



## County Councillor Max Hunt Annual Report 2021/22

I always welcome any questions from residents

### Formal Council Committee work

This year I was appointed to the **Highways and Transport Committee** which oversees and scrutinises the county's transport policies and programmes. I am generally dissatisfied with the Conservatives lack of strategic approach to transport and the neglect of carbon reduction targets. I articulate my views in a clear and logical way through this committee.

I have also been appointed to the **Scrutiny Commission** and as a Commissioner have been charged, with colleagues to increasing the effectiveness of the scrutiny process.

Like all councillors, I attend the full **Council Meetings** where I speak on your local concerns and on wider policies

These meetings and other information are recorded and [webcast](#) for you on You Tube channel *Committee meetings at Leicestershire County Council*.

### **Local bodies and groups with which I am connected:**

Most of our local residents' organisations failed to meet due to Covid and the lack of Zoom facility and I depended on personal contact by email with the leading members. These are:

*The Loughborough Campus and Community Liaison Group*. This is a forum to address town/gown matters and we did have meetings on zoom. Generally this Group is more of a 'talking shop' and I find it more effective to approach council or university officers direct when problems arise.

*Ashby Road Estates Community Association (ARECA)* which runs the Hut community centre and represents local residents.

*Thorpe Acre Community Association* which has kindly taken on the responsibility for the Thorpe Acre Trail which we created for the Millennium.

*Stonebow Village Parish Meeting* which is still a new organisation created to serve residents in the Garendon Estate. Eventually this will set a Parish Rate but for now they are simply relieved of paying the Loughborough Special Rate. We had one meeting in the year to date, which was notably not attended by anyone from the parish. This will change as residents move into the new houses.

## **Strategic Activities**

**My strategic issues concerning the County Council have not changed and were detailed in my Report last year on which I was re-elected.**



They included:

- Carbon reduction
- Cleaner Air
- Looked after Children and young people
- Schools, Streets and Traffic:.
- Unfair Council Tax rises

## **Corporate Strategic Plan 2022-2026**

The identification of Priority Areas and Neighbourhoods doesn't appear in the plan, nor do the unparished areas figure greatly. Concerns I have raised have been accepted formally in the document and also informally by officers.

## **The Communities Strategy 2022-2026 (Community Approach)**

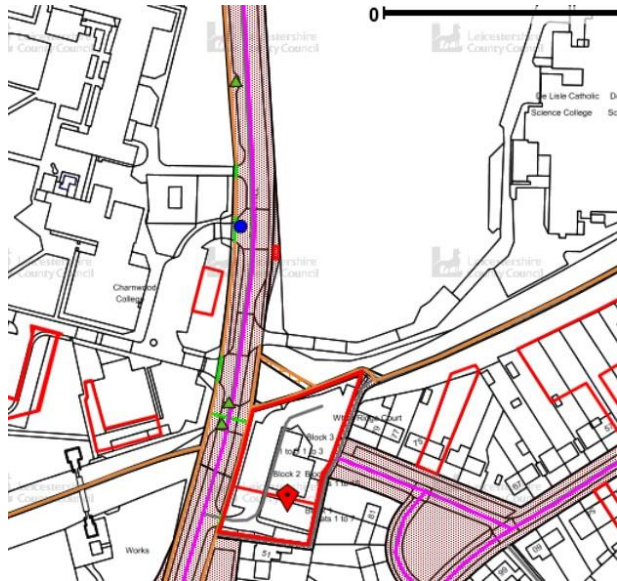
with particular reference to the place given to parish councils and place. I think the team do a good job, and have accepted the remarks in the Corporate Strategy which also apply here.

**I have raised various strategic matters in Full Council and Committee which are on record by searching on my name in [politics.leics.gov.uk](https://politics.leics.gov.uk)**

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

- To minimise further effects of the pandemic, and *build back better* in the aftermath.
- Ensure Social Care services are at their best and have the staff they need to care for vulnerable people under the pandemic.
- Promote the Loughborough town centre.
- Sufficient high-quality school, pre-school and childcare places in the area I represent.
- Promote early carbon zero measures widely.
- Monitor detailed plans for West of Loughborough/Garendon Park development as they emerge, particularly via Conditions and Sections 106 agreement to P/14/1855/2 and subsequent applications.
- Explore new ways to reduce congestion between children/parents and through traffic on Rupert Brooke Road and Old Ashby Road in particular.
- Disseminate the messages of county's public health work promoting Active Travel.
- Better information to families about services for elderly people and people with learning difficulties.

