

## County Councillor Annual Report

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2019/20

**Name of Councillor**    **Louise Richardson**

**Electoral Division activities**    **Enderby and Lubbethorpe Division (incl. Thorpe Astley)**

### **Main Activities and the impact during the past year:**

Due to the Covid pandemic we have conducted all meetings virtually and officers have been working from home. This has been a big change in the way work is carried out however officers and members have risen to the challenge. I also must thank all officers for their flexible way of working throughout the pandemic and for doing what was needed even if this meant carrying out other roles within the organisation.

As Lead Member for Equalities, Community Engagement and Rural Partnerships during this year I have been involved in setting strategic direction and policy of the council together with Cabinet. I have attended the Diversity Alliance, Disability, BAME and LGBT+ network groups as often as I can. As well as the various networks I encourage joint working to focus on common areas where everyone can support each other. I also visit the council's Armed Forces network. Leicestershire's Inter Faith Forum has not met during Covid and has been taken through a workshop just prior to Covid to reform and be more productive on many different areas.

I liaise with voluntary organisations and charities with relation to education and skills, health, disability, faith, race, rural and cultural. This is both through organisations that are commissioned by us to delivery services on our behalf as well as those requesting grants. We have good relationships with our voluntary organisations, and this was seen during this year even more, enabling us to ensure we are in contact with many more organisations. We decided not to run the Shire Grants scheme during lockdown however we set aside a very large Community Fund which enabled charities that were having problems paying rents or keeping services running to access some funding. This was well received, and we assisted a large number of organisations. We also were amazed at the response of volunteers for carrying out Covid testing and vaccinations as well as the many who did a lot in their own communities. The response was fantastic and I do hope we keep some of that community spirit with us as we come out of the restrictions. Working practices will be different and more flexible moving forward I have no doubt.

As Armed Forces champion I continued to meet virtually with the Civil and Military Partnership Board and we were able to meet the criteria to become a Gold award member for the Armed Forces Covenant. We did run a successful work experience programme in Environment and Transport for veterans and it was beneficial to all concerned. We hope to be able to expand this in the future across the council.

Leicestershire Rural Partnership, which I chaired, goes from strength to strength and engages Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, LLEP, Farmers Union, RCC, National Forest and others and now we are working on our Natural Capital evidence base and have been commissioned by LLEP for this work. I was successful in becoming a member of the LLEP this year to enable the voice of the LRP and rural areas to be heard. County officers, through the

LRP, are working on a database of natural Capital in Leicestershire to be used as evidence in work carried out by the LLEP but also will assist the council in its work on the Green Agenda and In ensuring biodiversity.

The Market towns group is fully supported from districts and enables work to be carried out such as fast broadband wifi for towns, working with businesses and looking at the offer presented to residents and visitors. We are also administering the Rural and Towns Business Support Programme due to Covid-19 and ensured that grants were paid out swiftly. We also had to work with towns to ensure that Covid safety measures were implemented.

We also run a hardship fund for those in real difficulties and usually present the Green Plaque scheme to celebrate Leicestershire's important buildings and residents that made a very significant impact on our societies. Unfortunately, the Green Plaque scheme was not run last year due to Covid however shortlisting did occur and background work was undertaken to ensure that as soon as it was safe and allowed to recommence we were able to. The next presentation is taking place in July as long as Covid restrictions have eased.

## **Community Leadership Role**

I work well with my fellow councillors both at district and parish and feel there is a good cohesion when it comes to issues that cross the sectors and attend all meetings where I can, including Enderby parish council, Braunstone town council and I am a Lubbethorpe parish councillor and was involved in the setting up of the council there. I share information and utilise social media to repost any comms released from county, especially needed during Covid-19 in letting people know about grants etc that they could access. My social media is carried out in a personal capacity and I do not have a county twitter, facebook or LinkedIn page.

I keep other councillors and councils aware of what is happening at county and signpost residents and councillors to relevant organisations and departments where appropriate. Bulletins from NHS re Covid-19 were also shared with all councils in my area and I became a Covid Champion to assist in getting messages out to specific areas of the county and specific communities.

In my division I have dealt with many issues for the area. I have been instrumental in bringing together a multi-agency group to tackle the issues caused by the travelling community, which are very complex. The MP has also been informed. This has resulted in appeals being logged that we are still awaiting hearings for. We are now coming up to two years wait and this is totally unacceptable for residents and the council.

