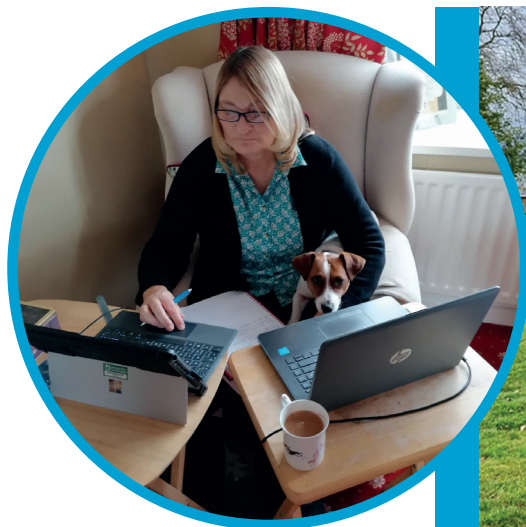


MAGGIE WRIGHT - Annual Report 2020/2021

County Councillor for Stoney Stanton and Croft Division.

The Division comprises the Parishes of Aston Flamville, Croft, Elmesthorpe, Huncote, Potters Marston, Sapcote, Stoney Stanton, Sharnford and Wigston Parva. Collectively known as the "Fosse Villages".



Electoral Division Activities

This year we have all experienced unprecedented times and events. The COVID 19 pandemic has touched us all. I begin by thanking all Key Workers, our Community Champions and Volunteers. I offer my sincere sympathy to all who have lost loved ones during these difficult times. I now look forward to the restoration of life after lockdown and the return to normal family activities and celebrations. It is good to already see some of our community libraries and groups starting to open their doors again.

Like so many residents this year I have worked from home with face-to-face committee meetings being replaced by virtual Zoom and Teams meetings. Quite an adjustment and I must say a fight for space in the Wright household. Three of us working from home at one stage. But, adapt we did. Although many of our community groups and organisations had to close during the pandemic many Good Neighbourhood Schemes continued in a safe form to ensure our elderly and vulnerable were supported at home. Volunteer groups sprung into action to deliver shopping and prescriptions to those shielding. Ingenious schemes developed to identify where and when help was needed during lockdown and good will was widespread.

I have continued to support my Parish Councils and Parish meetings throughout the year by attending virtual meetings and presenting regular monthly reports.

Evidence gathering has continued, when possible, to complete the Section 19 report on the Stoney Stanton flooding event which occurred on 1st October 2019. Thirty-four properties were flooded. The report has recently been released. I will continue to work with multi-agencies involved. The County Council were successful in getting funding for an Integrated Flood Modelling Study which has made some progress but been delayed due to the virus. Completion is expected soon. Coincidentally I chaired a Scrutiny Review Panel on Flooding and presented findings and recommendations to the County Council Cabinet in February 2021.

Traffic and Highways issues continue to be one of the most dominate resident concerns within the Division. The issues range from pot holes, lack of parking spaces, weight restriction and speeding. I was pleased to support local campaigner John Taylor and help Alberto Costa (MP) to launch his traffic survey on the B581 road between Stoney Stanton and Elmesthorpe in March 2021. The survey has generated a good response and the results will be presented to County Highways. Although speed limits are governed by legislation it is hoped some traffic calming measures can be introduced to reduce the speeding between Elmesthorpe and Stoney Stanton on Station Road.

STAG (Sharnford Traffic Action Group) continue to provide regular updates. Concerns are still expressed about the quantity of traffic using the B4114 through the village. The Average Speed Cameras slow traffic down but it is the number of vehicles continually increasing which is adding to the problem.

The ambition is to get more connectivity via cycleways and footpaths between all the Fosse Villages is still high on my agenda although proposals are thwarted at present by funding constraints. Our footpaths really need some TLC at the moment due to unprecedented use during the pandemic. I have worked successfully with the Environment and Transport team use grants to get some footpaths cleared and repaired. Never have our open spaces and parks meant so much to us.

