

## ***Letter from Councillor Russell B. Hamilton – February 2012***

**Public Health** - The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2011 was published last month.

The report highlighted the fact that the Government is making the biggest changes to the public health system in 40 years in response to Professor Sir Michael Marmot's review. The *Marmot Review: Healthy Lives, Healthy People* drew attention to the difference in not just life expectancy but importantly years of life in good health between people in the most deprived neighbourhoods and those living in the least deprived neighbourhoods in England.

People in Herefordshire live on average longer healthier lives than in many other parts of England, but this average statistic disguises the fact that people in Herefordshire do not all have an equal chance of a long healthy life. The key message in the Director of Public Health's report is the need to reduce these differences.

In tackling this it is known that a child's readiness for school at the age of 5 is strongly predictive of their future health and wellbeing, and the development for 5 year olds in Herefordshire is significantly below average for England.

Circulatory disease is the single largest cause of long-term ill health and disability in Herefordshire. The NHS Checks programme has the potential to reduce the social gradient in circulatory disease in Herefordshire.

The cost of falls-related admissions for older people in Herefordshire is substantial and could be reduced through strength and balance training, assessment of hazards in the home, assessment of vision and medication review.

### **Warm Homes Healthy People Fund - Get Warm Stay Warm Herefordshire**

You will recall that last month I mentioned the project to reduce the effects of cold weather on vulnerable people in Herefordshire. Although the funding for this is time limited - there is still time to get assistance. If you need help or know someone who does please telephone the Council's Get Warm Stay Warmer Administrator on 01432 260235 as soon as possible as this project will end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. This is an additional FREE service so please use it while you can.

### **Road Safety**

At long last work is underway to improve road safety and carry out repairs at a number of locations along the A49 including at Cross Collar and Harewood End. Whilst there will be night closures on the A49 during this time it is important to note that the Highways Agency have told me that access to homes and businesses will be available throughout. Anyone requiring access should stop and inform the workers patrolling the roadblocks. When given access take extra care, as there may be workers in the road. Please continue to support local businesses including your local pub throughout this time. All businesses are open as usual.

### **Litter and Fly tipping**

I know that litter and fly tipping are of great concern to many of us. The problem is not only frustrating because of its unsightliness and the enormous cost of picking it up but because the fact it is damaging to the image of Herefordshire.

I am keen to see what we can do by taking a concerted approach to tackling the issues and would welcome any ideas that you may have.

In the meantime you can report problems with litter by email to [streets@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:streets@herefordshire.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01432 261800. You can also report fly tipping to the Community Protection Team by email to [info@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:info@herefordshire.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01432 261761. In the event of fly tipping please record as many details as possible including date, time and location. Make a note of the description of any vehicle or perpetrator too as this can help the Community Protection Team to take enforcement action against the illegal disposal of waste. Let's have a concerted effort to tackle this anti social behaviour.

### **Herefordshire Council Budget**

A budget which includes extra funding to pay for services for older people and means council tax levels will remain frozen for the second year was approved by Herefordshire Council at the meeting of the council on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. It was agreed that the Council should take advantage of a one-off £2.16 million government grant offered to those authorities willing to freeze council tax in 2012/13.

The agreed budget includes an extra £1.4 million from central government be put into the adult services budget for the next financial year, which will be in addition to £2.2 million from the NHS to support care activity.

The budget also reflects the role economic regeneration can play in supporting Herefordshire's economy through a capital programme that includes funding for key infrastructure projects.

However the challenge arising from the government's deficit reduction programme means that all parts of the council will need to make a contribution to meeting the savings requirement. It is also clear that this will require an ongoing dialogue about the prioritisation of services if we are to ensure that we focus our attention on the things that are of greatest importance.

A final decision to freeze council tax at the current level will be taken when council meets in early March.

### **Herefordshire Diamond Day – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

Plans are progressing for Herefordshire's celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. You can find out more and keep in touch with progress by registering to receive updates at [www.herefordshirediamondday.co.uk](http://www.herefordshirediamondday.co.uk) or telephoning the organisers on 01432 261837. Please look out for events going on in your Parish.

### **Finally.....**

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any feedback on issues raised in my letter or if I can be of assistance. Let me have your email address if you would like to receive this message or a copy of my report to Parish Council's directly.

### **Councillor Russell B. Hamilton**

Email: [russellbhamilton@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:russellbhamilton@herefordshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01989 561054

Mobile: 07973 158668