

Annual Report by Richard Shepherd for 2019 - 2020

I represent the Division of Sileby and The Wolds, which is made up of six parishes: Burton on the Wolds, Cotes and Prestwold; Hoton; Seagrave; Sileby; Walton on the Wolds; and Wymeswold. Its range of parishes makes it is a richly varied Division.

The COVID -19 pandemic and responses to it stand out as issues towards the end of the year under report, and at the time of writing the situation for months and years ahead is uncertain. I will return to that matter later.

I maintain a close relationship with each Parish Council, attending their meetings as often as possible, and keeping in touch in between meetings.

I work with them on matters of local concern. For example:

Arranging a site visit by County Council officers to meet representatives of the Burton on the Wolds, Cotes and Prestwold Council to see and discuss repairs needed to the B676. The result was repairs were carried out.

Sileby: presentation to members of the public about changes to the number 27 bus route, to support officers making the presentation. Result: greater public understanding.

Sileby: attendance at public meeting with officials from various agencies about flooding. Result: questions put; matter ongoing.

Sileby: undertaking to assist the Parish Council as required about actions in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Hoton: site visit to meet a Parish Councillor and decide action about overgrown trees and developing a case for extending the speed limit.

Seagrave: monitoring action on the condition of Park Hill; discussions on A46 crossing.

Walton on the Wolds: clarifying issues of street lighting and road condition.

Burton on the Wolds, Cotes and Prestwold: arranged a presentation by County Council officers, as part of LCC's initiative on better engagement with Parishes.

Wymeswold: pursuing the issuing of a licence to install birds' mouth fencing; licence now issued.

Keeping Parish Councils and members of the public informed about progress with two controversial planning applications by British Gypsum. I recently joined members of the public in speaking at a meeting of the County Council's Development Control and Regulatory Board to oppose the applications. The Board refused permission for them both.

The issue of HGV routes in my Division has previously been explored and options for action to address the issue have been clarified. That helps inform consideration of the consequences of any major planning applications, if they were to be permitted.

As well as work with Parish Councils **I have also assisted members of the public** with enquiries about a number of matters, such as parking and Anti Social Behaviour. As often as possible, with the permission of those concerned, I like to consult Parish Councils because those Councils are the important first tier of local government.

Since the outbreak of the COVID – 19 pandemic I have sought to keep Parish Councils and, through them, local communities, aware of information. I have for example drawn attention to the "One Prepared" website as a valuable resource, as there is the risk of misinformation and fraud.

Looking ahead, I shall continue to deal with local issues such as those mentioned above. Critical will be maintaining communication about the issues now facing the Council arising from the pandemic, such as the financial impact and its consequences.

Turning to my wider Council involvement, I serve on the Council's Cabinet, working with the Lead Member on Finance and Resources. I also serve on the Constitution Committee, the Employment Committee, and the Local Pension Board. My further role as the Conservative Group's Chief Whip involves assisting in the efficient running of the Council.

I have been appointed by the Council to a number of organisations: the East Midlands Shared Services Joint Committee, the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation Management Committee, and the British Gypsum (Barrow Project) Liaison Committee.

I am also a member of Charnwood Borough Council. The Ward I represent on that Council is a different geographical area from my County Council Division, and this contributes to my knowledge.

I have mentioned above the importance of communication. **I contribute articles to two magazines** which are distributed in different parts of my Division. They have been published virtually in recent months. **I also write a blog** which is posted on the Sileby Parish Council website and from there goes onto social media.

I have benefited from opportunities for learning and development provided by the County and Borough Councils. Examples are training sessions about finance, planning, health, including mental health awareness, personnel matters and GDPR.

Richard Shepherd

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