

## County Councillor Annual Report

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2022/2023.

**Name of Councillor**     **Dr Kevin FELTHAM**

**representing the GARTREE Division.**

### **1) Electoral Division activities**

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

During 2022/23, I attended 38 **parish council meetings** either in person, or virtually; since the covid-19 pandemic, some parish council committee meetings are still held virtually. Occasionally, as in previous years, they clashed with other meetings, such as other parish councils, church council, duties as LCC chairman or if an extraordinary meeting was called, so sadly I had to prioritise which ones to attend.

Recent staff changes at the Kibworth and Great Glen Parish Councils, during the past three years has required some of my time and experience to help the new parish staff find solutions for and to keep on top of staffing and Health & Safety policies. Like all the other parishes in Gartree Division, all clerks requested some assistance from time to time.

**Members Highways Funds** of £25,000 per county councillor per year to help improve highways issues were made available from the middle of 2021/22 and for part of 2022/23. The main task was getting the information to all the parishes in my division and then chasing up a few weeks or months 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 first 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. The administration of the Members Highways Fund proved a challenge but the projects that were successfully installed have been a major asset.

I rely heavily on my experience of over 22 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. Sadly, over the years, many staff have now retired but always important keeping up relationships.

In most 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** began in 2019/20, and 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 increased to 109 members, since we publicised it again during

2022/23.

Although the original 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 being built out during 2022/23. 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 more than 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. Concluding of this review version was delayed due to the lockdown but after the relevant consultations and external examination it was completed and put to a referendum on 4 May 2023. The results showed overwhelming support for the Neighbourhood Plan at 89.9% voting Yes in support of the Plan and so it was made by HDC on 31 May 2023.

Since 2001, I have continued to contribute monthly 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.

## 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 was concluded in 2021/22. Three **Memoranda of Understanding** were needed to ensure members from both parish councils fully understood how the new arrangements would work in practice. More work is still ongoing to simplify accounting practices between the two Kibworth parish councils.

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. It is small so a larger office was identified upstairs in the same building and has been used since April 2023.

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 was 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 continue to be 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 Kibworth Community Hub. A planning application was granted permission by HDC Planning Committee in 2022. The main work now is to simplify governance of a new combined charity when formed, and to identify the funding for the project. Nortoft will no longer be involved from the end of May 2023.

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 Park and a tarmac pathway through Smeeton Road

Recreation Park. As of May 2022, funding was approved for the inclusive play equipment, the pond and the tarmac pathway. Further applications have been submitted and granted in 2022/23 for a trim trail, zipwire and skatepark.



*Site for new concrete and fibre glass lined pond, now fitted, filled and planted – ready for new wildflowers*

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

On 18<sup>th</sup> May 2022 I was delighted to be elected chairman of the county council. I attended all five county council meetings during 2022/23 including an extraordinary meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to remember Queen Elizabeth II following her death on 8<sup>th</sup> September. 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 the Strategic Plan, Communities Strategy and Community Safety Strategy, and Net Zero Leicestershire Strategy and Action Plan which were all approved as was the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget.

During 2022/23, I attended some 170 events as chairman of the county council representing some 712,000 residents of the county. This is just a brief list of some of the events and venues I was privileged to attend:

- Hosted Chairman's reception in July at Beaumanor Hall
- Hosted King Charles Coronation lunch in May 2023 at Beaumanor Hall
- Attended Musicals at Curve by invitation including Wizard of Oz and Matilda
- Attended celebration at R.A.F Wittering
- Memorial to Chief Constable Simon Cole at Leicester Tigers Club
- Leicester City Council Town Hall, Lord Mayor election May 2022
- Numerous services held at St Mary de Castro Church, Leicester
- Numerous presentations by Princes Trust Teams in Leicester, Hinckley, Loughborough and Melton Mowbray
- Attended graduation ceremonies for Loughborough University, Leicester University and De Montfort University
- Met and attended several events with High Sheriff of Leicester and Leicestershire
- Met and attended several events with the High Sheriff of Rutland
- Met with Rupert Matthews, Police and Crime Commissioner
- Privileged to unveil green plaques for Frances Deacon, Bert Black, Theodora Salusbury, and the Military Stables (Defence Animal Training Unit)
- Attended Open Day at Rainbows Hospice in Loughborough

## Priorities for the immediate future are:

The key priority for the Kibworths continues to be 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, and one on Albert Street in Kibworth Harcourt, were held in April/May 2023 and 63 vehicles exceeded the relevant speed limit over the two-week trial period with volunteers operating the radar equipment. Letters were sent to the vehicle owners by the police.

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 and the Kibworths have reviewed them, and both have been made.

**Anti-social behaviour** problems (ASB) have continued to cause problems in the Kibworths and also in Great Glen. 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.

## 2) Council Activities

### Committees you serve on at County Hall 2021/22

While taking on the role of chairman of the county council I have not been appointed to regulatory or scrutiny committees:

My principal role during 2022/23 has been as the elected chairman. Cllr Dan Harrison was elected to be vice-chairman during the year.

In addition to the events I attended that are listed above, I was privileged to represent the county at the Armed Forces Parade on High Street in Leicester in May 2022, the laying of commemorative wreaths for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 10<sup>th</sup> September in Green Dragon Square and the Proclamation for King Charles II at Town Hall Square on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022. I also managed to arrive at Market Harborough for the end of the Proclamation there by the vice-chairman of Harborough District Council that same afternoon.



### Local committees/Outside Bodies

I have been a parish councillor on **Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council** since 2014, 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 also been co-opted onto Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council.

I continue to serve as a parish representative on the **Kibworth Joint Recreation Board** and was re-elected vice chairman for 2022/23. Planned work according to the Open Space Strategy have been progressed during the year using either s106 contributions or specific grants.

I took on the role as chairman of the **Kibworth Joint Burial Board** in 2020/21 and was re-elected for 2022/23. 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 continued to enhance the cemetery with a new wooden fence along the eastern side of the cemetery and a new tarmac path around the natural burial area, both funded by s106 contributions.



The 19<sup>th</sup> century **Lychgate** was granted Grade II listed status by Historic England in 2022/23. 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 was expertly restored in 2022/23. 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 2022/23 as it managed to continue providing a suitable venue for dance and karate classes as well as village cinema film nights occasionally throughout the year. WiFi has now been installed and the toilets have been upgraded. The external appearance at the Station Street entrance is due to be improved in 2023.

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](http://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 continue to be an appointed Trustee of the **Nicholson Memorial Charity**. During 2022/23 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 could as the majority during 2022/23 were held online using MS Teams. All of these briefings continued to have 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 and 2022 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:**

**Date 27/06/2023**