



## Protecting Consumers from Rogue Builders

**Recently, Mark brought a private members' bill to protect future victims of rogue builders. For too long, home owners have been ripped off by dishonest and unqualified builders.**

The only recourse for victims is contract law. However, it is hugely expensive to take advantage of this route, and rogue builders simply close their business and start again, ripping off a new set of victims.

Mark's proposals, worked up with the Federation of Master Builders, to license all builders in the domestic arena means rogue builders will lose their license if they abuse consumers. **Without a license, they don't have a livelihood and there are no more victims. This restores the balance of power in favour of unprotected consumers.**



## Local Plan Update

The adoption of the Wyre Forest Local Plan was passed by the District Council, despite Paul and John voting against it, along with their Conservative colleagues. *"The effect of this was to remove all the Local Plan sites from the green belt, including the four sites in Wribbenhall and Arley Ward (Stourport Road, Kidderminster Road, Habberley Road and Low Habberley)"*, reports Paul, as the Local Plan was using inflated housing number requirements.

Local residents were kept updated with the process, and this will continue. It remains the opinion of your Conservative District Councillors that our greenbelt should be protected as much as possible, and no unnecessary development should take place on it.

## Bewdley Museum In Limbo



John and Paul were pleased when the District Council's Localism' agenda eventually resulted in Borough House, the public toilets, and Riverside North Park being transferred by it to Bewdley Town Council.

But Paul and John are both unhappy that the prospective new Trustees

of the Bewdley Museum have resigned en bloc, with no obvious reaction from the District Council.

*"This leaves the future of the Museum up in the air"*, says John, *"with no indication from the District Council if the promised transfer of the freehold of the Guildhall and The Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Gardens to Bewdley Town Council will now take place."* Paul added, *"It also leaves a big question mark over the Museum's future funding."*

## Benches for Blackstone Picnic Area

Several months ago the two Picnic Benches within the Blackstone Car Park were found to be in poor condition and were therefore removed. Subsequent residents' requests for replacements were presented to County Councillor Ian Hardiman who enquired with County Highways whether replacements could be provided;



Picnic Benches will be replaced at Blackstone, paid for via Cllr Hardiman's divisional funding

however Highways' response was that they would only oblige provided Ian would utilise his Divisional Highways' Fund to cover this. Ian did not hesitate agreement to this, as the absence of picnic benches in a picnic area would be unreasonable.

An order has been placed and delivery is awaited.





# Supporting our Towns

Kidderminster - Bewdley - Stourport

**Kidderminster** Mark Garnier has been working with Wyre Forest District Council to **secure government investment in to Kidderminster Town Centre. With two successful bids to the Levelling Up Fund and the Town Centre Fund, Kidderminster will see:**

- The old Crown House site developed into a 21st century amenity
- The Town Hall upgraded to a first class community arts hub
- The Piano Building repurposed for the town
- The Old Magistrates Court redeveloped into a state of the art workplace
- The canal tow-path upgraded
- Derelict buildings cleared to open up the town centre

“These projects,” says Mark, “**will make Kidderminster fit for the 21st Century and make it an attractive town to live, work and play in.** This is all brilliant news for Worcestershire’s second biggest community.”



The Old Magistrates Courts to be redeveloped - funded by the Government’s Levelling Up Fund

**Bewdley** The brilliant flood defences put in nearly twenty years ago have proved to be just the job when the River Severn floods. But only for the west bank. In recent years, the temporary defences put up to protect Beales Corner have failed, with misery for local residents and the paralysing of the town’s economy.

No more. **After bringing Prime Minister Boris Johnson to the town in early 2021, Mark and Boris promised to “Get Bewdley Done”. True to their word, £6.2 million has been pledged to develop a combination of demountable and permanent flood defences.**

The plans are being worked up and should be **completed by early 2024. After years of suffering, the town will finally be properly defended from flooding.**

**Stourport** **Stourport has seen a lot of investment into its canal basins, making it an attractive town to visit.** But occasionally plans go astray - when Wyre Forest District Council proposed a purpose built homeless shelter on the old Lloyds Garage site in Bridge Street, Mark intervened.

“*Helping the homeless is one of the most important things we can do as a society. But we need to make sure they have access to welfare support, education and training, and health provision. Stourport is not the best place in Wyre Forest to help those who need it, and I am pleased the council agreed.*”

**Meanwhile, Mark continues to work with community groups to secure funding for local projects, to lift the town and bring in more visitors.**



## Maypole Close

**John was recently contacted by a resident of Maypole Close who is concerned by thoughtless parking. Vehicles are being parked on the pavement and restricting access to a fire hydrant. Worcestershire County Council have looked at the problem in the past and decided to take no action, so John has referred the matter to the police.**

## Update from John Campion West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner Visible in our Communities



**Police Officer numbers have increased by a further 400 since 2016 and will increase by another 125 this year.**

PCC John Campion said “I am proud that police officer numbers will have risen to record levels under my tenure as PCC. Working with the Conservative

Government we have delivered our promises to recruit additional police officers. **My pledge to make sure communities in Wyre Forest and across West Mercia receive maximum benefit as a result.** That means seeing a police officer more often in our community, crime coming down further, victim satisfaction improving and confidence in policing rising.”

# Your Local Highway Updates

## Catchems End Zebra Crossing Tactile Studs

County Cllr Ian Hardiman has again raised the issue of absent Disability Tactiles at this crossing and whilst he has been assured that stud-type Tactile pins (which can be inserted into the pavement tarmac) have been delivered to the Highways Depot, the necessary works have still not been actioned. Ian has expressed his disappointment to the Highways Engineer asking him to resolve this long outstanding issue.

