

Email Received 1.2.25

Dear Councillors,

I am writing to you about several issues which I hope you might discuss at a future meeting.

Firstly I read that the developer who wants to build 100 houses on land on Lowe Hill has resubmitted for planning permission. Whilst I appreciate homes have to be built somewhere I think this is too many homes for this particular site due to the highway issues. I did write to you the first time this came before planning because of my concerns for traffic at this junction by the school and the flooding that happens regularly here. If planning permission is granted there should at the very least be some sort of plan for construction traffic as it's already busy enough at going to school and going home time with all the buses, cars and children on foot and adding in construction traffic to this mix could be a recipe for disaster. I would also ask you to consider if all the homes have enough off road parking allocated to them. We are told we all have to go "green" and drive electric vehicles but the government doesn't seem to be implementing planning to insist all new homes are built with charging points and somewhere to charge a car without cables coming across pavements to the road. It's hard enough navigating pavements, particularly for disabled people or those pushing a pram without having to negotiate charging cables as well. Too many new estates seem to be being built with houses straight on to the pavement and not enough parking provision.

I read a recent article on Market Drayton councillors having a blitz on the town and highlighting issues that need fixing and using the "Fix My Street" service which Shropshire council is supposed to action things from. My own experience of using this site has been that nothing you report on there is attended to. I have reported quite a few issues on there over the years it's been running and no-one appears to take any notice. So I wondered if Wem councillors might take a similar approach, you don't have to walk far in Wem to find many things that need attending to! Just on the estate I live on there are pot holes, blocked drains, dog fouling and overgrown trees. Just as an example I have reported trees on people's boundaries that have grown so far over the pavement it is now impossible for someone pushing a buggy, in a wheelchair or other walking aid or who is partially sighted to get by on the pavement and on bin day even those on 2 legs have to walk in the road.

This one is by 27 Marlcroft and angles out at the top so gets wider and makes it hard to walk past on the corner – there's also dog mess under it.



This is by 22 Somerset Way Shropshire council keeps telling people to walk more but do nothing to keep pavements walkable!



Last Monday I saw a road sweeper attempt to drive down Pym's road to clean it, unfortunately it chose to drive down there just as all the school children and associated traffic were going to school so there were too many parked and moving vehicles so it gave up and drove off in the direction of the station. I was hoping it might just go down some of the estate roads off Pym's road and come back to Pym's road once the rush was over but it didn't. So firstly could Shropshire Council be asked to consider the locality when organising road sweeping or maybe liaise with the local council who know the area better and not try to do it when it's busy in that locality and maybe the local council could advertise the fact sweeping is going to take place so people don't park in the way. Pym's Road really needs

sweeping, particularly at the Lowe Hill end of the road where it floods as it's very muddy and the drain is currently blocked. All the flood water pours off the field (where they want to build) and brings mud with it and the road and pavement is now in a very poor state. One field still currently has a pond in it!



Wemsbrook Road and Drive also need sweeping as the drain floods in heavy rain and I have seen sewage coming down the road.



I would be obliged if these matters could be discussed and passed on to the relevant people for action.
Yours sincerely



Low Hill / Pym's Road in flood, as happens quite regularly!



Email received 5.2.25

I know you have already added the points raised in my previous email to the agenda for the next council meeting but I am attaching a letter I have recently sent out to Helen Morgan MP, who has forwarded it to the department of transport. I haven't as yet had a reply.

The council may like to read it and discuss as I think it's something that needs to be talked about at all levels of government. It's all very well those in the top tier of power saying we're going to go to net zero and all be driving electric cars by 2030 but there needs to be some joined up thinking and answers to a lot of questions to achieve this. Like many towns and villages, which started life as medieval settlements before the invention of mechanical vehicles, Wem has a large number of properties that have no off road parking and house frontages that are straight on to the pavement or road. How do the government propose people can charge a car from these? It's hard enough for disabled people, people with babies and young children and the elderly to get about as it is without cars having charging cables coming across the pavement or road and blocking the way. What about people in blocks of flats or rental properties that they don't want the expense of putting in a charger when they might have to move out? The government don't seem to be implementing plans in other areas which are needed just as much as actually constructing EVs and putting in charging points. For instance why has no-one brought in planning laws to make builders install EV chargers, incorporate suitable off road parking, and solar panels to generate electricity, in all new build homes and businesses? It's no good trying to put them in as an after thought when there isn't enough space. So many businesses are already struggling with keeping afloat they can't be expected to install charging points in their car parks for their workforces. Councils have no money as it is so how are they to provide the thousands of chargers that would be needed in their car parks? The same applies to the NHS, they can't afford to put in chargers for staff or patients needing to charge their cars to get home.