- Support voluntary organisations and try to ensure that grants and participative budgeting are directed towards social priorities.
- Campaign for better funding for the NHS. Never take great performance from our acute services in UHL, mental health in LPP and GP services for granted.
- Improving bus services (Kinchbus in particular) and examine the options within the County's new [Enhanced Bus Partnership](#).
- Introduce road safety improvements where possible and further community speeding interventions to reduce casualties, particularly around schools. The plan illustrated is an example of how previous collisions can be shown if and when requested.
- Continue to campaign with others to reduce casualties involving cycles and pedestrians. Support safer cycle routes.



### **Local Issues for residents and individuals.**

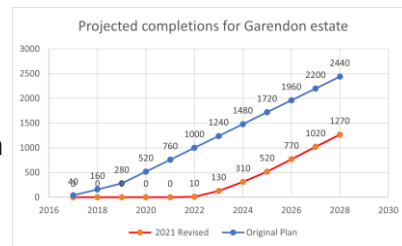
- The development of the Garendon Estate I have reported regularly to residents who are on my mailing list
  - HMOs: Continue to press for complete embargo (0%) on further HMOs. This will be decided by Charnwood BC within the Draft Local Plan.
  - See that the old Garendon High School building is used to the full for educational purposes.
  - Ensure transport for post 16 students to special schools for SEND settings.
  -
- Case work for individuals on various local matters.



## These are some news items brought to residents:

### **Garendon: Persimmon takes over**

We are still safe to take a walk through Garendon over the but things are still happening in the background. From 7th February the developers will be installing a temporary access into site from the Derby Road, just north of Pear Tree Lane. Persimmon is then hoping they can continue working on the A6 "to install utility services prior to the new roundabout being constructed."



I'm told the land has now passed from DeLisle to Persimmon. A letter has been sent to Charnwood Borough Council indicating that Persimmon are unlikely to complete any houses before 2023. They will then be north of Pear Tree Lane where they now have the full planning permission for nearly 500, shared with Wm Davis.

I made a formal submission that the homes should be energy efficient and low carbon, but these considerations can't easily be required through the planning process. Boilers will, no doubt, be driven by gas (a fossil fuel) so it makes you wonder when we will see zero carbon homes. The company has yet to apply for a permit to create a new roundabout on the Derby Road, but they do have approval for a temporary access to start earthworks etc. The tree planting, restoration of the monuments, primary schools and extension of the old railway path are all triggered at different stages in the construction.

See also

[www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/garendon\\_park\\_development](http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/garendon_park_development).

*Roads, Trains, and Active Travel*

I've never understood why the French and Germans could have a fast electric trains whizzing from city to city, but we can only manage one to Birmingham and East Midlands Parkway. We could call it Loughborough Parkway. But these are slow plans coming and we still have ancient rail infrastructure elsewhere. People in Coalville have been crying out for the restoration of the Burton to Leicester 'National Forest' Line for many years.



Most money is still spent on roads, including our new five lane mini-highway to the M1 which was overspent and bailed out by a Build Back Better grant mid Covid. The County will now be putting in a bid to improve the A511 through Coalville even though it will attract more traffic taking a short cut from M1/J22 to A42/J13.

County are making a bid for Government support for cycling and walking in Loughborough. If it succeeds, I expect it will mean



safer crossings and consideration for more electric bikes. I'm pleased to see a growing emphasis on separating cycles from pedestrians. The obvious solution might be to take road space but that would be unpopular where traffic is heavy at peak times (when its often quicker by bike anyway).

Leics County Council has made a bid to increase bus usage. It has been a very difficult time for bus services. The companies have been funded to run empty during the most difficult Covid periods. So, it is difficult to see any obvious ways to increase the use of the service in Loughborough. Fares are too high and petrol driven cars are cheaper for families. Nevertheless I am following this with interest. I have secured a bus shelter for the Sharpley Road shops where residents have had to wait in the rain for too long.



I know that congestion is the major concern of all motorists in the town. If you would like to understand more about where the pinch points will be you may like to read a [consultants report](#) by AECOM for the Charnwood Local Plan It is a bit technical but the locations predicted to get more congested make very interesting reading.

### **Food Waste, Bins and Bottles**

Although the *treatment* of household waste is the responsibility of the County Council, *collection* is done by the Borough and District Councils. Each Council has its own contract - and different coloured bins!



So, to make some sense of this they have been devising one single plan of action to meet climate change targets and encourage reuse, repair and recycling.

They will be publishing their plan for public consultation this January, so if you have strong views look out for it in the Echo, on social media and council's websites.

The plan includes *separate food waste collections for anaerobic digestion by the county, collect the full range of recyclables, continue collecting garden waste and reduce waste sent to landfill to less than 5% by 2025*. They are promising (note: no guarantees) much more co-operation, encouraging and generally doing their best to do more, not so much actually doing. It will depend on a working much more closely than they are used to.

### **Our Incinerator (aka EfW)**

The Incinerator will begin testing in 2022. I have asked the company to ensure that there is an open line for residents to ring in if they encounter odd smells or emissions from the tall stack. The danger is that the plant will encourage local authorities to burn rather than recycle.

