

Friends of the Earth.

I have received your letter asking four very important questions. As you can imagine it is an extremely busy time for candidates at the present time and I also still hold the office of Mayor of Shrewsbury so I apologise if my answers are brief.

Your first question asks how climate change will affect this county. I would say that at this point in time we can only guess at some of the problems we will have to face. Climate change will affect virtually every aspect of our lives. If the climate heats up then it maybe that farmers have to alter the crops they grow and that there may be issues relating to drought conditions in the summer. It will be necessary to adapt our homes to stay cool in summer and yet retain heat in winter. If we have more storms this may destroy crops and cause structural damage to properties. We may suffer more serious flooding with problems in maintaining a clean water supply. From a health point of view we will see diseases that are not here at the moment such as Lyme's disease carried by midges and now seen in some southern areas of this country. We will also see different diseases in plants and animals, the whole balance of nature will be affected and some species may not adapt quickly enough to survive. Elderly residents will suffer if we have very hot weather and so on.

I regard climate change as the biggest issue facing the world today. When the new council is elected I hope that all members will accept that climate change is happening and that we cannot ignore that fact nor should we say that we cannot do anything about it. The council can start by regarding the issue as a priority and start putting its own house in order. All council buildings should carry out a green audit and this would include all schools and residential homes etc; Every report written should have a detailed environmental impact assessment as to what the effect of the council's actions would be on the environment.

The council should always be aware of any government initiatives with regard to sustainability and should do their best to promote them such as home composting, monitoring energy consumption in people's homes, recycling. If the council took the lead I am sure the public would follow. Planning policy should reflect changes in the climate by such things as grey water collection in new homes, possibly grants for helping residents to install solar panels, better insulation, natural ventilation rather than air conditioning and so on.

Villages should be kept vibrant by keeping facilities such as schools, shops , post offices, pubs and village halls within their boundaries. If residents have to travel then car sharing should be considered and /or improved bus services. Nowadays cycling is also a good form of transport and keeps you fit. I know that there are many more ways of tackling climate change but what the new council needs to do initially is to accept its happening and that even small scale initiatives can make a big difference. It really is no good to act like an ostrich and bury your head in the sand. We must start taking act now.

I am still a novice with regard to all the initiatives that we could under take to prepare ourselves but for the sake of generations to come we have to start tackling the problem in a united and concerted manner.

With regard to the incinerator, I supported a proposal at the town council to oppose the construction of the incinerator. I hope from what I have written you will see that we have to deal with the issue of climate change now. If elected I will do my very best to make sure it is a priority for the new council.

Anne Chebsey