

County Councillor Annual Report

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2021/2022.

Name of Councillor **Dr Kevin FELTHAM**

representing the GARTREE Division.

1) Electoral Division activities

Main Activities and the impact during the past year:

May 2021 saw the county council elections across Leicestershire with 55 seats to be decided at polling stations. For the sixth time I was pleased to be elected to represent the 10,942 electors in the Gartree Division of south east Leicestershire. The turnout this time was 34.5% for the division and the results were:

Dr Kevin Feltham (Conservative)	2,357
Liberal Democrat candidate	537
Labour candidate	510
Green candidate	388

This gave me a 1,820 majority (62.1%) and I am very grateful for those who voted for me and all those who helped me deliver leaflets and organise the campaign.



During 2021/22, I attended 41 **parish council meetings** either in person, or virtually,. Occasionally, as in previous years, they clashed with other meetings, such as other parish councils, church council, or if an extraordinary meeting was called, so sadly I had to prioritise which ones to attend. Very occasionally as in previous years I have managed to be at the start of one parish council meeting, and then after giving my monthly report, I have given my apologies and made my way to another parish council to give a similar monthly report before their meeting has finished, but I much prefer to focus on one parish council meeting at a time, if possible. During the early part of the 2021/22 year, the coronavirus pandemic meant some parish council meetings, especially committee and other parish meetings, were still held virtually, e.g. Zoom or Microsoft Teams, which actually let me move more easily between parish council meetings as no travel was involved! It was good to be able to have face to face meetings again with relevant safety

measures such as mask wearing, steriliser being available etc.



Staff changes at the Kibworth Parish Councils, including a new joint deputy clerk and joint groundsperson, during the year has required some of my time and experience to help the two parish clerks find solutions for and to keep on top of staffing and Health & Safety policies. Like all the other parishes in Gartree Division, any new clerks, such as for Tugby & Keythorpe parish, requested some assistance from time to time.

Members Highways Funds of £25,000 per county councillor to help improve highways issues were made available from the middle of 2021/22. The main task was getting the information to all the parishes in my division and then chasing up a few weeks later to see if they had priorities that needed some of the Fund money. I also volunteered to be a member of the Fund panel of members to hold virtual meetings to follow how the scheme was working and the range of issues that were being costed and then added to the list of work to be carried out over the next year. The list for the Gartree Division included some straightforward priorities such as a disabled parking bay near a charity shop, more bollards to prevent parking on grass verges, mobile (battery) vehicle activated speed signs (very popular in small villages with speeding problems), and village gateways. A second year of Members Highways Funding in 2022/23 will be well received too.

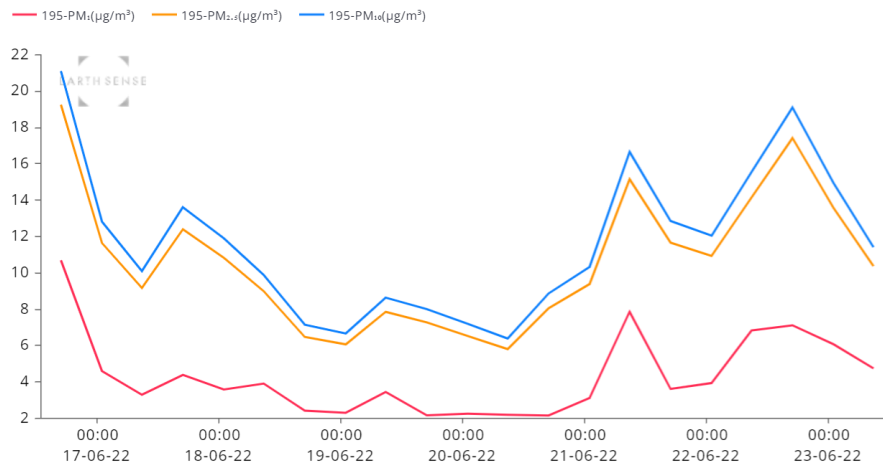
I rely heavily on my experience from over 20 years as a county councillor to have ongoing good working relationships with County Council and Harborough District Council (HDC) officers, as well as other parishes in the Gartree Division and their clerks.

In the majority of cases, where I am sent an agenda and invitation for parish council meetings, and I am able to attend, I am pleased to give an update on county council business and my activities; if I am unable to attend, I always aim to provide written reports by email. I'm also happy to follow up issues raised by parish councils with the county council where the response has been delayed or requires further explanation.

The venture to create an **Autism Friendly Kibworth**, which began in 2019/20, was paused in 2020/21 and 2021/22 when the lockdown put a stop to events. However, the Autism Friendly Kibworth Facebook group now has over 70 members, and I am hopeful that we can begin activities again during 2022/23.

