

Dear, Fellow Councilors & Clerks.

I am writing to ask for your support in addressing an issue of vital importance to the county. The condition of roads within Shropshire, especially our rural roads is a subject of grave concern for this Parish Council and our parishioners. Attached are just a few examples of the dangerous and unacceptable state of our roads. I am sure that many of you share our concerns and have your own examples of poor road conditions with no prospect of sustainable repair.

CIL Local Funding is used by Shropshire Council to supplement highway maintenance. CIL, raised by taxing new house builds is charged in the rural parishes at a rate double to that of urban builds, but the CIL funds raised in this way are disproportionately used to support urban projects. This places an unfair burden on our rural communities, effectively robbing rural areas to support urban ones. Many of our smaller rural roads are in effect our 'A roads' and are critical to rural life and rural economy.

Parishioners are finding rural roads virtually impassable, with many complaints of damage to vehicles, inability to get deliveries and concerns about access for emergency services. This is a real quality of life issue and parishioners feel that despite efforts to get help from Shropshire Council their concerns are simply not being heard.

However, there appears to be no shortage of funding for expensive projects within Shrewsbury and whilst we understand that the county capital is an asset, there must be more consideration for rural communities. This imbalance must be redressed. Simply put, funding earmarked for the expansive projects in and around Shrewsbury should not come at the expense of our rural communities. I am therefore asking for all Parish Councils, Councilors and Clerks who fall under the authority of Shropshire Council, to join to take action to highlight this issue. Pressure should be brought to bear on the leader of the Council to acknowledge this inequity and to divert additional funding to rural highways repair.

A single council has limited influence, but a confederation of rural parishes is a different matter. If there is enough interest amongst fellow councils, I am happy to help set up an action group to take this further. Please let me know if you might be interested in joining such a group. In the meantime, we are sending the leader of Shropshire Council the letter below. If nothing else, please copy this letter onto your Parish's letterheading and submit it. A list of potential recipients is also shown below. I hope you feel able to join with us in this course of action and I thank you for your consideration.

I look forward to hearing your views on this and sincerely hope that you feel able to support and join with us in our endeavours.

King Regards

Ann Cadden

Chair Childs Ercall Parish Council

Please send this or similar as soon as possible.

Dear Sir

Why are you treating the rural communities with disregard?

You continue to put forward expensive new highway projects to serve Shrewsbury and the major towns but only “patch” the problems with the roads and lanes in countryside communities. This has long been your practice, but now, to compound the insult to your rural voters, you are using more CIL Local funding to support highways projects, with the most expensive supporting Shrewsbury and the major towns. But the money is raised by charging the rural communities twice as much as the urban areas. The figure is £118.93 p/sq mtr against £59.46 p/sq mtr. Taxing the rural to service the urban.

And please do not patronize us by arguing that the people from the rural community’s commute to the towns as each commuter, school pupil, or health worker must travel on miles of poorly repaired rural road to get to the few miles of new. And work practices are changing with more people working from home, a policy supported by Shropshire Council who have made broadband provision a priority.

For years, your actions have kept our roads and lanes open at the lowest cost to keep us quiet and ignore the gradual collapse of these community arteries. But is this a false economy? Has anyone added up the patching cost over the years against doing a good job in the first place?

Every drive or ride to anywhere is a challenge, avoiding the hole or badly finished patch soon to become a hole again. Are you really concerned about the quality of life of your rural community?

If you are, then act now and implement a policy for rural roads and lanes that gives the ordinary village resident an answer to one of their biggest problems, simply getting in and out of their community.

We do not need words; we are past that. We need action from our politicians to support their rural community.

[from your Parish Council]

List of potential recipients of your letter: -

peter.nutting@shropshire.gov.uk	Leader of the Council
Andy.Begley@shropshire.gov.uk	Chief executive
Mark.Barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	Executive Director of Place
Steve.smith@shropshire.gov.uk	Head of Highways
Lensambrook@hotmail.com	Childs Ercall Parish Clerk

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