

County Councillor Annual Report

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2019/20.

Name of Councillor **Dr Kevin FELTHAM**

representing the GARTREE Division.

1) Electoral Division activities

Main Activities and the impact during the past year:

During 2019/20 I was privileged to serve once more as the chairman of the **Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)** which also meant I chaired the Joint HOSC covering Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland on the rotationally agreed basis with the city. As part of my chairman's role I received briefing sessions with the Director of Public Health and Assistant Directors prior to every scrutiny committee meeting. I have also had meetings with the chief executives and chairmen of both the West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and East Leicestershire & Rutland CCG. I also had a telephone conversation with the new chairman of the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and met the newly appointed joint chief executive of the three CCGs covering Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland.

Now that Leicestershire County Council has responsibility for running the Joint HOSC meetings, these meetings are held at County Hall and are available as a webcast for the public on YouTube.

I attended 45 **parish council meetings** either in person or virtually during 2019/20. Sometimes as in previous years, they clashed with other meetings, such as Governors or if an extraordinary meeting was held, so sadly I had to prioritise which ones to attend. Occasionally I have managed to be at the start of one parish council meeting, and then after giving my monthly report, I have given my apologies and made my way to another parish council to give a similar monthly report before their meeting has finished, but as I concluded last year, I much prefer to focus on one parish council meeting at a time, if possible. At the end of the 2019/20 year, the coronavirus pandemic meant meetings could only be held virtually, e.g. Zoom, which actually enabled me to move more easily between parish council meetings as no travel involved.

The clerks of three of the parish councils in my division, Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt, and Tugby & Keythorpe have changed during the year, which has meant a considerable amount of extra training for them and some mentoring and advice from me. One of the advantages of having been a county councillor for 19 years is that I have built up good working relationships with the parishes and their clerks, but still quite a wrench when any retire or resign.

In the majority of cases at parish council meetings where I am sent an agenda and invitation, I am pleased to give an update on county council business and my activities; if I am unable to attend I always try to provide written reports by email.

Having attended a Hidden Disability workshop at County Hall in 2018/19, I agreed to become involved in 2019/20 with a new venture to create an **Autism Friendly Kibworth**. This was suggested by officers from county hall and I helped bring together a range of business owners and other people within the community to meet on a number of occasions, and put together a

programme of activities to raise the understanding of the autism spectrum and to bring together those in the community who were either parents of children with autism, or those on the spectrum themselves. I set up a local Facebook group and it now has over 40 members. A workshop explaining more about autism was held in January at the Kibworth Community Library led by an officer from county hall and attended by 25 people. Our original aim was to arrange and encourage one event about autism in the community every month, but the coronavirus pandemic has postponed any since January.

An ongoing issue for the Kibworths is the **A6 Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** and the need for an **A6 bypass**, so I continue to liaise with the MP, Neil O'Brien OBE, ward councillors, the Director of Highways at LCC and HDC staff to see how a bypass could be planned and delivered without having to finance it with thousands of new houses. The **Major Roads Network** proposals by central government might provide potential funding but a business case needs producing first. HDC funded A6 roadside nitrogen dioxide measuring equipment in 2018/19 and this has continued to provide 15 min real-time data which can be examined via a website, and is a great improvement on the previous delayed monthly averages from tubes on streetlamp posts at several locations on the A6.

Both Great Glen and the Kibworths have 'made' or adopted **Neighbourhood Plans** which have helped greatly with objections when responding to some large housing development planning applications, and now that HDC also has a five year housing supply and have an adopted **Local Plan**, it has made it harder for developers to propose and obtain approval for unwanted large housing estates. During 2019/20, this protection helped with two housing applications – one of which went to appeal – and both were refused. Both Great Glen and the Kibworths began a review of their Neighbourhood Plans in 2019/20, to ensure the Plans were in conformity with the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework. I was a consultee for the Great Glen consultations which led to another successful referendum on January 2020, and am an active member of the Kibworths group which is aiming for a referendum, delayed due to the pandemic, of May 2021.

