

Hinxworth Parish Meeting – 4th April 2019

County Councillor's Report

Firstly, I must apologise for not being able to be present at the parish meeting this evening. Since I represent 16 parishes there are often conflicts between parish meetings and that is the case this evening. If possible, I try to find a way to attend both meetings when this happens but this evening the timing and the location of the meetings means that is just not possible.

The biggest call on the County Council's budget of around £800 million continues to be provision of social care to very elderly and seriously disabled people across Hertfordshire. This consumes around half of the total budget with another £200 million spent on services for vulnerable children and those with very special educational needs. These services are largely invisible to most residents (unless they know somebody in need of them) but are vital to those who receive them.

The inevitable result of this is that the money available for other services such as highways which are visible to all of us is more limited than we would like.

After much pressure the County Council has agreed to provide additional money to repair some of the more minor roads which otherwise never got to the top of the list for repairs. In addition, this winter the government provided some "one off" money to repair more roads on the condition that the work was done before the end of March. This is not an ideal arrangement since many works need to be planned months ahead and there are some jobs which can only really be done in good weather.

The result of these two changes is the repair of New Inn Road and the planned repair of the High Street and Frances Road, which is to be done during the current financial year. Assuming that the works are done well (which is usually but not always the case) this should put most of Hinxworth's roads in good order for a few years. There will still be a need to improve the state of parts of the road between Hinxworth and Ashwell, but I hope we can make some progress on this before too long.

I'm pleased to hear the speed indicator device, which was paid for partly from my highways budget and partly by the Parish Council, appears to be having some effect on traffic speeds. Generally, these devices seem to make most drivers slow down, although a small minority are immune to these and most other ways of reducing speeds.

The County Council is reviewing its speed management strategy and in particular its policies relating to 20 mph limits. I hope that this will make it easier to introduce such limits in more villages where this is appropriate.

Like all other County Councillors, I have a budget that is available for grants to local organisations. I try to ensure that this is used for new initiatives rather than running costs, but the only rules are that the grant must be for an organisation with a bank account and only those who ask get any grants. I am always very pleased to hear from local organisations with plans that would be assisted by a grant of a few hundred pounds.

I am also always happy to try to deal with any local issues which people raise. I can be contacted by email at steve.jarvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk, via my website at www.stevejarvis.org.uk or by phoning 01438 727122.

Steve Jarvis
County Councillor