**Councillor Stephen Bentley**

**Report to the Annual Parish Meeting**

**19th April 2022**

It has been a difficult time for many people and I would like to place on record my personal thanks to the people of Ercall Magna Parish who have gone that extra step to help friends and neighbours throughout the Parish. Your community support programmes in Roden, Ellerdine and High Ercall in particular, were well organised and thankfully received by many.

We hope, now, that we will be working towards a return to normal, although it must be accepted that this could be a new normal , as we will all learn to live lives differently. This not only relates to post covid, but also taking into consideration the current climate change agenda and the financial impact many will ensure due to the energy price increases and rising costs of essential such as our food.

Covid and the lockdowns inspired a community togetherness and support for one another – it is essential that this now continues. I would implore everyone, not to get burdened with worry or concern for yourselves, family, friends or neighbours – help and advice is available, please don’t be afraid to ask. I hope that I, too, can offer guidance to the most appropriate sources to help you.

As you all know, throughout the pandemic, common tributes have been paid to our amazing front line NHS staff, and rightly so. However, we must not forget those in our communities who have contributed in many ways – fetching groceries or prescriptions etc. These individuals have done so without thought or self interests, these are our local heroes and members of your Parish Council contributed much to support those less fortunate than ourselves – a huge thank you to everyone!

As a member of Telford & Wrekin Council, and representing the Edgmond & Ercall Magna Ward, both Stephen Burrell and I remain frustrated as we have to continually fight to have our voices heard. As a rural area, we believe that we do not get a far share of resources (when compared to the urban area of Telford), but please rest assured, we continue to represent all residents and businesses whenever the opportunity arises.

You may already be aware that the Boundary Commission has recommended that this Ward returns to being two separate Wards from next May and therefore there will be two Ward Members, one will represent Edgmond and the other representing Ercall Magna. They are also recommending the relocation of Roden and Poynton out of Ercall Magna. I personally, am totally against this, and I know from the residents who have contacted me that many share my concerns. However, if you have not yet had your say, you have until 9th May to make any representations.

May I take this opportunity to thank you, the residents, and your Parish Councillors in particular, for the help and support you have offered me over a number of years and particularly in the last two years when times have been more difficult for people and meetings have not always been possible. The use of zoom has been successful to a point, but some issues need a site visit and face to face discussions. I look forward to taking up some current issues with officers at Telford & Wrekin in the coming weeks – I think we have much to do with our highways and road safety, rural transport and the use of our lanes by the size and number of HGVs (although I know the businesses also need to be able to operate).

Having mentioned the Boundary Commission recommendation, I have had the privilege to have represented you over the past two elections and I wish to confirm my appreciation and commit my continued support to the communities and the Parish Council.

Kind regards

Councillor Stephen Bentley