

**Cllr Barbara Jones -Williams**  
**2023 Annual Parish report**

**I have represented Martley Ward** on Malvern Hills District Council for 28 years; I feel very privileged and proud to do so. Following the recent District Council elections, I am pleased to announce that I got re-elected for a further four years..

No overall party or group is currently in control of Malvern Hills District Council. The political balance now stands as:

- Liberal Democrats: 3
- Conservatives: 7
- Independents: 11
- Malvern Hills Independents: 3
- Green: 7

**I was elected as Vice Chairman** for Malvern Hills District Council 2022/23, so hopefully at next weeks AGM of Council I should be made Chairman for 2023/24, for the third time.

**Following the recent Ward Boundary** review plans, the number of Councillors has been reduced from 38 to 31, as part of the review for the district. The new wards will consist of 1, 2 and 3 member wards, my main concerns with the larger wards, such as 2 and 3 members are in my experience of being a ward member for 28 years, is that the close contact between the ward member, residents and parish councils are very important, we are however still a single member ward consisting of Martley, Kenswick and Wichenford, Broadwas and Cotheridge, Knightwick and Doddenham, I very much welcome the new parishes and are looking forward to working with all parish councils and residents alike.

I did however make a note whilst canvassing, comments and concerns of residents , particularly in the new extended part of my Ward.

**I have continued** to deal with every day issues within my ward, I hope to continue as Rural Champion.

**The end of the municipal year at Malvern** was also the end of the four year period, we will welcome the new council in at the AGM on Tuesday 23 May, I would however like to take this opportunity in thanking the retiring councillors and those who may have lost their seats for all the work they have done over the past four years.

**In the past year the SWDPR** timetable has slipped behind yet again, for the third year, with a far greater risk of speculative development in our villages due to a question surrounding the five-year land supply following a Planning Inspector's decision on the MHDC and Wyre Forest boarder at Arley, this means that developers will try to have developments agreed under the Nationals Policy Planning Framework (NPPF), rather than the local plan. The NPPF has a presumption in favour of development, and leaves rural locations exposed.

**A new grant has been launched** to help tourism businesses in the district grow and increase visitor numbers.

The Malvern Hills Tourism Grant Scheme is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The aim of the scheme is to help develop the local tourism industry within specific areas, as well as increasing visitor numbers and improving the visitor experience within the Malvern Hills District.

The scheme plans to support the Malvern Hills District tourism industry to grow over a two-year period, with the opportunity to:

- Encourage businesses to adopt greener practices
- Help with upkeep of local attractions
- Improve visitor experience
- Improve accessibility at attractions
- Encourage festival and event development in town centres

Eligible businesses can apply for a 50% match-funded grant. Grants include:

- Cultural/Heritage Attractions - up to £5,000
- Attractions – up to £2,500
- Sustainable Tourism – up to £2,500

· Festivals and Events - up to £1,000

**Our Ukrainian Liaison Officer** has recently been on an incredible journey in collaboration with Helping Hands, and the generous benefactors supporting.

As a result of their kind donations three generators were able to be purchased.

The generators were transported from London to Malvern and shipped to Ukraine.

These generators will go a long way to supporting both schools and the military in desperate times, for example during air raid sirens or power outages.

We have also continued to support Ukrainian refugees in our District.

**I have very much enjoyed** working with the parish councils and our County Councillor and look forward to continuing to do so.

Best Wishes,

Barbara