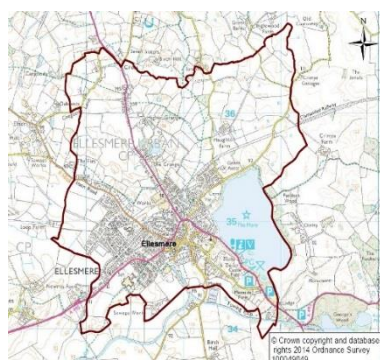




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Shropshire Council's 'Big Conversation'

Shropshire Council's Big Conversation was launched on 17 November 2015.

The Big Conversation survey is the first phase of a five-year conversation the Council wants to have with Shropshire people to ask them what Council services are most important to them, and what they can do to help and make the remaining resources it has go further.

This is the Council's biggest conversation to date, and it comes in light of continuous Government cuts which, in five years' time, will leave only one quarter of the current funding that pays for over 150 services. This is a reduction of 75% from the £100m the Council currently spends on these services, and means it will have to stop delivering some services.

By 2020/21 the Government's £44m revenue support grant – money that is paid to Councils each year to help provide services – will end. By the time this grant ends, it is estimated that we will be a further £77m worse off, due to the combination of inflationary increases in costs, particularly in adult social care, and further cuts in Government grants.

Shropshire Council's forecast budget for 2020/21, recently published in its Financial Strategy, is estimated to be £188m. £163m (87%) of the budget will be allocated to core services such as adult services, children's services, safeguarding, domestic waste disposal, concessionary travel and school transport.

This will leave just £25m (13% of the overall budget) of money to spend on the remaining 150 plus services Shropshire Council currently provides. This is a reduction of 75% from the £100m the Council currently spends on these services.

The Big Conversation has been set up to ask residents, businesses and organisations how the Council can bridge a £77m funding gap over the course of the next five years.

They are looking for all views on the services which people value and those they don't and also to identify services that groups or organisations within communities may consider running themselves.

The survey, which will run until Monday 4 January 2016, will be followed by further consultations with local people, partners, community organisations and businesses across Shropshire in 2016.

See the attached supplement to 'Members Briefing' for more information and details of how to participate.

Traffic Speed Concerns

Concerns have been expressed by Elson Road residents to the Clerk and Town Mayor regarding the amount of cars speeding and overtaking on this road particularly outside the school.

The Clerk has notified the Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team (SNT) of this problem. Currently PC Paul Crump and Special Constable Ben Jones have been the only two able to use the speed gun. CSO Tracey Walker has recently completed her speed gun training so Ellesmere now have three members of the local policing team able to monitor speed. The area covered by the SNT is Ellesmere Town, Ellesmere Rural, Dudleston Heath, Baschurch, Cockshutt, Ruyton X1 Towns, Welshampton and Lyneal and so are stretched.

This briefing will also be sent to all the local schools, businesses, local transport companies for them to highlight this problem to all their employees and drivers in an effort to slow drivers down.

Ellesmere Town Council will be looking into developing a 'Community Speed Watch' for the Town, with the local policing team.

Other local Parish Councils are also looking into developing their own 'Community Speed Watch' arrangements to deal with their own speeding issues it may be possible to develop these on a Local Joint Committee (LJC) area basis.

Ellesmere Christmas Winter Festival

The Town Mayor, Cllr Ian Ward, was honoured to be invited to switch on the Tree of Light this year at the Christmas Winter Festival evening on 27th November.

The evening was enjoyed by a large number of local families and visitors. A highly successful programme of events and entertainments were organised thanks to funding and support from Ellesmere Chamber of Trade and Commerce, Ellesmere Carnival Committee and Fizzgigs. Ellesmere Rotary Club and the local Police ensured that the town centre road closures were effectively supervised. Our thanks and appreciation to everyone involved.

Council Drop-In Session – Thursday, 19th November, 2015

The key concern raised from a local resident was a problem about speeding on Grange Road.

The Policing Team and Shropshire Council Highways have been informed.

Also see the article on 'Traffic Speed Concerns' in this Briefing.

Canals and River Trust Annual Showcase Event

The Mayor, Cllr Ian Ward, Deputy Mayor, Cllr John Frost and Cllr Stacy Thornton attended the Canals and River Trust Annual Showcase at Lion Quays on 6th November. The event included interesting talks by the Chief Executive and others about the work of the Trust and exhibitions by various community and voluntary groups involved in the canals of North Wales and the Borders. An afternoon workshop on planning provided an opportunity to remind the Trust of the proposed developments by the canal in Ellesmere.

New Christmas Lights

A new 3 year Christmas Lighting Scheme has been organised and funded by Ellesmere Town Council, supported by a donation from Ellesmere Rotary Club, with new street festoons and new LED lights for the Tree of Lights.

