

Cllr Barbara Williams Rural Champion report for 2019/20

Meetings and events

I had a meeting with the AONB, Cllr Stuart Camella from Martley Parish Council and MHDC's Portfolio Holder for the Environment in July 2019 to discuss the proposals regarding extending the AONB further north in our district, and what impact if any it might have on our farming community, This is likely to take some years and will of course require a great deal of public consultation, with Natural England responsible for looking at this.

I also had a meeting with Amanda Smith (Community Services Manager) and Community First in September. We talked about the Rural Economy Select Committee, which the Government has set up.

Promoting the work of local organisations

At full council several months ago, when we declared a climate emergency, I stressed that we should consult and work with the National Farmer's Union and they have been invited to join our partner workshops on the matter and I believe are an important partner going forward.

As we are a predominantly rural district, farming is one of our biggest economies, also farmers are the custodians of our countryside. They are a hard working sector of the community providing much needed food for the table and local produce, we must therefore secure their future and generations to come.

In the current crisis, we have seen some wonderful acts of kindness in our rural communities. MHDC has started to capture some of these examples through our Good Neighbour Network at www.malvern hills.gov.uk/community/malvern-hills-good-neighbour-network

What I hope to achieve in the next 12 months

Moving forward, from a community safety perspective, I will continue to support the Council to work closely with police and other key partners to tackle exploitation in the agricultural sector.

Domestic abuse also continues to be a hidden issue which is more acute in rural communities, which is why we will continue to work with partners to support voluntary organisations that are supporting victims of domestic abuse via various outreach methods.

Flytipping continues to be problematic for rural communities and particularly our farming communities. The Council has seen a surge in reports since lockdown. I want to support the Council to work with farmers to protect their land/property from future fly tipping as well as promote the SCRAP code.

Cllr Barbara Williams

