

# Les Phillimore

## County Councillor for Cosby and Countesthorpe Division

### Annual Report 2019/20.

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The Division comprises of the Parishes of Cosby, Countesthorpe, Kilby, Foston and South Whetstone with a population of circa: 12,000

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#### Electoral Division activities

As the newly elected (Dec 2019) County Councillor for the Cosby & Countesthorpe Division, it is an honour and a privilege but also a daunting prospect to follow in the footsteps of my late friend and 50-year stalwart of Local Government and civic service, Alderman David Jennings. I can never replace David but I will certainly strive to honour his memory and continue his commitment to public service.

I live in the division with my Specialist Early Years SEND Nursery Nurse wife Jackie. We have two grown up children, educated locally at Badgerbrook, Thomas Estley and Countesthorpe College before both studying at our Leicester universities.

First and foremost, I must thank all those good people who placed their trust and belief in me by ticking the ballot paper box and electing me as your County Councillor. It is always a humbling experience to be elected to serve our communities and an honour that should never, ever be forgotten irrespective of political or non-political allegiance. We are blessed to live in a democracy and whether you voted for me or for another candidate, it is my honour to represent each and every resident with equal favour throughout my division.

Covid-19 has brought out the very best in people and across local government the rapidly assembled Community Hubs continue to receive recognition and praise for their work with, and support for, our local communities, shielded individuals and community support groups.

Covid-19 continues to curtail activity in public life and getting to know my expanded communities is critical but in the absence of face-to-face meetings or being able to knock on doors and say hello or deliver news leaflets, attending virtual Parish Council meetings, responding to email, telephoning people and working with our Elected Ward Councillors are proactive ways that I am able to introduce myself, make myself available, support my community and learn about what is important to our grass-roots communities and any concerns that I may be able to help with.

#### Current divisional matters: -

- Hill Lane, Countesthorpe – working with the County Highways Department on the highway and roadside damage and obstructions caused by HGV vehicles
- Kilby Crossroads – pressing the County Highways Department for a detailed assessment and report following more accidents at this accident blackspot
- Cosby – matters relating to Adult Social Care
- Cosby - Parking, verge damage and residential obstruction around Lady Leys
- Cosby – damage to highway surface and impact on residential property

## County Council activities - (Bodies served on at County Hall)

Joining Leicestershire County Council in the latter quarter of the electoral term meant that the opportunity to be appointed to Council Committees was limited. On the positive, this meant that I was able to act as a substitute on a number of committees allowing me to find my feet, get to know my fellow Councillors and Council Officers and get up to speed with the business of the day across the County Council.

Fortunately, Planning and Economic Development are two of my many passions and with vacancies, I was fortunate to be appointed to the Development Control and Regulatory Board and the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, both being committees that I believe I can make positive contributions to quickly and my background at District, Parish and business levels would be ideally suited to.

Sadly, no sooner had I just started to get up to speed with the County Council, Covid-19 arrived and curtailed all public activity as simultaneously, Local Government rapidly adapted to new ways of working, meetings had to be cancelled, new services had to be designed and delivered and collaborations formed across national and local government and working with local agencies to provide exemplary community support through these unprecedented times.

Fortunately, thanks to an historically well-run council, the County Council has, unlike many other councils across the country, sufficient financial reserves and government emergency funding to weather the immediate costs and loss of income from Covid-19. This is not though a bottomless pot of money and I look forward to being able to play a positive role in campaigning for fairer funding for Leicestershire and to contributing fully to the new post-Covid-19 council strategies.

As we move towards remote working and virtual meetings, Council business is returning to a form of normality for us as Councillors although our day-to-day representation of our communities continues to be somewhat curtailed and only available via remote communications for the foreseeable future.

Looking forward, one of the most significant challenges facing our county division is the potential of delivering significant housing and employment growth in South Leicestershire. The Strategic Growth Plan sets-out a very high level concept document as to how this may be achieved but, as a personal view, as Covid-19 and the councils environmental agenda have the potential to fundamentally change the way we live, work and play, the future housing and employment needs may change and may change significantly and I look forward to contributing to these debates fully in due course but always seeking to gain the greatest advantage for our division and ensure the strongest representation.

Whatever our future holds, as your elected representative at Leicestershire County Council and with my collective local government, business and Higher Education activities and interests, I can assure you that I will listen to all sides of the debates and campaign for the very best outcomes for our division, our district wards, our parishes, our skills, jobs and economy, our education, our elderly, our communities and our future lives.

## Passions and Other Interests

People who know me, know that I am passionate about everything that I do and at the forefront of my working life are People, Business, Education, Skills and social justice, including: -

- The Director-e Ltd. A project dedicated to the Senior, Executive and Professional 3<sup>rd</sup> Age (Over 50's) who may find recruitment and employment challenging
- The Federation of Small Businesses – the UK's largest business group representing c: 160,000 SME's and the self-employed
- Higher Education - Part-time Tutor at De Montfort University coaching Postgraduate students through Business Research Projects.
- Innovation and international collaboration – supporting new business ideas over the long-term



I believe that my combined activity and exposure across local government, education and business ensures that I offer a holistic understanding of how these interact with society and how we can collectively provide the very best for our communities.

## **Local committees & Outside Bodies**

- Cabinet Member at Blaby District Council holding the Housing and Community Services Portfolio
- P/T Parish Manager for Cosby Parish Council
- Elected Regional Chairman for the UK's largest business group, The Federation of Small Businesses
- I have served on Whetstone Parish Council for c: 25 years
- Panel Member – De Montfort University Business and Law Advisory Panel

## **Priorities for the immediate future**

- Getting to know my new communities in Countesthorpe, Foston and Kilby
- Getting out and about within my communities when Government guidelines support public activity
- Supporting my division as we live through and recover from Covid-19
- Maintaining a watching brief over the Strategic Growth Plan and A46 Corridor concepts.
- Engagement with Schools within my Division
- Supporting all tiers of local government, communities, community groups and businesses through and recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Supporting the County Council as it rebuilds its finances and designs the services of the future.
- Learning more and contributing fully to the business of the County Council

## **Learning & Development**

- Induction Training @ County Hall.
- Development Control Training @ County Hall

## **Community Events**

- Whetstone Remembrance Day Parade
- Cosby Remembrance Day Parade
- A Very Merry Whetstone Christmas
- Cosby Christmas Lights and Fayre
- Cosby Toc-H Charity Sleigh collection

## **Communications and Social Media**

I am easy to find on Linked-In in particular, but also have a small number of business and personal accounts on Twitter and Facebook.

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