Leominster, Stoke Prior, Kimbolton, Ivington, Luston and Westfields primaries together with Earl Mortimer College took part in the celebration at the Minster Church with a capacity congregation.

Cllr Roger Phillips