

Subject May Newsletter
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May Newsletter

Dear resident,

Please find below my monthly update on my activities in both the National Assembly and Montgomeryshire.

For much of April, the National Assembly has been on its Easter break so I have enjoyed being able to spend more time in Montgomeryshire meeting with residents and local organisations.

As you know, we have also recently elected our next set of county, town and community councillors. I would like to wish all those who were elected well as they start their 5 year term and I am looking forward to working with them. I would also like to thank all candidates who gave their time to contest seats across the county.

As always, if you feel that I can help in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me at russell.george@assembly.wales or on 01686 610887.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell".

Russell George
National Assembly Member for Montgomeryshire

Newtown Bypass Update

With construction now well underway, I wanted to provide an update on the progress of the Newtown bypass. The Welsh Government has informed me again recently that works are on schedule to be completed by the end of next year.

Good progress has been made at Glandulas Caravan Park, a bridge at this location has almost been completed and the flood compensation area, ponds and embankments have been completed.

Two of the four underpasses in the Mochdre area are also nearing completion and works have commenced at a bridge on Mochdre Lane and a further bridge which will carry Upper Dolfor road over the new bypass.

Works have also been carried out for the embankments and attenuation ponds at Kerry Road ready for the new roundabout to be constructed. For the remainder of this year works will include building some of the key bridges and I'm told the bypass will really begin to take shape.

The contractors 'Griffiths' now have operational offices and facilities at their site offices on the Dolfor Road. These offices are also open to the public and residents are more than welcome to call in at reception with any queries or to simply ask a question about the on-going works.

I am very mindful that land and home owners are being affected by the disruption of construction. I attended a meeting last month with home and landowners affected along with Welsh Government and Griffiths' construction staff. I felt that the meeting was helpful as landowners affected had the opportunity to raise a number of generic concerns with Government and contractor staff. There are a wide range of issues causing disruption for some residents including working times, noise and issues around communication of activities. A number of commitments were made at the meeting by officials.

There are a number of road closures in place for the Middle Dolfor road, Upper Dolfor road and Mochdre Lane. I include a link for more information on these or you can contact Powys County Council on 0845 602 7035 or <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/roads-transport-and-parking/traffic-delays-planned-road-works/>

I have also raised with contractors the use of traffic controls when transporting equipment across the Kerry road in particular. I have asked them to take into consideration the peak times for travelling to and from work and to avoid the use of traffic lights during these times. In addition, I have raised the issue of subcontractors transporting lorry loads of stone from Carno quarry for the bypass, I have asked that these loads are properly covered to avoid any spillage onto the road or potential damage to other vehicles.

Those affected should be treated with the utmost respect during construction. If any landowner does want to meet with me to discuss a particular aspect, please do contact my office.

I will continue to press that construction remains on schedule over the next 18 months and that disruption is also kept to a minimum for commuters. I will also continue my calls to the Welsh Government that it promotes Newtown town centre with measures such as correct signage and other means. I have discussed matters with Powys County Council as they will become responsible for the current road through the town. There will be an opportunity for them to make improvements and indeed receive financial support themselves from the Government to carry out works. Negotiations are on-going with Welsh Government on the transfer of the trunk road and once these discussions have developed further, they have committed to carrying out a consultation exercise.

Local Elections

Local elections to Powys County Council and town and community council elections took place last week. Please click [here](#) to see the results and to find out who your county councillor is.

In Montgomeryshire, there are now 15 Independent Councillors, 14 Welsh Conservatives, 3 Liberal Democrats and 2 Plaid Cymru.

Across Powys there are 30 Independent Councillors (down 17 on 2012 election), 19 Welsh Conservatives (up 9), 13 Liberal Democrats (up 4), 7 Labour (up 1), 2 Plaid Cymru (up 2) and 1 Green (up 1). One seat was not contested so there will be an election for this seat after the General Election has taken place.

Previously, Independent Councillors were in the majority, and the Council was run as an Independent council. There is now no overall control of any party group, and discussions are now taking place

between the party groups as to who will lead Powys County Council. I will report on this further next month.

General Election

The next General Election will be held on the 8th June. If you would like a postal vote, please follow this link to apply:- <http://www.powys.gov.uk/en/elections/apply-to-vote-by-post/>

Mobile Coverage - Newtown, Staylitttle & Churchstoke

I am pleased that O2 will soon be launching 4G in Newtown as well as improving its 2G and 3G network. Work began on Monday 17th April and subject to successful testing, customers will see the new and improved service in the following weeks. During the work, there may be times when O2's customers experience intermittent service.

This is good news for O2 customers living in the Newtown area and long overdue. It was 18 months ago that I organised a meeting with all the mobile operators in Newtown, and each made commitments so it is good news that we are now finally seeing progress

However, some communities still have no reception at all, let alone 3G or 4G signal, so we must keep up the pressure to ensure that operators take responsibility to serve these areas also.

I am therefore particularly pleased that O2 has also announced that it intends to launch its 4G service in Staylitttle, an area which, to date, has been without any reliable mobile coverage at all. O2 are preparing for the new 4G site in Staylitttle to go live at the end of the month, subject to BT completing works on transmission links.

I am also pleased that EE has recently launched its 4G service in Churchstoke.

Recycling Survey - Results

You may be aware that I conducted a survey earlier this year on people's views on recycling and waste. There has been widespread concern following recent changes made to recycling services by Powys County Council. I have received thousands of completed surveys and I would like to thank all who took their time to present their views to me.

The headline results were:

- Residents would generally like to see a return of the fortnightly refuse collection instead of the current 3 weekly collection.
- Many comments were made about the dissatisfaction of being unable to recycle soft plastics.
- Overwhelmingly, people undertaking the survey were opposed to reductions in recycling services, and believed service cuts should be found elsewhere.

I intend to further report back more comprehensively, to all who completed my survey.

A new council has been elected and I am aware that many of the new intake of councillors believe that Household Recycling Centres should be open 7 days a week. Welsh Conservative Councillors will be pursuing this particular point in negotiations now taking place within the new council. My own view is that the Council's new administration should act on the overwhelming view of the residents of Powys. I will be feeding back the survey results to Powys County Council.

Advice Surgeries

Please contact me to make an appointment if you would like to meet with me.

Friday 19th May – 10am – 1pm, 20 High Street, Welshpool

Friday 26th May – 10am – 12pm, 13 Parker's Lane, Newtown

Monday 5th June – 2pm – 4pm, 13 Parker's Lane, Newtown

Friday 16th June – 12pm – 2pm, 20 High Street, Welshpool

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