Like the scenario with electrical goods, and in particular mobile phones that were being made with different connectors and chargers until a directive for them to conform, there needs to be rules put in place for car manufacturers to all use the same charging types and connectors. At the moment there are many different ones and also different types of chargers, some of which will only charge slowly, and will cars being used in the UK be able to charge abroad? Will ferries be able to carry the extra weight of electric vehicles? So many questions and so few answers it seems.

We live in quite a rural area so there's a lot of miles between where chargers can be located as most of the infrastructure so far is in cities and big towns so having a day out will take a lot more planning.

Being a rural area we also have a lot of people with trailers, horse boxes, caravans etc. You can't tow with most electric cars so how are these people to manage?

It seems to me that not only are we lacking in the new infrastructure needed to carry out the plans for going net zero but the infrastructure we already have isn't up to it either. How many thousands of homes and businesses were without power in recent storms? You can't charge a car or a mobile phone without power so are people in rural areas to be left with no means of transport and no ability to call for help?

I hope councils will start asking questions of those in government so things can change for the better, particularly where our planet is concerned, but I fear there's a long way to go to achieve anything like the goals government have set.

Thank you for your time in reading this.

To Who It May Concern

I am writing to you about electric vehicles and the fact they aren't the answer to being carbon neutral, as it seems those in Government, as in many things, don't seem to have a clue about the reality of owning an EV.

My husband and I bought an EV about 6 months ago, mainly because the car dealership where we've bought our last few cars offered us such a good deal financially that it works out we're paying less per month for a brand new car than we were paying for a 2 year old hybrid vehicle. However, in hindsight, and much as we love the car itself, we wish we'd stuck with the hybrid.

We do worry about the planet and what our children and grandchildren will do in the future with global warming, climate change, pollution etc but making everyone change to an EV is never going to work and isn't the answer so those in power need to come up with a more viable idea.

Owning an EV isn't just a case of going to the dealership, buying your car, getting in it and driving home like we're used to doing. You have to make all sorts of arrangements and pay out quite a lot of money to get set up for having an EV and no-one advises you or helps with this part.

My husband is a retired electrical engineer so he's quite knowledgeable about these things luckily because I wouldn't have had a clue, as will be the case for many people, old and young.

The first thing you have to get is a charging point fitted at home, but you have to research this yourself and hope you've chosen right. This is not cheap and costs approximately £1000 to buy a charger and have it fitted, it could come to a lot more if finding somewhere suitable to fit it with a power supply isn't readily available, and there is no financial help if you own your own property. So you have to try and work out which charger is best to buy and find someone to fit it. We were lucky as we own our own bungalow with a large drive and the meter boxes are on the outside wall in the drive so it was a fairly straightforward matter to fit the charger. But how is this going to work for all the thousands of people who don't have a drive, who live in terraces of houses built straight onto the pavement, blocks of flats, shared accommodation etc. Even new estates are built with homes straight onto the pavement, with narrow roads totally unsuitable for the amount of cars per household and with no where for leaving a car to charge with a power cable coming from it. So how are all these people to afford a charger and where will it be sited? We went without a holiday last year to be able to cover the cost of ours.

How many people know that once you have a charger fitted you then have to get the network distributor to upgrade the supply to the house so you don't blow everything when you use the charger? Being an electrical engineer my husband did know this but no-one told us or advised this would be the case. This means you have to contact the network distributor company at the source of supplying the electric, not the company you buy the electric from, so more research. In our case this was SP Energy Networks but it took me weeks of emailing and telephoning before I finally reached someone who could arrange for the necessary work to be done and we'd had our car several weeks before it was safe to use the charger. Having this work done by the distributor didn't cost anything further but it was a hassle getting it sorted and not straightforward. We're retired so had the time to do it but many people wouldn't.