Enderby has always had traffic issues and problems have been taken up with directors in Environment and Transport and with the portfolio holder regarding Foxhunter Roundabout, Trinity Road and Mill Lane that runs alongside the primary school, leisure centre, allotments, the high school, tennis courts, bowling club and cricket club as well as residents. This area gets really busy and the safety of the children is a real concern. This is also along with general issues of parking and traffic within Enderby and now the issue of HGVs driving through the centre of the village. I have now negotiated some improvements for the top end of Enderby to deal with HGVs, I have a multi-agency group meeting next week for Mill Lane to see what can be achieved after the last costing of a possible solution was unachievable and have also been successful in getting a camera on Foxhunter Roundabout. Thorpe Astley has also experienced speeding and parking issues and the entrances and exits of roundabouts have yellow lines, and these lines were extended up Murby Road to prevent the overspill of parking from the meridian Business Park. I dealt with complaints regarding queueing for

McDonalds Meridian Way and have asked for cutback of foliage on the Foxton roundabout in Thorpe Astley and also for signage to be improved and cleaned along the ring road and up onto Meridian Way, and a pedestrian sign to show that there is a crossing on the other side of the roundabout as vehicles drive fast around the roundabout without being able to see pedestrians or indeed for pedestrians to see the cars.

I continue to push for a cycle track from Lubbethorpe to Enderby to access the school and always endeavour to do my utmost to solve issues that residents have, if at all possible.

I continue to assist residents with Anti Social Behaviour and abuse.

I am intent on trying to get more community cohesion in Thorpe Astley.

Residents are often asking me about the relief road for Enderby and I will continue to ensure that there is priority given to this.

### **Engagement with the Council, other statutory bodies and public utility companies (Water, Gas etc) about services in the area**

I am a trustee at the RCC (Rural Community Council) and Leicestershire's SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education), Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), Rural Services Network (RSN), Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), Civil and Military Partnership Board (CMPB)

### **Priorities for the immediate future are:**

Traffic  
Car burglaries  
Travellers  
Pushing for Enderby bypass to be brought forward and solutions for improving speeding issues and road traffic accidents in the area.  
Community issues in Thorpe Astley.  
'Rabbit run' in Trinity Road.  
Cycle track from Lubbethorpe to Enderby for school access.  
Check when improvements to Desford crossroads is likely.  
To ensure good mental health is a priority moving out of lockdown.  
And any other issues brought to my attention by residents.

### **Council Activities**

### **Committees you serve on at County Hall**

Cabinet  
Full Council Meetings  
LRP (Leicestershire Rural Partnership)  
IFF (Inter Faith Forum)  
SACRE  
Health and Wellbeing Board due to change in portfolio.

Health and Car Partnership Board due to change in portfolio.  
Any committees or boards due to Joint Health Strategy, prevention etc.

### **Local committees/Outside Bodies**

RCC  
SACRE  
LLR Armed Forces Network  
RSN (Rural Services Network)  
Chair – District Planning Committee  
Scrutiny Commission member at District Council including Finance, Performance and Income  
Generation sub-committees  
Lubbesthorpe Parish Council  
Blaby District Council  
Integrated Care Partnership  
Health and Care Partnership

### **Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc**

Founder Trustee of Tumaini Jipya-New Hope both in UK and in Tanzania  
Rotary International – Rotary Club of Blaby

### **Other Matters:**

I have been given the portfolio for Health this year (May 2021) and therefore I have handed over to another member all the responsibilities for Communities, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and now conducting meetings with individual officers and NHS, CCGs, UHL, PH, etc to ensure that I am up to date considering that the Integrated Care System has to be developed and is a major opportunity for all partners to work collaboratively to bring about some real change for residents. This portfolio is also involved in Covid response as well as planning for Covid recovery, ensuring testing stations are available to residents as conveniently as possible and also arranging vaccinations. Getting the various messages out to hard to reach communities etc is also a priority so that we prevent the need for hospitalisation and any increase in inpatients. We will also likely be involved in flu vaccinations and possible booster vaccinations for Covid. This is on top of the usual prevention strategies and mental health services that will be necessary going forward.

I look forward to my new role and working with partners to improve services for residents and to ensure wellbeing of all.

### **Communications**

I am a member of a number of community pages on facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to be able to both share information but also to pick up on issues that are being talked about, to try to address

issues early rather than for them to fester and nothing being done. I also try to correct misinformation and to let people know of anything I feel would assist in them understanding the system and why something may not be happening at that particular time. All my social media pages are personal pages.

I also give reports at parish meetings when I can attend and repost any messages from County Council. Information is also given by phone and in person however when we asked to do a surgery we were informed it would be too political to use a parish council building which I am rather surprised at as we are there for all residents regardless of party affiliation. We are investigating using other premises.

**Signed by Councillor**

HLRichardson

**Date**

27<sup>th</sup> June 2021