Unfortunately plans for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange have not gone away and although delayed, formal consultation is now scheduled for June/July this year. Presentation of the application is due to go to the Secretary of State in September 2021. The actual details of the plans provided so far by the developer is very disappointing and makes any meaningful response to consultation difficult. I spoke at County Cabinet in February to express our concerns. This coupled with proposals for a Strategic Housing Development Area off the M69 Junction 2 will have an enormous impact on the environment and an existing infrastructure which is totally inadequate. Engagement meetings with Pegasus Consortium started during the pandemic and will resume once further details are available. There is no planning application at this time.

Ongoing multi agency meetings, led by our MP Alberto Costa have continued regarding issues at Sapcote and Granitethorpe Quarries. I am still asking for an agreed Action Plan and Strategy to monitor and resolve this matter.

I am particularly grateful to Sapcote resident David Irwin (supported by Sapcote Parish Council) for championing the cause for getting super-fast broadband into his local area via an Openreach Voucher Scheme. Unfortunately, the phase 4 procurement by LCC failed to attract a provider so this long-awaited service still needs to "cross the line" and get delivered. I am liaising with the broadband team and trying to find a pragmatic solution to this extremely frustrating problem.

I am told the work to improve the footpath between Huncote and Narborough should soon be started. This is now long overdue (even allowing for COVID) and is part of a planning condition which should have been discharged years ago relating to the Spence Lane site in Huncote.

I am pleased to attend the Croft Quarry Liaison meetings which provide a good engagement and communication platform to ensure residents voices and concerns are heard in relation to the ongoing Quarry operations. A planning application will be determined soon regarding the restoration of the quarry void. I am pleased to see the majority of material will be transported into the site by rail. I am also working with Acresford Sand and Gravel, residents and the Parish Council at Huncote during the restoration of the planning consent as the excavation of the sand comes to an end. It is hoped to revitalise the bridleway and footpaths and explore the possibility of planting trees and wildlife projects.



Community Events

Events as we know them this year have completely diminished due to social distancing and rules required to defeat the pandemic. However, great initiatives have been devised to try and keep people in touch and socially active. Our pubs have provided great quizzes and bingo nights, our local churches online services and children clubs. On May 8th many celebrated (socially distanced of course) with Street Parties to celebrate VE Day. I helped to produce an online celebration message by reading the passage from the bible as read on the actual day. I also participated in my local village Christmas ladies evening which of course was virtual. Organised by the Church and Chapel I demonstrated a flower workshop activity and was able to join in carol singing and listen to a full programme of Christmas events and quizzes. Santa and his reindeer were cancelled this year but we did manage some socially

distanced carol singing to bring some Christmas cheer. Likewise, many Christmas dinners and parties were cancelled but Good Neighbour Schemes and volunteers went into action to deliver parcels to ensure people were not forgotten.

I was able to send a wreath on behalf of the County Council to the Croft and District British Legion branch for Remembrance Sunday although an actual service could not be held. I did attend a short COVID compliant service at Thurlaston Church to mark the day.

There continues to be a great sense of community spirit in the Fosse Villages which has been demonstrated magnificently throughout the COVID 19 crisis.

Finally thank you to all who supported me for re-election in May 2021.

Priorities for the immediate future

- Proposed Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange.
- SDA M69 Junction 2 proposals
- Review the Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan now successful at referendum.
- Once appropriate re-engagement with schools within the Division
- Once appropriate re-engagement with local GP Surgery
- Review of Rural bus services and pilot proposals
- Traffic and infrastructure issues
- Continue to highlight the need for cycle and footpaths in rural areas.

Council Activities

- Children's and Families Overview and Scrutiny Commission – Vice Chair
- Development Control and Regulatory Board.
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority.
- Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Chair of Scrutiny Flooding Review Panel

Local committees/Outside Bodies

- Thurlaston Parish Council (Community Chair)
- Deputy Leader at Blaby District Council portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets.
- Croft Liaison Meeting

Other bodies - School governors/community and charity organisations

- Thurlaston Primary School Foundation Governor
- Thurlaston Church and Chapel activities
- Thurlaston Players' and Amateur Dramatics Group

Learning and Development

- Attended weekly members briefing throughout the pandemic which provided a value source of information during a rapidly changing time

Social Media

- Occasional tweeter
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