The **A6 Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** on the A6 through the Kibworths and the need for an **A6 bypass** have not been resolved. I continue liaising with the MP, Neil O'Brien OBE, ward councillors, the Director of Highways at LCC and HDC staff who measure the air quality on the A6 through the Kibworths. The likelihood of a bypass in the next few years is very unlikely as it would require thousands of houses being built to fund it, and the Kibworths are still recovering from needing to accommodate some 2,000 houses built in the last 13 years. The Zephyr real-time data collecting equipment on the A6 from Earthsense, which can be examined via a website, is a great improvement on the previous delayed monthly averages from tubes on streetlamp posts at several locations on the A6, and the air quality monitor installed by HDC in 2019.

The following image is for 8 hour measurements of particulate matter in mid-June 22 from the Earthsense monitor on the A6 in the Kibworths.



Although the made **Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan** and adopted **HDC Local Plan** do not designate any further housing developments, there have been two large sites with planning permission continuing to be built out during 2021/22. Some applications for more housing developments in the Kibworths have been refused because of the clear policies in the Neighbourhood and Local Plans and because HDC has a five-year housing supply; the applicants have also lost appeals to the planning inspectorate. A review of the **Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan** began in 2019/20 and includes small allocations for about 21 houses on four small sites within the limits to development but concluding it has been delayed due to the lockdown and it is due to begin Regulation 16 consultation in the Spring/Summer 2022, so hopefully will be ready for a referendum in 2023. The Neighbourhood Plan for Tugby & Keythorpe parish is also going through statutory consultations in 2021/22.

Since 2001, I have continued to contribute regular Gartree Division news articles on local matters of interest to the **Kibworth & District Chronicle**, a free community newspaper delivered to over 4,500 homes in 25 villages across south Leicestershire, many in the Gartree division; and now [online](#) since the coronavirus pandemic hit. I used to contribute similar articles to the quarterly **Glen Sence**, a free community newspaper delivered to Great Glen, Burton Overy, Wistow and Newton Harcourt but that sadly folded in 2019/20, although is hopefully coming back in 2022.

Community Leadership Role

Since 2019/20, I led the work, with legal support, to regularise the two joint Kibworth Parish Council committees to bring them into line with new accountancy regulations – no joint committees could have separate bank accounts, staffing or assets, from the principal parish authorities and the ongoing work to assist with audit queries has continued to 2021/22. Three **Memoranda of Understanding** have been required to ensure members from both parish councils fully understand how the new arrangements work in practice.

The joint **Kibworths Parish Office** in the Kibworth Grammar School Hall, that was setup and refurbished during 2019/20 was closed for almost the whole of 2020/21 because of the pandemic, before it re-opened in May 2021. The parish office is mainly used by the two Kibworth parish clerks and joint deputy clerk, for briefings of the two parish and Joint Board chairmen and has been used for councillor surgeries with district ward councillors and myself.

In 2019, I helped define the specification for a **Feasibility Study** of community facilities in the two Kibworths, and after obtaining a small grant from HDC and tendering, Nortoft Partnerships Ltd carried out a survey and published an initial report in May 2020, which because of the pandemic and lockdowns didn't progress much further. This has now being followed up by the formation during 2021/22 of a Steering Group, consisting of representatives from the Trustees of

the Kibworth Grammar School Hall, Kibworth Community Library and both parish councils. I am the representative for Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council. The group is working to improve community facilities, the future location of the community library and the change of the Kibworth Grammar School Hall into a Kibworth Community Hub. A planning application was submitted for the changes in April 2022 and is due to go to the HDC Planning Committee in the summer of 2022.

Following on from a similar event in 2020, and after funding has been identified, I helped organise a second **Kibworth Get Active Day** with both parish councils and a professional sports coaching company on the large Warwick Park between the two Kibworths in Spring 2021. Over 150 local children took part in the variety of sports activities including cricket, football, basketball, dance, gymnastics and frisbee. Further work with the coaching company has been arranged for youth indoor activities during the winter of 2021/22.

In September 2021, I helped with a Sunday afternoon consultation event organised by both Kibworth Parish Councils for the public to come along to see plans, talk to councillors and comment on the Neighbourhood Plan Review version, the Open Park Strategy of draft design proposals for five public parks and the Kibworth Community Hub alterations to the Kibworth Grammar School Hall should planning permission be granted. Questionnaires were issued to the 150 people who attended, and I also helped make them available online for the Open Space Strategy and later the Community Hub.

On behalf of Kibworth Joint Recreation Board I helped the clerks apply for section 106 funding in 2021/22 for inclusive play equipment for a small play area off Smeeton Road, a new concrete and fibre glass lined pond in Rookery Close Park and a tarmac pathway through Smeeton Road Recreation Park. As of May 2022, funding has been approved for the inclusive play equipment, the pond and the tarmac pathway. Further applications are due to be produced in 2022 for a trim trail, zipwire and skatepark.