## Yellow Lines Requested for Kidderminster Road near to Spencer Avenue

Residents have drawn attention to the safety hazard being caused when vehicles are parked adjacent to the Spencer Avenue entrance/exit. Ian has therefore asked Highways Officers to investigate whether the introduction of Double Yellow Lines at this location will resolve the issue.

## Illegal Verge Parking

Illegal Parking on the Verge by the Pelican Crossing near to the Junction of Grey Green Lane and Kidderminster Road has frequently been reported to the police who have at intervals addressed the problem but unfortunately the practice continues. Therefore, Ian has found agreement with County Highways to resolve the issue by installing wooden bollards at this location to prevent vehicular access.

## Habberley Road Speed Enforcement

The County Highways Engineer has confirmed that speed analysis data shows that speeding is occurring here and that accordingly, Bewdley Town Council can rightly ask the Police or Safer Roads Partnership to carry out Enforcement here on a regular basis. (Whilst Highways can carry out speed analysis, they cannot carry out actual enforcement.)

## Slippery Road Surface, approach to Trimpley Crossroads

In response to local horse riding residents’ concerns regarding horses finding difficulty using this road as it has developed a Glassy/ Slippery surface, Ian requested inspection by Highways Officers who have now agreed that improvements will be carried out to rectify this as soon as possible.

## Habberley Road Pavement Overgrowth

This pavement continues to easily become overgrown causing severe narrowing of the pavement along this road making it difficult to negotiate, especially by infirm persons.

Ian invited the Highways Engineer to see this unacceptable situation and he agreed to programme Siding-Out by the relevant Team in order to restore the full width of pavement for usage.

# Mark Garnier Takes Unwanted Quarrying To

## Westminster

The communities of Cookley and Wolverley have faced uncertainty over proposed quarrying between their two villages. This 106 acre site would be within 1km of 5 schools.

**The county council rejected the planning application, but Mark is working with cross party MPs to get the Government to change the law on acceptable levels**

**of dust in the air. Right now, UK laws allow levels of dust not acceptable in close contact with communities in other countries.**

Mark pays tribute to the Stop the Quarry Campaign. “The team in Wolverley and Cookley have done a brilliant job lobbying councillors to block these proposals. But an appeal by the applicant may reverse common sense. That is why I am working with cross party colleagues in Parliament to present a solid argument that the UK must keep up with international standards. **If we are successful, this will not just protect our local communities; it will protect all communities in the UK.**”

# Cost of Living Crisis

## WHY IS INFLATION RISING

Rising prices are a serious issue – especially when they rise the fastest in a generation.

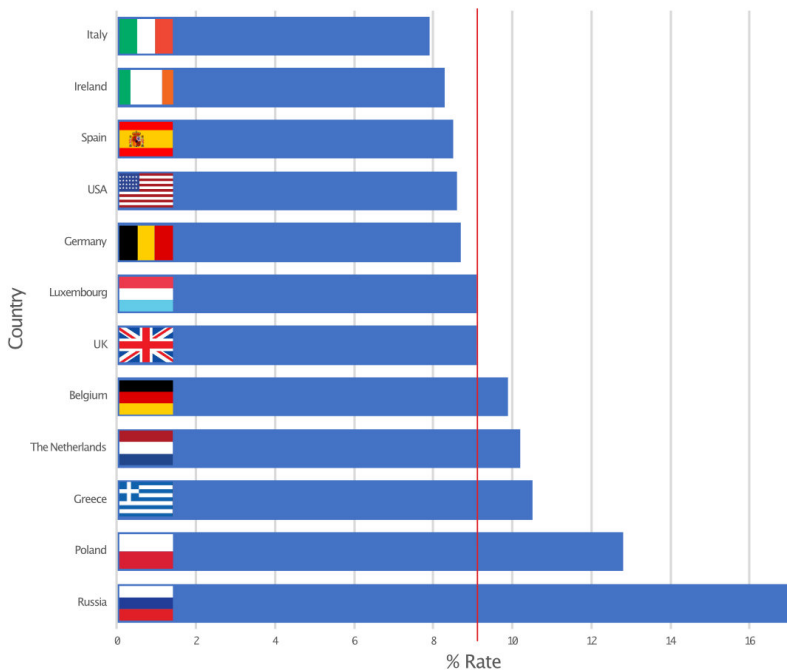
**The two biggest cost rises to families are heating and eating. The UK's official independent statistician – The Office of National Statistics – tells us that these rises are a direct consequence of the war in Ukraine.**

When one of the world's biggest energy exporters illegally invades one of the world's biggest food exporters, we know we are in for a difficult time. Although the UK is one of the countries least reliant on Russian oil and gas, the global market for energy has been starved of supply as sanctions against Russia bite. With less global supply, but the same global demand, prices inevitably go up.

Meanwhile, Ukraine, struggling valiantly against the Russian invaders, has lost a third of its food production capability, leaving wheat growing severely restricted.

And with Covid lockdowns in China still having a knock on effect to global shipping patterns and international trade, prices across the board are rising.

**May 2022 Global Inflation Rates**



## More Help Announced for Cost of Living Crisis

Due to the war in Ukraine, world prices of oil and gas have soared.

This means unexpected profits for our oil and gas companies. Already subject to corporation tax, the Government wants energy companies to use this money wisely.

That is why we have asked them to invest into more energy production - both green and traditional - to ensure better energy security for the UK. If they don't - the Government will impose a short term levy to help fund these measures aimed at supporting households through the crisis.

**Pensioners Winter Fuel Payment an additional £300**

**Low income families £650 cost of living payment**

**Disability benefit recipients £150 cost of living payment**

**Household energy bill relief doubled to £400**

**Household Support Fund increased by a further £500m**

**Reduced Fuel Duty by 5p per litre**

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