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 contact Communications  
 Officer Mary Pryce on 881287.  
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**Message from Kevin**

I don't think it would be right for me to ignore the two issues which have dominated the headlines both internally and externally over the last few days. These are job evaluation and the proposal for a joint Chief Executive for Bromsgrove and Redditch. With regards job evaluation, it is true that Unison nationally have raised concerns about the process and want to investigate it before we proceed. Throughout the process we have worked locally and regionally with Unison and in this spirit we are now working with Unison at a national level to sort out any concerns they have. This has put the process timetable on hold somewhat and I will keep you up to date with the outcomes of our work with Unison. To keep staff up to speed we have held three drop-in sessions which Jo Pitman, Tony Beirne and myself have headed up to deal with any concerns or queries. At these sessions we also allowed some time for questions about the Chief Executive's position. As you know, at the next Council meeting you will be asked to consider a feasibility study being carried out which would see one Chief Executive post for both Councils. We have been working together with Redditch over the last couple of years and we have both faced the same tough budget rounds. So considering the option of working together is a timely and could see greater value for money and joint working opportunities. I want to stress that this is not indicative of any plans to merge the two authorities and I would be grateful for your help to dispel any such rumours in your own wards. I am on leave for the next two weeks, but Hugh, Tony or Phil are available if you have any questions about either of these issues and I will be happy to talk to you more when I get back.

**Issue 26 – March 19, 2008.**

**Register of Interests**

Please remember it is very important to ensure that your Register of Interests forms are up to date. They are now accessible on the intranet by following the link below

<http://svlan007:8071/mgMemberIndex.asp?bcr=1>

and then clicking on to a councillor's details. They will shortly be available on the internet too and we will keep you informed when this becomes live.

**More details: Debbie Warren, Senior Solicitor, Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Tel 01527 881609 or d.warren@bromsgrove.gov.uk**

**Neighbourhood Committees**

The Council has recently received an external evaluation report (funded by Government grant) of the two neighbourhood area committees (NACs).

The report identifies that all the stakeholders feel there is value in the NACs, in particular, they support the role of the ward councillor and are consistent with Government thinking on community engagement. A report will be presented to 30 April Cabinet recommending that the Council set up a third pilot in Hagley, increase the funding for each NAC, formalise the governance arrangements and run a stakeholder event in the summer.

We will be consulting our partners on the report and will feed this information into the Cabinet decision.

**More details: Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive Tel. 01527 881430**

**e-mail: h.bennett@bromsgrove.gov.uk**

**Flooding Matters**

The Council has published Flooding Matters, a leaflet giving guidance and advice to support residents during the event and risk of flooding.

**More details: Phil Street, Executive Director, Partnership and Projects. 01527 881202**

**p.street@bromsgrove.gov.uk**

**Green Waste Charging**

Proposed charges to the green waste collection are due to come into force for April 2009. The service for 2008 will remain as per last year; collections will start in April and run to the end of November. Green waste collections are not a statutory function, however, as residents have told us this is a much valued service, we have listened and identified that by introducing a small charge, it will be able to continue. One benefit of a chargeable service is that this would not be paid for directly from the Council Tax but only by those actually wanting it. An Officer Project Management Team has been set up to work on the issues surrounding its introduction. Timescales for delivery are tight and the obstacles to overcome are challenging. However the essential groundwork that needs addressing for a successful implementation is already underway. **More details: Anna Wardell, Waste Policy and Promotions Manager, Tel 01527 881715 or a.wardell@bromsgrove.gov.uk**

**Political Balance**

As a result of the election of Councillor Miss Diane Campbell at the recent Slideslow By-election, the political balance of the Council is now Conservative 27, Labour 6, Independent 4 and Wythall Residents' Association 2. In line with the rules governing political proportionality, we have reviewed the allocation of seats on committees. We can inform you that the small percentage changes arising from the increase in the size of the Conservative Group by one Member do not affect the proportional allocation of committee places to political groups. The current political composition of committees will therefore remain unchanged until they are reviewed at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May. **More details: Karen Firth, Committee Group Leader. Tel 01527 881625 or k.firth@bromsgrove.gov.uk**