Site for new concrete and fibre glass lined pond

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

In May 2021 I was delighted to be elected vice-chairman of the county council. I attended all four county council meetings during 2020/21 (May 2020 was cancelled) and all were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. As in previous years these are all webcast and can be viewed in the county council's YouTube archives. Amongst the items discussed in addition to regular reports from Cabinet members were reports on the impact of covid-19. Revisions to the Strategic Plan and Environment Strategy were approved as was the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget.

I have thoroughly enjoyed being a Management Committee Board member for the **Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation** (ESPO) for over 15 years. This is public sector owned professional buying organisation (PBO) with six authorities as members – five of them County Councils: Leicestershire (host authority), Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Warwickshire, Cambridgeshire, plus Peterborough City. ESPO is committed to getting the most for our customers by pursuing best practice in procurement, sourcing, supply chain partner support and management, contract

management and EU compliance. During 2021/22, I also continued to serve on the ESPO Audit & Finance Committee which used MS Teams for all of our meetings not just because of the covid pandemic but also because it helps members reduce travelling.

The main ESPO website has been totally revamped and went live during 2021. This has improved online ordering and is helping improve efficiency for the organisation and their customers.

Priorities for the immediate future are:

The key priority for the Kibworths is the recognition by the highways authority, police and national government that speeds along the A6 through the Kibworths need to be monitored, ideally with average speed cameras, to maintain traffic speeds below 30 mph. A **Community Speed Watch** (CSW) at two locations on the A6 was due to be started just before the March 2020 lockdown, and projects have not yet restarted. Together with Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council and residents, over 200 signatures of residents asking for a CSW were obtained in 2019/20. This should have led to some 30 volunteers being trained during the summer of 2020 in the use of the equipment but again the coronavirus caused this to be postponed until 2021/22 when hopefully the work can commence. I met with the police to agree three locations for the CSW to take place.

A Kibworth bypass would benefit the community but is not likely to be revisited without being funded by thousands of new houses. The current Harborough Local Plan does not include large housing development in the Kibworths or Great Glen, and both have Neighbourhood Plans in place; Great Glen have reviewed theirs and it also has been made. The Kibworths review is underway.

Another step towards evidence building is continuation of the real-time nitrogen dioxide monitoring on the A6. An additional air quality Zephyr monitor was installed in 2020/21 to provide real-time data for other pollutants - **Particulate Matter** (PM1, PM2.5 and PM10). It is always a surprise for those not living in the Kibworths to realise that the A6 through the Kibworths has over 20,000 vehicles using it every day and has been listed as the fourth worst nitrogen dioxide polluted area in the East Midlands.

There are still ongoing discussions about finding locations for housing that Leicester City say they cannot take, and there have been rumours that the area north of Great Glen is being reviewed as a possible site for thousands of houses to take the city overspill. If this is to go ahead, it will need considerable infrastructure, especially highways, so although the A46 Expressway may have been dropped, there will need to be something to take the traffic away. I shall be continuing to press that an A6 bypass around the Kibworths should be an essential part of any strategic plans for this area.

Anti-social behaviour problems (ASB) have continued to cause problems in the Kibworths and also in Great Glen. During the summer of 2021, vandalism to a new picnic table and benching in the play area of Warwick Park was destroyed by arsonists with Kibworth firefighters called to extinguish the fire at 1am. A number of **Facebook Community Groups** began during the covid pandemic. These social media sources continue to provide evidence of burglary, car theft and damage and ASB. I continue to liaise with the Local Policing Unit, the three Kibworths Ward members and the HDC Community Safety Partnership.

Capacity in local schools continues to be an ongoing issue, but with less houses being built in both the Kibworths and Great Glen, there have been slight reductions in the pupil numbers for both primary schools, although the secondary Kibworth School (now renamed Kibworth Mead Academy) continues to experience space challenges. I will continue to work with the teams at County Hall to review pupil numbers and discuss future strategies. An application for a new Cibbaeus primary free school has been approved by the Department for Education and land off

Warwick Road in Kibworth Beauchamp identified, but this location will be challenging if approved.

2) Council Activities

Committees you serve on at County Hall 2021/22

While taking on the role of vice-chairman of the county council I have only been appointed to regulatory bodies instead of scrutiny committees:

- Development Control & Regulatory Board
- Local Pension Committee
- Employment Committee

.I attended all meetings of these bodies during 2021/22 in person when lockdown rules permitted or via MS Teams.

