

## **Replies from Independent councillors on Shropshire Council**

### **Councillor Madge Shineton**

Dear Mr Whitelegg, my apologies for my delay. As an Independent Councillor I have always believed in working together with the public, service providers, and local councils and will continue to do so for this wide ranging public service which is vital for both urban and especially rural areas in our County. Our group members will be participating in public meetings and briefings as they are arranged.

Regards

Madge Shineton

Independent Councillor, Cleobury Mortimer Division

### **Councillor Pauline Dee**

The Independent Group have always believed in working together with the public, service providers and local Councils. We will continue to do so for this wide ranging public service which is vital for both urban and especially those who live in the rural areas in our County.

Our members will be participating in public meetings and briefings.

Since deregulation of the bus service it has been a hard job to achieve sufficient finance to provide what the public want and deserve.

Unquote

Kind regards

Pauline

Pauline A DEE

Shropshire Councillor for Wem Urban, Wem Rural and Whixall

### **Councillor Dave Tremellin**

*County Councillor's Report*

Given the dire straits that Shropshire Council finds itself in with regard to central government revenue support funding it's inevitable that "cuts" have to be made with competing priorities leading to controversial decisions, one of which has been the reduction in (and in some cases the complete removal of) funding for public transport, whether in the form of direct funding for 'community buses' or the subsidies paid to commercial operators to maintain commercial routes.

It's a contentious issue, particularly when it comes to support for post-16 transport of students wanting to pursue further education in whatever form it takes and whatever the desired outcome.

We're lucky in Highley because we have the 125 service bus running from Bridgnorth to Stourbridge at hourly intervals, but if you want to travel by bus to the cinema in the evening then hard luck, because the service ends at 6.30. And getting to the FE or Sixth-Form College of your choice will break most banks!

A few years back I was contacted by the parents of one young local chap who had been warned by his Kidderminster employer that if he was late again he'd get the sack. A plea citing the late running of the 125 didn't cut it and when it happened again he parted company with said boss. That's one of those situations "that happens" and it is in no one's gift to do anything about.

And then there's the climate change argument, where proponents of radical change insist that "going electric" will sort it. Hmm, depends on the "it", if that electric-powered bus is running late then the "it" will still happen. Which explains the attraction of the internal combustion engine.

Right, so what merit is there in the alternative view that given the will and a bit of logical thinking we can have a public transport system that "works"? Well, that's a question I'm giving you the opportunity to ask of Professor John Whitelegg, the author of a 2018 report for the 'Foundation for Integrated Transport' (FfIT) addressing the specific subject of 'Shropshire Rural Buses'. It's an interesting read.

Very briefly, in an exchange of emails, John had been insisting that Shropshire Council and its Members had "got it wrong" and I challenged him on that, making the point that as the elected Local Member for Highley my concern had to be about more prosaic matters than realizing the ideal world that he envisaged if only Shropshire Council pulled its finger out. Quite apart from his ideal being damned expensive for a council strapped for cash, the rurality of Highley and the dependency of its population on a highways infrastructure that enabled commuting to work and getting to whichever college offered the courses needed for the post-16s to complete their education sort of took priority.

Which is when John sent me his FfIT report and I decided to invite John down here to the Severn Centre, Main Hall, on the 24<sup>th</sup> October at a public meeting I've called for 6.30 pm.

I've also invited either Steve Davenport, portfolio holder for transport and/or his deputy Simon Harris, to put Shropshire Council's side of things. To date I haven't heard back from Steve or Simon, so if they do decide to put their case after this article has gone to press then it will have to be made known in the promotions nearer to the date. But anyway I look forward to seeing YOU there.

*Dave Tremellen*

17<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

No reply was received from Councillor Turley, independent councillor for Shifnal North

No reply was received from Councillor Ioan Jones, independent councillor for Harlescott

No reply was received from Councillor Clare Aspinall (Brexit Party), Oswestry East