



Ludlow Focus

Special Edition

Local Services in Crisis

1 LUDLOW'S NEW HOSPITAL Future of project in doubt

Budget shortfall is more than £1 million a year. Project may be cancelled. Emergency meeting 21 August.

THREATENED

2 TOWN BUS SERVICES Services halved

Four services reduced to two. Longer, less frequent journeys. Park and Ride bus every 30-50 minutes.

SLASHED

3 CODER ROAD RECYCLING Closure decision due

2,000 signature petition ignored. Decision on closure next month. Craven Arms will be nearest tip.

SCRAPPED?

4 RURAL BUSES Service cancelled

Rural Link service ends 5 October. No immediate replacement. Any future service much reduced.

TERMINATED

5 SUNDAY PARK & RIDE BUS Promises abandoned

Hope of Sunday bus service abandoned. Plans to fund buses from parking charges disappear without trace.

ABANDONED

6 OPEN DEMOCRACY Doors closed on decisions

Many Shropshire Council decisions no longer made in public committee. Public & press barred from meetings.

HIDDEN

1 THREATENED Ludlow's New Hospital

The new hospital project is in crisis. It should be well underway by now. At first we were told that the delays were simply due to changes to the way that the NHS is run. Now we know that there is an annual funding shortfall of more than a million pounds a year.

Building due to start at £27m hospital site

Tracey Huffer, councillor for Ludlow East is very concerned:

"There are so many unknowns at the moment. Is it possible to build a smaller scheme than planned at present? If a new hospital is not built at all, what will happen to the existing hospital? Will it be upgraded or will it be sold off for housing as originally planned? Our GPs surgeries need better buildings and facilities. Will they still move to the Eco Park if the new hospital is not built?"

"Community hospitals and health centres are vital in supporting the acute hospitals. We need more support in the community to give people the care they need at home rather than them travelling to Shrewsbury or Telford. Prevention is better than cure and that means localised delivery."

As a member of Shropshire Council's health scrutiny committee, Tracey is well placed to help get the right health provision for Ludlow: "I'm very concerned that Ludlow may end up without the health care provision it needs and patients will have to travel to Shrewsbury or Telford for treatment. I'm working hard ensure that the people of Ludlow and surrounding areas do not lose out."

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has called an **extraordinary Board meeting** to discuss the funding crisis. It is inviting local residents and patients to attend. The meeting begins at 9am, 21 August at Ludlow Racecourse. Further information from the CCG at bit.ly/llhdhosp or 01743 277500.



Councillor Tracey Huffer

2 SLASHED Town Bus Services

From the beginning of September, Ludlow will get new bus services. Far from the promised improvements, they will be a lot worse.

The bus services will be cut by half, from four routes to two.

Many journeys will take longer. The last bus from town will be earlier. Sheet village will no longer be served. Buses to and from the Park and Ride will run every 30 to 50 minutes, not every 15 minutes as at present.



Andy Boddington

Andy Boddington is a regular bus user. "These changes will disadvantage local people and tourists alike. With fewer buses taking longer, people will be discouraged from coming into town. The

new timetable will kill off the park and ride service. Shrewsbury has had its Sunday services reinstated but all we get in Ludlow is second class treatment."

3 SCRAPPED? Coder Road Recycling

Shropshire Council is to announce whether the Coder Road recycling centre is to be closed.

Ludlow resident Amanda Pope has raised a petition of more than 2,000 signatures against the closure, but Shropshire Council seems not to be listening. A decision will be made by a councillor from Oswestry behind closed doors in the next few weeks.

If Coder Road is shut, it is inevitable that that local recycling rates will plummet and fly tipping will soar.



Councillor Vivienne Parry

Vivienne Parry, councillor for Ludlow South is very concerned: "This will be a major disaster for the town. How many people will trail all the way over to Craven Arms to use the tip there? We will have dumping and fly-tipping everywhere and it will cost a fortune to clear up."

4 TERMINATED Rural Bus Services

Shropshire Council has axed the county's award winning rural bus service without any plans for a replacement. Hundreds of people in rural villages will be stripped of a vital service that takes them into market towns like Ludlow, giving them access to shops and medical services.

The Link bus service will cease on 5 October. Shropshire Council says that it is hoping to provide a limited "safety net" service but is unable to provide any details.

Roger Evans, Lib Dem leader at Shropshire Council said: "I'm sorry to say that the Conservatives leading the council have decided that rural transport is no longer a priority for them. But it is a priority for the thousands of people who rely on public transport for the basic necessities of life. The real problem here is not shortage of funds but mismanagement of the money we have."