My principal role during 2021/22 has been as elected vice chairman to the chairman, Cllr Dan Harrison. Although the number of engagements were curtailed due to the covid pandemic, I was very honoured to represent the county council at a range of events including opening the Women's Aid Leicestershire Reflection Garden in Abbey Park, Prince's Trust presentation awards, the East Midlands Chamber Annual Dinner in Nottingham, a Cultural Communities Network celebration at 120s House, a celebration of Leicester & Leicestershire Street Pastors, a celebration of Achievement Awards for Children in Care at the National Space Centre, the opening of a new Leicestershire County Cricket Club Memorial Garden by the Bishop of Leicester and various charity dinners.



Local committees/Outside Bodies

I have been a parish councillor on **Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council** since 2015, and Chairman since 2016; re-elected in May 2019 as councillor, and re-elected chairman for 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22. In order to continue improving the working relationships between the two Kibworth parish councils I along with another councillor, have been co-opted onto both Kibworth Parish Councils.

As I was a parish representative on the original Kibworths Neighbourhood Planning Group from 2016 to 2018, I volunteered to take a similar role for the review of the Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan which has been meeting since 2019 and, but for the lockdown, would have held a public consultation on the review changes but this was delayed until September 2021. It has been updated to ensure it is conformity with the HDC Local Plan adopted in 2019. The Regulation 14 consultation took place in 2021 and minor changes were agreed as necessary before it was submitted for Regulation 16 consultation by HDC in March 2022. It is hoped the Review version will be independently examined later in 2022 and a referendum to adopt it can take place by 2023.

I continue to serve as a parish representative on the **Kibworth Joint Recreation Board** and was re-elected vice chairman for 2021/22. A key piece of work in 2021/22 was for the Kibworth Joint Recreation Board to engage a landscape designer to prepare outline proposals for enhancing the five parks in the two parishes; this public were consulted on this Open Space Strategy in September 2021 and subsequent modifications.

I took on the role as chairman of the **Kibworth Joint Burial Board** in 2020/21. The cemetery is a peaceful sanctuary for relatives and friends of those buried in the quiet grounds, as well as local

residents walking through the grounds, and it is important this continues. We have purchased **Epitaph** software in order to be able to record all burials in the cemetery since it opened in 1892; there are over 3,000 graves so a labour of love for the clerk!

The 19th century **Lychgate** is being considered for listed status by Historic England. It has exquisite, stained glass windows and wooden pillars. It has electricity and still has the original hand drawn bier preserved inside the building and which is due to be expertly restored in 2022. The Lychgate is included in the Neighbourhood Plan as a local heritage asset.



I continued as a committee member for the **Kibworth & Smeeton Village Hall** during 2021/22 which managed to continue providing a suitable venue for dance and karate classes while maintaining pandemic precautions. WiFi has now been installed and plans are being prepared for improving the external appearance at the Station Street entrance.

I remain a committee member (Treasurer & Secretary) of the **Kibworth Improvement Team** formed after the highly successful BBC TV series 'Story of England' by Michael Wood and Maya Vision International. During the year I continued to help with the ongoing contributions to the online Museum section of the www.kibworthvillage.co.uk website that continues to publicise the heritage of Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt and Smeeton Westerby.

Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc

I resigned on 22 June 2021 as a member of the Local Governing Board (LGB) at the **Robert Smyth Academy** in Market Harborough, which is now part of the Tudor Grange Multi-Academy Trust. I had been a member of the Governing Body during the management of the school by five headteachers.

I continue to be an appointed Trustee of the **Nicholson Memorial Charity**. During 2021/22 the Trust continued to approve grants to young individuals and youth organisations. Many of our meetings during the year were held virtually.

I continue to be the **Kibworth Parochial Church Council** Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer for St Wilfrid's Anglican Church in Kibworth Beauchamp.

3) Learning and development:

I attend as many all-member briefings as I can or study the follow up of emailed slide presentations if I am unable to attend a briefing in person. All of these briefings during 2021/22 have been virtual using MS Teams and have had a better attendance virtually than when they were held in person in previous years. Being able to switch on the laptop five minutes before the briefings which were usually at 4pm on Tuesdays was preferable than having to drive for 40

minutes to County hall and then drive back.

4) Other Matters:

With over 50 years of experience working in and around the NHS, including short spells at major London tertiary hospitals (Guys & St Thomas, Imperial College), and officially retiring in December 2018, I occasionally still get asked to provide some advice in strategic planning for new laboratory computer systems by both commercial suppliers and NHS Hospital Trusts.

For several weeks leading up to Christmas 2021 I was delighted to take on the role of the resident Santa Claus at the Kibworth Harcourt Windmill Farm Park on most afternoons.



Social Media

Twitter: @kevin_feltham

Website: <http://politics.leics.gov.uk/mgMiniSite.aspx?UID=280&EID=0&PID=131&PG=1>

Signed by Councillor:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Feltham'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Date 23/06/2022