Since 2001, I have been contributing monthly Gartree county news articles on local matters of interest to the **Kibworth & District Chronicle**, a free community newspaper delivered to over 4,500 homes in 25 villages across south Leicestershire, many in my division; and now [online](#) since the coronavirus pandemic hit. I have also contributed similar articles to the quarterly **Glen Sence**, a free community newspaper delivered to Great Glen, Burton Overy, Wistow and Newton Harcourt that sadly folded in 2019/20. Examples of some of these published articles are included on my county councillor website – see [Social Media](#) below.

Community Leadership Role

During 2019/20, I led the work, with legal support, to regularise the two joint Kibworth Parish Council committees to bring them into line with new accountancy regulations – no joint committees could have separate bank accounts, staffing or assets, from the principal parish authorities. An initial **Memorandum of Understanding** was prepared and signed by both parish council chairmen in 2019/20 so that the new arrangements could take effect from 1 April 2020. The two committees have been renamed as part of the changes to: **Kibworth Joint Burial Board** (now the responsibility of Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council), and **Kibworth Joint Recreation Board** (now the responsibility of Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council). Representatives from both parish councils still attend these Boards.

I also led the work to have a second legal **Memorandum of Understanding** prepared and adopted by both Kibworth parish councils relating to the formal line management of new members of staff – deputy clerk and groundsman, as they were both appointed to provide

support to both parish councils.

During 2019/20 I asked the Chief Executive of the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC) to hold formal job evaluations for the clerical posts of both Kibworth parish councils to ensure the staff were on the correct pay grade for the roles and activities for which they were responsible.

I was also heavily involved in the refurbishment and opening of a joint **Kibworths parish office** in the Kibworth Grammar School Hall during 2019/20 together with the clerk for Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council. Great Glen has had a parish office for many years and I have long felt the Kibworths needed somewhere for parishioners to come and meet with the clerks and parish councillors. The office was also available to be used for councillor surgeries with district ward councillors and myself, but that stopped once the venue had to be closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Hopefully the surgeries will resume once the venue is re-opened.

On behalf of Kibworth Joint Recreation Committee (as it was then) I was successful in obtaining planning permission in 2019/20 for a **Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)** for the old skatepark site on Warwick Park. A section 106 application for funding had also been successful and the new facility will be installed in the Spring 2020.

Engagement with the Council, other statutory bodies and public utility companies (Water, Gas etc) about services in the area

I attended all five county council meetings during 2019/20. As in previous years these are all webcast and can be viewed in the county council's YouTube archives. Amongst the items discussed in addition to regular reports from the Cabinet, including the Medium Term Financial Strategy, were motions on Climate Emergency, secondary school transport, and post-16 SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Transport – all of which I supported.

As a member of the Scrutiny Commission, I attended and spoke at all seven meetings in 2019/20 with a wide range of agenda items during 2019/20 including the annual review of the council's commercial strategy and Leicestershire Traded Services, the council's draft planning obligations policy, the ongoing work of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP), the local industrial and tourism growth strategies, the work of the Local Resilience Forum, the ongoing vision for local government in Leicestershire, the integrated risk management plan of the Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Equality Strategy, the revised Environment Strategy and Action Plan and the Youth Justice Strategic Plan. All meetings were webcast and are available to be seen in the council's YouTube archives.

As a member, I attended all five of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings in 2019/20 and took part in the discussions on a wide range of agenda items including: the Care Placement Strategy, Special Educational Needs and Development work, Children's Safeguarding, Early Years, outcome of Ofsted visits, the financial situation, 16+ Semi Independent Accommodation and the report of the Multi Academy Trust five member panel, which I chaired. I also presented the report of this panel to the first virtual meeting of the Cabinet in March 2020.

