



County Councillor Report July 2025 – Sharon Ritchie-Simmons

Presented to Highley Parish Council

Date: Tuesday, 6th August 2025

Division: Highley – Shropshire Council

Summary of Activity – July 2025

Although there is no Parish Council meeting in August, I wanted to ensure residents and colleagues stay informed of my work this past month. This report reflects my continued efforts across infrastructure, public services, and council governance on behalf of Highley.

Highways

In July, I worked closely with Shropshire Council's Highways team to schedule essential pothole repairs across Highley. I met with the lead officer for South Shropshire Highways to review priorities and discuss upcoming repairs scheduled for the week of 28th July. Recruitment is currently underway for a dedicated technician for our area, which should further improve service delivery. Residents are encouraged to log issues directly at [FixMyStreet.com](https://www.fixmystreet.com), which is the main reporting tool used by the Highways team.

I also had a further meeting with the lead officer and the Chair and Clerk of Highley Parish Council to discuss their priorities. Locations were selected based on resident reports, FixMyStreet submissions, and additional input kindly provided by the Parish Clerk. The streets prioritised include Vicarage Lane, Hazelwells Road, Hollywood Drive, Titterstone Road, Redstone Drive, Coronation Street, Willow Drive, Church Street, Clee View, Main Road, Bridgnorth Road (by the shops), Silverdale Terrace, and Beech Street. Further defects were also identified on Netherton Lane and New England Lane.

To help manage residents expectations, I shared a post explaining the two types of pothole repair currently being used. Permanent 'cut-out and reinstatement' repairs involve removing the damaged section and laying new tarmac in layers, while quicker 'infill' repairs (sometimes called the 'cow pat' method) allow crews to address large volumes of defects quickly. Both methods are essential for keeping roads safe and functional. Some works will not be undertaken during this focus day as they require more substantial repairs such as New Road and Hazelwells Road.

Transport

I've continued trying to resolve issues with the Diamond Bus timetable, particularly to ensure that Shrewsbury College students can reliably transfer to the Bridgnorth–Shrewsbury route. This is proving more time-consuming than anticipated as I work to establish better lines of communication with Diamond Bus, which is operated by the Rotala Group as the contact provided by Shropshire Council has been unresponsive.

Sewage Infrastructure and Odour Issues

I've carried out multiple site visits this month in response to long-running concerns from residents about sewage odours around Kinlet View, Netherton Lane, and the wider area. The shaft tank and wet wells have now been cleaned, and a hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) monitor has been installed to track emissions over time. Severn Trent has committed to a regular cleansing schedule and is now treating the issue as a high priority at executive level following my continued pressure.

During my inspection at the Netherton Lane pumping station, I personally lifted and checked several wet well manholes and the pump chamber. Both were found to be clean and free of odour, but I did detect a smell at the catchment grill—this will now be jet washed.



I also inspected the top reservoir and discovered a strong odour due to a compromised manhole seal. This issue has been logged for repair. Severn Trent are scheduled to return on Thursday, 24th July to carry out a full cleanse of the sewer pipes running from the school to the top of Netherton Lane, clean the drains in front of Kinlet View, and reseal the manhole. Some temporary odours may be noticed during the work, but this is an important step toward a long-term solution.

Council Scrutiny and Governance

On 10th July, I attended the first meeting of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This committee oversees vital areas including highways infrastructure, economic growth, environmental policy, climate response, flooding, housing, and community safety. I also took time to publicly explain the various scrutiny committees at Shropshire Council to help residents understand how decisions are made and where accountability sits.

At Full Council on 17th July, I voted against increasing the budget for the Ludlow biochar pyrolysis plant from £2 million to £3.3 million. The project poses financial risks, relies on a single buyer, and will burn imported wood pellets rather than local green waste. All Reform UK councillors present opposed the proposal.

Training and Development

This month I completed Safeguarding Adults training—a vital reminder that protecting vulnerable people is everyone's responsibility. One of the most powerful moments came during a video called "Because You Said Something," which reinforced how small actions can make a big difference. The link to the video is available on my facebook page.

Respectful Communication

I will always support open, honest discussion and scrutiny—it's an essential part of public service. However, I've had to delete a small number of comments from my Facebook page due to unacceptable tone. While I welcome debate, I believe we all have a duty to keep our dialogue respectful—particularly those of us in public roles.

Looking Ahead

In the weeks ahead, I will continue to monitor road repair progress, work with Severn Trent on odour resolution, push for improvements in school transport arrangements, and keep residents informed via my X (Twitter) channel: <https://x.com/CllrforHighley>, Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Clr.Sharon.Ritchie.Simmons> and website: <https://www.cllrsharonritchiesimmons.co.uk/>

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