The responsibility for monitoring the emissions comes under the government's Environment Agency. For them it's all about risk management and how well or badly they are funded to do the job for us. By the way, the name of the process in the industry is EfW Energy from Waste. So, the name avoids the burning word but to be fair the heat from the process will drive turbines or heat water for distribution to homes or businesses – maybe the campus. We shall see. You can read a lot of the technical detail on <http://www.garendon.freeuk.com/efw.htm>



### **Resurfacing of Wards End**

Unlike most roadworks those at [Wards End](#) have been a Borough Council project. It began as a plan to direct traffic into the Granby Street Car Park via Frederick Street, thus removing most of the through traffic from Wards End and Devonshire Square. This was then reduced to widening pavements and removing access to Bedford Square parking from Wards End. The reduced scheme was estimated at £1.9million, then that became 2.6million and now over £4million. Financially, it overshot partly due to underground problems in Devonshire Square. It was originally conceived as a bigger project, with the Granby Street car park accessed from Frederick Street I believe, but it was then watered down.



By comparison. please allow me to say that the last Labour run borough council created the Market Place and Market Street pedestrian scheme, which I was involved with, has been much more successful, it was within budget and included the Sockman who has become a well loved personality!

### **Graffiti and other frustrations**

You may have noticed that there has been an eruption of mindless graffiti in the past months. I have reported several examples to the Borough Council on [cleaner.greener@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:cleaner.greener@charnwood.gov.uk) during the period. In the past the Borough's anti-social behaviour team have tracked the key culprits down. This year they don't seem to have been so successful. According to the park and open spaces team there has also been a higher level of **vandalism**.

The property review by DRET, who **own Charnwood**



**College**, has been delayed again. I am still in touch with them, however, and waiting for news of their proposals for the former **Garendon High School** land and building, the Swimming Pool and Field House. land and buildings, **Booth Wood** is a Borough responsibility and we are still waiting for their officers to come and set up a Friends Group to help with the tasks needed to encourage wildlife and manage the area.

### **Climate Change Update**

The County Council is making a push to see [more trees planted](#). Trees consume CO<sub>2</sub> and are a good thing if it's the right species in the right place. However, this is not, on its own, going to save the planet as we all keep telling them, especially while Ratcliffe (opposite) is still burning coal.

County Hall itself is now far more efficient to heat – though most are working from home right now.

But the County Council still hasn't bitten the bullet on the measures needed for the whole county. Transport – one of the biggest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> and other pollutants. New road projects are planned on the basis of increasing traffic, when the scientists say we need to reduce travel. The expectation is that soon EV (electric) cars will replace ICE (internal combustion) ones, but cars on the roads today have an average life of 15 years. So, there is much work to do and technology yet to solve problems which stand in our way.

For more background see <http://www.garendon.freeuk.com/climatechange.htm>

### **Taxing Times**

Earlier this year, after the Government raised National Insurance tax, the Conservatives moaned loudly how they hated raising taxes, forgetting that that's how they pay for the things they boast doing. So why is our County Council Tax is going up 3% and by nearly 4% by the Borough Council Tax? I can't speak for the Borough but the



Government is effectively forcing County and City Councils to raise tax to meet the rising cost of children and elderly people in council care. These are statutory obligations.

The Conservatives who also control the Borough are increasing their precept by nearly 4%, as it has done each time for several years.

The Borough Council is also intending to increase the Garden Waste charges by £9 a year, an increase of over 20%, to £50 (or £55 if you don't do Direct Debit). It's interesting that this is rapidly approaching half our Borough precept of £136 at Band D. At some point it becomes cheaper to dispose of green waste at the tip!

### **Using the Tip and the Library**

Please follow Covid advice on all services but I'm pleased to say we are now free to use the [Recycling and](#)



[Household Waste](#) sites (the Tip) without booking. Don't forget that some things can be repaired or reused or set out in a yard sale if you have one in your street.

The Library is back in business, so or all the current Library services see the [County Library](#) web pages.

The service will still be enabling services through the "Self" account and the Mobile Service should be working fully again,

To avoid a trip to the library, I recommend the 'Borrow box' online service for audio and Kindle books for which a Self account isn't needed.



## Visits and Contacts that I have made

- Sir Robert Martin Court (Sheltered flatlets)
- Hanover Court (Sheltered flatlets)
- TACA by invitation (Jan 2022) and ARECA
- Persimmon Homes Consultation Committee (Louise Ward)
- Newhurst Local Liaison Group (David Best, Chair)
- CBC Planning matters

I respond to many people with personal problems that have a bearing on public services.



Wish best wishes to all residents of Garendon and Ashby Wards in North West Loughborough.

Signed:

*Max Hunt.*

**Max Hunt CC**  
May 2022



