

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17TH FEBRUARY 2021
POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

‘Litter Wombles’

Local ‘litter wombles’ do a fantastic job keeping our county clean and tidy – and a new scheme is providing practical help to support them.

Across Leicestershire, there are hundreds of groups of volunteers who collect litter from our streets, parks, verges and other public spaces.

Getting the right equipment is one of the challenges they face – and that’s why the County Council will be offering groups light-weight fold-up road signs and hi-vis jackets to help keep them safe, and extra-long litter pickers to reach under bushes and hedgerows.

This initiative will not only help to keep Leicestershire grot-free and boost our environment but also help increase recycling rates and raise money for important charities.

To find out how to get this equipment visit www.leicestershire.gov.uk/litter-picking or email Community.Litter@leics.gov.uk

LGBT+ history month

February is LGBT+ history month. This month is a chance to increase the visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people, their history, lives and their experiences. These stories are often the ‘hidden histories’ that we have not heard before, and the month helps us to remember the milestones that have been fought for by LGBT+ people in Leicestershire and beyond in our recent past.

Along with our partners – including Leicester City Council and Leicestershire Police - we’ll be proudly flying the rainbow flag every day in February to remind us how far we have come, and to celebrate the LGBT+ people of today.

Covid Memorial Walk – Watermead Park

In a couple of weeks, we will have been fighting COVID, in Leicestershire, for over a year. The first case in Leicestershire was detected on 6 March 2020 and the battle has been long and unforgiving. As the Chairman referred to earlier, the loss has been felt across the world, as well as here in our communities, hospitals, and care homes. We have sadly lost our own members of staff at the County Council.

Next month, along with the City Mayor, I will open the memorial walk at Watermead Park, which goes across the City and County boundary. Funded partly through memorial pledges from city and county residents, it will be a place of remembrance. It will also be a place where we say thank you to all the people of Leicestershire who have simply kept going through this terrible year. While noting it is not over yet, the memorial walk will also be a place of hope – for the future.

Supporting residents, community groups and businesses during Covid

The Council has continued to support the local voluntary and community sector in recognition of the fantastic work the sector continues to do in helping vulnerable people and providing vital services.

We have awarded a further £1million to 170 groups through Round 3 of the Leicestershire Community Fund, making a total of £2.6million to aid 390 groups since the start of the pandemic in March last year. We have also distributed £250,000 to help 26 foodbanks and have made available £1.2m to assist vulnerable children and families with food and fuel costs. Additionally, to increase capacity for debt and money problems we will be providing an extra £250,000 for Leicestershire and Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureaux.

We have also supported our rural pubs; 138 pubs have been assisted with £1,000. The scheme aims to keep people in jobs, maintain the role of the pub as a community hub and help them to diversify by providing extra services for residents. The scheme has been welcomed by the British Beer & Pub Association.

The impact of the pandemic on Leicestershire's economy is unprecedented. The damage is immediate and long lasting with evidence demonstrating that the hardest hit sectors are hospitality and tourism with the youngest most affected through job losses. This council has done what it can, and will continue to do so.

We have distributed £750,000 to over 100 businesses, helping to secure their futures and dozens of jobs in the County. And we are putting in place services to support those now looking for work as well as providing much needed employment opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds through an extended form of the Government's Kickstart programme

Mr N. J. Rushton CC
Leader of the Council