I have been a Management Committee Board member for the **Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO)** for over 14 years. This is public sector owned professional buying organisation with six authorities as members – five of them County Councils: Leicestershire (host authority), Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Warwickshire, Cambridgeshire, plus Peterborough City. ESPO is committed to getting the most for our customers by pursuing best practice in procurement, sourcing, supply chain partner support and management, contract management and EU compliance. I also continued to serve on the ESPO Audit & Finance Committee during the year – which continued to experiment with using Skype for Business to help Board members from

councils take part from some distance away. As the coronavirus pandemic hit the UK in February 2020, and physical meetings were no longer permitted from late March 2020, this early experience of using virtual conferencing proved invaluable.

In 2018/19, ESPO Trading Limited was formed to help diversify the product and customer base, and I was appointed to represent Leicestershire on the Board of Directors. The limited company is expanding the marketing of ESPO products internationally now, so I look forward to the outcome of several initiatives. The main ESPO website is being totally revamped and the new website is expected to be finished by the end of 2020; I am hopeful that more customers will use this form of electronic ordering to improve efficiency within the whole organisation. Each of the member councils shares in the annual dividend depending on the amount of business each has had with ESPO.

As the county councillor covering the Tugby & Keythorpe parish, I continued to represent parishes straddling the A47 so attended meetings with Centrebus, LCC & Rutland Transport officers and other parishes to discuss a sustainable solution for the **747 bus route**. In the event, continued subsidy of the route by both Leicestershire and Rutland County Councils was agreed into the 2020/21 financial year.

The **Brookfields** supported living scheme on Bindley's Lane in **Great Glen** continues to be refurbished. It was due to be opened in early 2020 but the coronavirus pandemic has stalled final arrangements. It will offer a much needed improvement in the standard of living for those in need from the Harborough area, giving them a chance to enjoy their independence with any support they require. I am fully supportive of the proposed scheme, and was delighted to be able to visit and have a look around some of the completed accommodation.

Priorities for the immediate future are:

The key priority for the Kibworths is the recognition by the highways authority, police and national government that a bypass is essential. Building a business case is a slow process, but I feel a step by step approach will provide the clear evidence. Together with Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council and residents, over 200 signatures of residents asking for a **Community Speed Watch** (CSW) were obtained in 2019/20. This should have led to some 30 volunteers being trained during summer 2020 in the use of the equipment but again the coronavirus has caused this to be postponed until later in the year and then the work can commence. I met with the police to agree three locations for the CSW to take place.

Another step towards evidence building is continuation of the real-time nitrogen dioxide monitoring on the A6. An additional air quality Zephyr monitor is due to be installed in 2020 to provide real-time data for other pollutants - **Particulate Matter** (PM1, PM2.5 and PM10). It is always a surprise for those not living in the Kibworths to realise that the A6 through the Kibworths has around 24,000 vehicles using it every day, and was listed as the fourth worst nitrogen dioxide polluted area in the East Midlands in 2019.

Another key factor is the ongoing ad hoc measurement of speed on the A6 by the police. Several motorists have been caught and prosecuted for speeding in excess of 100mph on the bypass between Great Glen and the Kibworths.

I am not a supporter of the **Strategic Growth Plan's** proposals for an **A46 Expressway** to the east and south of the Leicester Principal Urban Area. Although no further information has been made about the route of the Expressway around the Great Glen area, I am working with the local MP, Neil O'Brien MP, and district councillors to argue that the existing A46 route north of Leicester should be developed as an option to a brand new route crossing the green fields of south east Leicestershire. If ever the A46 Expressway route is announced, I shall be continuing to press that

an A6 bypass around the Kibworths should be an essential part of the strategic plan.

Anti-social behaviour problems (ASB) have continued to cause problems in the Kibworths and also in Great Glen. The **Kibworth Meadows** Facebook page is for residents living in the large estate off Wistow Road, mainly in Kibworth Harcourt. This social media source continues to provide evidence of burglary, car theft and damage and ASB. I liaise with the Local Policing Unit, the three Kibworths Ward members and the HDC Community Safety Partnership. A well attended public meeting to discuss local ASB issues was held in June 2019 in the Lounge of the Kibworth Grammar School Hall. As a result a series of meetings were held with parish councillors and representatives from the police, HDC, schools, churches and other organisations to follow up as an action plan to reduce ASB.