5 ABANDONED Sunday Park & Ride

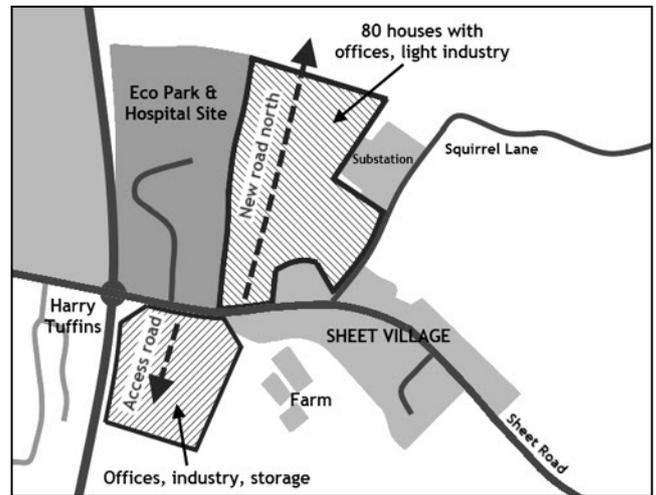
Extended service to be funded by new parking charges
Sunday is added to town Park and Ride

Barely four months ago, Conservative councillors pledged a Sunday park and ride service paid for by Ludlow's controversial car parking charges. That promise has been quietly dropped. Shropshire Council continues to rake in nearly £600,000 from parking charges and fines from Ludlow every year. But we will not get our Sunday buses.

6 HIDDEN Open Democracy

Shropshire Council is making many of its decisions behind closed doors. It has torn up the democratic rule book and passed power to councillors who deliberate and decide in secret. The public and press are excluded and there is no debate. The Liberal Democrats believe an open transparent council is the best model to deliver effective services and guarantee the best use of council taxpayers' money.

New Plans for Ludlow



Shropshire Council is again consulting on where to put housing and employment land around Ludlow. It wants to find room for an extra 125 houses by 2026, over and above those it proposed in a consultation last year.

Eighty of these houses will go between the Eco Park and Sheet village. The original plan was for this site to be used as an extension for the Eco Park. Now it will be mixed use with housing built alongside offices or light industrial units. A road through the site will open up land to the north of Eco Park for thousands of houses in the longer term.

Another new proposal is for an industrial area south of the Eco Park, alongside the A49. This could host offices or industry, but seems likely to be destined for large warehouses.

The council's consultation closes on 24 August. Full details online at bit.ly/ludlowsam or ring 0345 678 9004.

Ludlow Traveller

It's good news that Shropshire Council is to introduce a dial-a-ride service from 25 August. The service will use a 14-seater minibus and a wheelchair-accessible people carrier. Users will pay a £12 annual membership fee and £1 a journey for adults and 50p for children.

Local Lib Dem Contacts

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August 31. Youth Festival. Wheeler Road from 2.30. Loads of activities for a fun afternoon.

MEP hails veto on Tory plan to go soft on criminals

Shropshire's MEP Phil Bennion has welcomed news that the Liberal Democrats have vetoed Conservative plans to opt out of key EU crime-fighting measures.

Under the Lisbon Treaty, the UK can leave a series of cross-border EU crime-fighting measures and must make a decision on whether to opt out or in by next year.

After prolonged negotiations in the coalition, Home Secretary Theresa May has announced that the UK government will opt back in to European Arrest Warrant and all key crime fighting measures deemed vital by the Association of Chief Police Officers.



Phil Bennion MEP commented: "This is a victory for British police and courts over Conservatives who wanted to put blind anti-EU prejudice ahead of catching criminals."

"Perhaps trying to head off UKIP, the Tories wanted to withdraw from various crime-fighting measures which police

chiefs and crime experts have repeatedly warned are vital for our security."

"The Lib Dems are determined not to let 'little England' ideology be put ahead of public safety, so our ministers dug their heels in. We have ensured that the UK will remain part of crucial measures such as the European Arrest Warrant, which has led to literally thousands of criminals being captured - including murderers, people traffickers, paedophiles and terrorists."

Conman seized from Spanish villa

The European Arrest Warrant has ensured a number of high profile criminals from our region face justice. Shropshire conman David Oakley was seized by police in Spain and brought back to serve a four year jail term for 12 offences fraud which netted him £100,000.

Concern as Tories swing the axe

County and regional Lib Dem Euro MP Phil Bennion discussed the chaos and cuts being imposed by Shropshire Council when he met Ludlow councillor Tracey Huffer recently at the Burwarton Show. Phil said: "I am very concerned to hear the crude cuts being made to vital services by Shropshire's Tory leaders without proper consultation. Savings are needed but the best way to find them is to consult widely and agree a plan to deliver the most important services efficiently."



Phil Bennion MEP and Tracey Huffer at Burwarton Show

MEP aiming for EU backing for Rural Apprenticeships

Lib Dem MEP Phil Bennion says the EU should support Rural Apprenticeships to train people for careers in farming, land management or rural crafts.

The Common Agricultural Policy is to be reformed to improve value for money, promote sustainable farming and stimulate the rural economy. Dr Phil Bennion, Lib Dem Employment Spokesman and a farmer, said:

"Recent talks on a new CAP include welcome flexibility on how to encourage farmers to be greener, though some Socialist MEPs are trying to bring back price support of foodstuffs, which I oppose. I am pushing for EU funding to help train people in farming techniques, landscape management and fast disappearing rural crafts. The council-backed pilot scheme at Acton Scott shows what can be achieved. The Lib Dems are rightly pushing apprenticeships and job-creating measures at all levels of government."