New LED lights have also been placed in trees outside the Town Hall as part of this new scheme to create a seasonal welcome for those travelling to and through the town and it has been pleasing that many positive comments received.

A huge thank you to ETC Sawmills for very kindly donating the town tree and to Ellesmere Rotary Club who year after year help to organise the tree of lights, raising money for local charities. This year the main charity to benefit will be the Severn Hospice.

Events at which the Town Council and Town were Represented in the Past Month

Date	Event	Represented by
6 Nov	North Wales and Borders Canal & River Trust Annual Showcase	Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor & Cllr S Thornton
6 Nov	Ellesmere RBL Poppy Concert	Town Mayor
8 Nov	Remembrance Sunday Parade & Service	All Councillors
11 Nov	Remembrance Day Ceremony, Town Centre	All Councillors
12 Nov	Ellesmere Library Workshop with Locality	Town Mayor, Cllr S Thornton & Town Clerk
12 Nov	Ellesmere Girl Guides Duke of Edinburgh Awards Presentations	Town Mayor
14 Nov	Farmers' Market, Ellesmere Market Hall	Town Mayor
18 Nov	Little Poppets Nursery 2 nd Birthday	Town Mayor
18 Nov	Annual District Leaders Awards Evening (Scouts)	Town Mayor
19 Nov	Town Council Public Drop-in Session	All Councillors
21 Nov	Ellesmere Community Care Coffee Morning	Town Mayor
27 Nov	Ellesmere Winter/Christmas Festival	Town Mayor
28 Nov	Ellesmere Methodist Coffee Morning	Town Mayor
1 Dec	Book Launch and Signing for 'Mere History' by Christopher Jobson, for Friends of Ellesmere Library and Mere News, Ellesmere Library	Town Mayor
1 Dec	Christmas Foodbank Launch, Tesco	Town Mayor
3 Dec	Age Concern Coffee Morning	Town Mayor
4 Dec	Ellesmere Community Nursing Home Coffee Morning	Town Mayor
5 Dec	Parish Church of St Mary Coffee Morning	Town Mayor

Diary Events for December 2015 (at the time of publication)

Date	Event	Represented by
11 Dec	Mere Melodies Christmas Concert	Town Mayor
14 Dec	Christmas Window Competition	Town Mayor
15 Dec	Ellesmere Youth Group Christmas Party	Town Mayor
16 Dec	Ellesmere Guides Christmas Event	Town Mayor
17 Dec	Age Concern Ellesmere Afternoon Tea	Town Mayor
18 Dec	Swan Mere Day Centre Christmas Afternoon Tea	Town Mayor
23 Dec	Little Poppets Nursery Christmas Event	Town Mayor

Complaints about Dogs Fouling Increases

The number of complaints about dog fouling and the exercising of dogs on areas used for sporting activities has recently increased.

Owners are reminded that it is their responsibility to clean up after their dogs and dispose of the waste responsibly. Dog owners are required by law to clean up after their dog; failure to do so can result in a fixed penalty notice being issued or possible prosecution.

Disposal containers are provided throughout the Town in areas where dogs may be exercised. If there is any area not adequately covered by the bins, please inform the Town Clerk.

The exercising of dogs on any areas where sports are played (e.g. Cricket Field or Football Pitches) is not only forbidden, but fouling of these areas may pose a serious health risk for those using the areas for sporting or recreational use.

Further information can be obtained from Shropshire Council or via its website at <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/environmental-maintenance-and-enforcement/street-care-and-cleansing/dog-fouling-problem/>

Planning Appeals and Repeat Applications

The Town Council has written to the Government complaining about the number of Planning Appeals and re-applications for sites which are not preferred sites within Shropshire Council's SAMDev (which should receive final approval by the Council later this month) by property developers that seem to have unlimited resources to commit to frustrate the will of the local community.

The constant battle which seems to have to be fought to try to prevent development on sites rejected through extensive public consultation and which in some cases threaten the areas adjacent to the Mere has caused a great deal of public anger and frustration.

Within the letter it is stated that; *"Ellesmere Town Council feel that the Government should show greater support to local communities by creating a framework where re-applications and multiple planning applications by private companies with significant resources should be deterred."*

Small Town and Parish Councils have very limited resources with which to defend their local communities from applications by housing developers that have seemingly unlimited financial resources with which to pursue undesirable applications for their own financial benefit. We do not feel that there is a "level playing field" under the current limitations of the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012."



The purpose of 'Council Briefing':

- Keeping Councillors informed
- Informing the community of the work of the Council
- Enabling Councillors to exchange and share information
- Putting positive communication at the heart of the Council

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