

COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

This is a brief report of some of my work during 2020/2021

Councillor Betty Newton, County Councillor for Loughborough North



The past twelve months have been the most remarkable time in living memory. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed so much - from the way in which we work to the way we live. Needless to say, it has had a dramatic effect on my work as a County Councillor. I'm also the Deputy Leader of the Labour Group at County Council.

In my role as a County Councillor, I am a member of the Employment Committee as well as being a member of the Member Conduct Panel. I also sit on the Combined Fire Authority and am Vice-Chair of the Corporate Governance Committee as well as being Chair of the Strategic Equalities Group.

Due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, most of my meetings and engagements over the past twelve months have been conducted by zoom.

However, notwithstanding the restrictions, I managed to maintain a full attendance record at committee meetings as well as speaking at Full Council on a range of issues. I even managed to engage in a few street surgeries and ward work over the Christmas period when restriction measures were relaxed and early in the new year as part of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Safe and Secure Initiative, did some walkabout work with the police in the Warwick Way, Barsby Drive areas and the lower part of Braddon Road. I also had some 300 flyers delivered in the areas were unable to visit.

I carried out my regular street surgeries until the imposition of the Covid restrictions. I completed the Pevensey estate in late December 2020 but have not been able to conduct further street surgeries due to Covid restrictions. Also, prior to the onset of the pandemic, I visited all the community centres in our area.

County Council Briefings/Work

As one of the Three Member Champions for Corporate Parents for looked after children, I attended those briefings/meetings held by the Council and delivered a speech on Corporate Parenting at one of the Full Council meetings.

Mental Health continues to be a major issue. I attended a number of important briefings on Mental Health First Aider and led a Health presentation at one such briefing.

I also participated in a Briefing on Medium Term Financial Strategy.

I was pleased to be able to participate in a Training session on the Role of the Highway Authority in the Planning process.

Another event I participated in was a Digital Strategy on CSE and the Environment and Transport.

I have attended the regular monthly meetings of the Fire Authority working with the Equalities team there. I also attended these meetings in my role as Vice-Chair of Corporate Governance Committee. These meetings are joint meetings with members from the City of Leicester and one member from Rutland. I always read the papers on behalf of our Labour Group and brief members on the issues and encourage them to ask relevant questions. I have to say that this is now beginning to work as at the last meeting all the Group members participated in the discussions. As Equalities Champion for Fire, I attend the monthly meetings of the SEDIP Group. This is a working group composed of officers and myself. I have held several briefings with the Chief Fire Officer to discuss important matters arising from these meetings as well as other issues. I recently sent a joint letter of support (along with the Leader of the Council) to our firefighters acknowledging the work they are doing during these Covid times.

Some Community Events:

I attended all the Hathern Parish Council meetings held throughout the year.

I have also worked with the local police in relation to a clean-up of a particular area in my patch.



Issues and Ward work:

- The flooding issue on the A6 road in Hathern village
- Also, road markings on the A6
- I attended all Hathern Parish Council meetings and reported on work being carried out in the village.
- With other County and Borough Councillors, I have also attended Loughborough Town Deal meetings.
- University Campus Liaison meetings.

County Responsibilities:

- Member of the Conduct Panel
- Employment Committee
- Member Champion meetings for young people
- Regular contributor to debates at Full Council meetings.

Briefings/training:

- Safer Streets briefing
- Corona Virus briefings
- Midland's Connect A46 update briefings
- Medium Term Financial Strategy Briefings
- UHL Acute and Maternity Plans.

As one of the Three Corporate Parents for young people and a member of the Children's Social Care Panel, I've taken part in member Champion meetings organised by the officers.

A Member Conduct panel has been set up and I was one of three members invited to take part in the hearing regarding a member.

I've also taken part in online training sessions including one on the use of the County Council Enquiries Mapping System.

I've participated in a couple of the LGA Diversity and inclusion network meetings.

I took part in Litter Pick in the Gorse Covert area during the year and will be participating in future "picks".

An issue which some residents were concerned about during the year was anti-social behaviour. This led me to meet with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team to discuss the impact on residents in council and Housing Association properties.

Briefings/Training:

I attended a Briefing on schools in Charnwood and highlighted the problem of Hathern School being oversubscribed.

More recently, I have participated in numerous Skype Briefings/meetings dealing with a wide range of issues.

I'm seldom happier in my work as a councillor than when visiting the community centres and meeting with residents in my patch. This has been what I have missed most during the past twelve months because of the pandemic and I cannot wait for it to resume again.

Ongoing Priorities for the future:

- Will continue to campaign to protect Hathern and Garendon from future development
- Support the safer routes to school initiative so that parents will choose to walk rather than drive their children to school
- Monitor the ongoing flooding issue in Hathern
- Work for a cleaner, greener and safer environment
- Encourage initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of Loughborough North residents
- Attend Hathern Parish Council meetings
- Continue to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the local Police Inspector and his team to deliver a safer living environment
- Community Centres such as those at Gorse Covert, Dishley, Hathern and Storer, provide a meeting place for local people to come together. Given the acknowledged link between improved wellbeing and these centres, I will continue to support their excellent and essential work

- Will campaign for a Loughborough Town Council.

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