Even once the charger is ready to use that's not the end of the problems. Octopus who are our energy supplier do a cheap tariff to charge EV's at home, but getting the car, the charger and Octopus to talk to each other without any conflict so charging actually happens is another minefield! We have spent months emailing and talking to Octopus and MY Energi who supplied the charger, trying to sort out many issues with this. Again as we're retired it hasn't had too many consequences for us if the car hasn't charged as expected overnight but if you needed the car to be ready to get to work or taxi children about you'd really be in difficulties. We are not the only people to experience these issues as can be seen by the many hundreds of messages posted by people on the Octopus Facebook page and other social media pages expressing their frustration at the problems they are experiencing getting an EV to charge.

If the EV does charge overnight at home it costs about 7p a Kwh, which is quite cheap to run the car as compared to diesel and petrol, but if you charge away from home the cost is closer to 70p a Kwh which is a vast difference in price. Running costs may sound cheap when you're told the car will do 200 miles on a full battery and it's cheap to charge but that 200 miles doesn't take into account using anything else electric in the car, so if it's a cold day and you want the heating on, or it's rainy and you use the wipers a lot, or the radio is on suddenly your mileage is down to half this amount so you can't get far without charging the car.

Then there's the issue of where to charge your car if you do a long journey. The first long journey we did we thought we'd stop and have a coffee and a comfort break and top the battery up at a service station, so we looked on the app where chargers were located and found somewhere we thought suitable just outside Kidderminster. The problem was we found every charger was out of service because some idiot had cut through all the charging connector pipes and removed them! Presumably this is because they have copper in them but how many chargers will be vandalised in this way? Luckily we still had plenty of charge left but anyone banking on charging here would have had a problem. The next place we stopped only had 2 chargers, one out of order and one in use. As you've no idea how long it would be in use as people just connect their cars and leave them we didn't wait around. The best place we found to charge on our journey south from Shropshire was Gloucester services which has a row of ordinary chargers and a row of Tesla chargers, but this was the only place we saw with Tesla chargers which are completely different to other EV's. The normal chargers were well used but there was one available so we topped up there but it cost us over £20 for the electric. There's also the time you have to wait for the EV to charge, so you have to factor in expensive charges for even just a drink at the services or make sure you take your own, but if it's cold it's not much fun sitting in the car while it charges.

If you look around a car park at the amount of cars there are, or a road at the amount of traffic, if all the vehicles were EV's where would people charge them? There's far too little working infrastructure. Companies can't afford to have them fitted at every work place, restaurant, theatre, cinema, sports facility etc. We stayed in a village pub on our journey south and there was no charger in the vicinity, we had to rely on service stations. It's a major worry which makes me think a lot more about travelling out. What if there was a motorway hold up and it's cold and your EV doesn't have much charge left? It's not like someone can bring you a canister of charge like they could bring you a can of petrol/diesel if you run out of battery power, you would be completely stuck and have to be taken on a trailer to a charging point. It might be okay if you live in a city where there are far more charging options but for those of us in rural areas once again we're going to be the ones struggling.

What about lorries? If they all have to go electric a refrigerated lorry isn't going to do many miles before it needs charging and how are long distance lorry drivers to charge vehicles and get to their destination on time?

As well as the issues detailed above there's the fact electric cars are much heavier than carbon fuelled ones, so will this impact on roads which are already in a terrible state and will tyres need to be replaced more frequently? How long will the battery packs actually last? It would be expensive to replace and what is going to happen to all those batteries at the end of their life. Has the government put in place plans for recycling or will there just be a different form of pollution destroying the planet?

This is a quote from a recent BBC investigation:

"While traditional lead-acid batteries are widely recycled, the same can't be said for the lithium-ion versions used in electric cars. EV batteries are larger and heavier than those in regular cars and are made up of several hundred individual lithium-ion cells, all of which need dismantling. They contain hazardous materials, and have an inconvenient tendency to explode if disassembled incorrectly. Currently, globally, it's very hard to get detailed figures for what percentage of lithium-ion batteries are recycled, but the value everyone quotes is about 5%." It doesn't sound very encouraging. Also we don't have the rare metals needed to make these batteries in the UK so can't compete on the world stage to build our own we have to rely on importing the materials to make them or importing the finished product.

We also need a much more robust electricity supply industry if we are to cope with everyone owning an EV. Some areas of Shropshire were without power for days in recent storms when power lines came down and flooding occurred. We'd have to generate a lot more electricity to be able to charge thousands of EV's.

So how is this progress in any sense? Like everything it's been gone into without enough infrastructure, information and knowledge. People I talk to about it all say the same, it's never going to work. The government need to be looking at other options like hydrogen and stop trying to kid the country that we're going to become carbon neutral.