Community Governance Review –HDC held another consultation on community governance during 2019. I led both Kibworth Parish Councils to request that the anomaly on the Kibworth Meadows estate which split off part of the estate between the Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt parishes. Longbreach and Bush Roads currently lie within the Kibworth Beauchamp parish boundary despite being provided with Kibworth Harcourt postcodes by Royal Mail, and both can only be accessed off Barnards Way, which is within Kibworth Harcourt like the rest of the 550 house estate. The formal request was submitted in 2019/20 by both parish councils to have the whole estate fall within Kibworth Harcourt parish and a final decision is awaited. If granted it would not come into effect until the next parish council and district elections.

Capacity in local schools continues to be an ongoing issue, but with less houses being built in both the Kibworths and Great Glen, there have been slight reductions in the pupil numbers for both primary schools, although the secondary Kibworth School continues to experience space challenges. I will continue to work with the teams at County Hall to review pupil numbers and discuss future strategies.

2) Council Activities

Committees you serve on at County Hall

Chairman of Members Learning and Development Working Group

Chairman of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Chairman of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Member of the Scrutiny Commission.

Member of the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee.

Local committees/Outside Bodies

I have been a parish councillor on Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council since 2015, and Chairman since 2016; re-elected in May 2019 as councillor and chairman for 2019/20. As I was a parish representative on the Kibworths Neighbourhood Planning Group from 2016 to 2018, I volunteered again for the review of the Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan which has been meeting in 2019/20.

I continue to serve as a parish representative on the Kibworth Joint Recreation Committee. During early 2020 I was also co-opted to be a parish councillor for Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council; I attend their meetings anyway as an observer, so as they had vacancies, it helps ensure good

relationships continue between the two Kibworth parish councils.

I continued as a committee member for the Kibworth & Smeeton Village Hall during 2019/20 which saw a considerable amount of refurbishment undertaken including electrical testing and installation of new lighting, painting throughout and the start of adding heating and also new facilities in the toilets.

I remain a committee member (Treasurer) of the **Kibworth Improvement Team** formed after the highly successful BBC TV series 'Story of England' by Michael Wood and Maya Vision International.

Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc

I remain a Governor at the **Robert Smyth Academy** in Market Harborough, which now that it is part of the Tudor Grange Academy Trust, has appointed a new principal, Dan Cleary. I have governor responsibility for Behaviour with the senior management team to help other governors at Exclusion Appeal meetings with parents, pupils and staff.

I am an appointed Trustee of the **Nicholson Memorial Charity**. During 2019/20 the Trust approved grants to young individuals and youth organisations. I was pleased to help with the a legal process that meant the County Council Cabinet finally approved the sale of a property in Market Harborough; the proceeds were added to the value of the Trust fund, so enabling more grants to be made available.

I continue to be the **Kibworth Parochial Church Council** Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer for St Wilfrid's Church in Kibworth Beauchamp.

3) Learning and development:

As a member of Members Learning and Development Working Group we had further briefings on the use of Skype for Business, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and changing the member iPads to Microsoft Surface Pro equipment.

I attended as many all member briefings as I could, or followed up with the emailed slide presentations, during the year including more on the Strategic Growth Plan, Budget, GDPR, Leicestershire Police etc.

One of the unexpected benefits of the coronavirus pandemic on all member briefings was the use of Skype for Business to hold these weekly Tuesday afternoons sessions from the end of March 2020. The initial member take-up grew markedly once the technical joining matters were clarified. This could be a useful way after the pandemic of continuing to hold all members briefings.

4) Other Matters:

With over 50 years of experience working in and around the NHS including short spells at major London tertiary hospitals (Guys & St Thomas, Imperial College), and finally retiring in December 2018, I am still occasionally involved in strategic planning for new laboratory computer systems.

Social Media

Twitter: @kevin_feltham

Website: <http://gartree.yourcldr.com/>

Signed by Councillor:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Feltham', written in a cursive style.

Date 26/06/2020