

The Gazette view



Funding worries

ALMOST every council in the country is currently considering, or has already decided to increase Council Tax. Despite huge cuts to budgets in previous years, which have already been put into practice, there will still not be enough to fund the demands made on councils. This is largely due to the ever increasing costs of social care, for both adults and children.

Everyone wants to think that they, their parents and grandparents, will be looked after, or supported in old age, with dignity and care. However, this is very expensive and as people live longer the costs are increasing.

And Council Tax is not the only increase many people face, businesses are concerned about an increase in their tax too. Then plans to change the way the Health Service is organised, due to financial pressures, is adding to the stress many people feel.

We are all aware of the demands on a diminishing pot of money and have to hope that those with the power to make decisions make the best possible use of the money they have.

Jo Scrivin, Editor

CAB funding

LAST week the *Ross Gazette* reported that the CAB service at Ross Library is being well used and has helped several local residents. Ross Town Council provided the funding to bring an outreach of Hereford CAB to Ross. To clarify the funding situation, the Town Council awarded the CAB

New coins will cost Councils

THE new 12-sided £1 coin is being introduced on March 28th and the round coin will no longer be used. All one pound coins need to be spent or returned to your bank before October 15th.

The introduction of the new pound coin is an historic event as it is the most secure coin in the world. However, introducing a new coin is not without



other costs.

The pay and display coin machines situated in car parks in Ross-on-Wye will all need to be adapted. A Herefordshire Council spokesperson told the *Ross Gazette*: "It costs £95 to upgrade a pay and display machine. In Ross there are 12 pay and display machines, of which nine will need to be upgraded at a total cost of £855."

New bollards for Skate Park

MEMBERS of Ross Town Council agreed to spend up to £1,000 to install bollards at the Skate Park in Wilton Road.

Councillor David Ravenscroft explained that there had been a lot of trouble at the Skate Park recently. The new bollards will include removable ones for service vehicles.

The Councillors were unanimous in their agreement to the expenditure which they discussed at their meeting on Monday, February 13th.



NFU critical of Council's handling of decision to sell smallholdings

HEREFORDSHIRE Council has been accused, by the NFU, of failing its tenant farmers by selling off its entire smallholding estate, despite a recommendation that part of it should be retained.

Herefordshire NFU levelled criticism at the council after the union successfully fought to make further details of a Fisher German report public. The report was commissioned by the Council in 2014 to inform its review of its smallholdings policy.

The Information Commissioner's Office, ICO,

and many tenants are still facing uncertain futures."

NFU Deputy President Minette Batters said: "Seeing this report provides those tenant farmers in Herefordshire with vindication in terms of their view of the importance of the county farm estate; but its cold comfort as it's too late to reverse the Council's heart-breaking and short-sighted decision.

Dairy farmer Graham Clay, out-going NFU regional tenants' group chairman, said: "The council's tenants have lived through nearly three years

Last chance to choose Ross 'Green Spaces'

THE Ross Neighbourhood Plan 'Green Spaces' consultation is reaching its closing date, and residents only have until Friday, February 24th to make further suggestions.

Following the recent *Ross Gazette* articles there has been an excellent response by residents to the consultation on Local Green Spaces. However, a number of residents have asked if there are current development plans for these sites; to which the answer is 'not that we know of' – but that designation in the Neighbourhood Plan would ensure that none would take place at least until after 2031.

Residents living adjacent to the following sites proposed for designation have received questionnaires about existing open spaces that have been proposed for designation as 'Open Green Spaces': Redhill Road/Hawthorne Lane, Cleeve Orchard, Duxmere Drive, Roman Way/Archenfield Road, Redwood Close, Falaise Close, Fernbank Road (paddock), Merrivale Lane (paddock), Mayhill Road, Bluebell/Primrose Close and Greytree Road. Responses to the consultation on these Local Green Spaces need to be submitted by March 3rd 2017.

Additional suggestions for sites are welcome until Friday, February 24th, 2017; they need to be for small areas that could be built upon, but which are important to a local community, and that are special or distinctive in terms of (any, or all of) beauty, wildlife, history, recreation or tranquillity. To get them designated in the demanding planning process is tough, so demonstrable local support is essential.

To suggest, support or oppose a possible Local Green Space please either collect a form from Ross Town Council, Corn Exchange, 7 High Street, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5HL (completed forms can also be returned there), request a form by email to chair@rossneighbourhoodplan.org.uk, message on Facebook @RoWNdP, or complete the questionnaire at the Plan's Consulting You