

From County Councillor Amanda Hack - Braunstone Division

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Annual Report 2022/23

Review of the Year

22/23 has seen much change for me at the County Council. I was voted by my peers to take over the Labour Group Leadership from May 23. This has meant I have led the Labour response in many debates at Full Council and taken forward the Labour Group position at the County Council.

Full Council provides an opportunity for Councillors to put forward questions and motions. Our group ask many questions and this year I have asked questions on Sure Starts and how the revised programme called Family Hubs will be funded post 2024. As a passionate advocate of Sure Start after seeing firsthand just how supporting families with an early start can make all the difference for the future. Yet this time limited funding, being hosted by many old sure start buildings just makes me worry its more sticking plaster politics.

The pressure on the budget continues to be a challenged with the massive increases in inflation. There has been a programme of more cuts proposed which reflected the expected budget deficit, fortunately there was a very slight ease of pressure meaning the cuts did not have to be so deep. In light of the changing position, for the budget meeting in February I seconded a motion put forward by the Lib Dems to put £500k of subsidy back into the Bus Passenger transport network. We have seen significant reductions in passenger transport usage that the government is trying to tackle using the £2 subsidy and I felt that we needed to hold services at consistent levels to stabilise the services and give the £2 simple fare structure have time to encourage people back onto the buses. Unfortunately this motion was voted down by the lead group.

2022, has seen a return to consistent meetings in the Council Chamber following disruption during Covid.

Moments in History **Platinum Jubilee**

In June 2022, we saw our communities come together for the Queens Platinum Jubilee and it was lovely to visit the street parties planned across the weekend in Braunstone Town. Those that opted for Friday evening certainly got the best of the good ole British Weather. The Road closures support was put to good use and quite a few street parties took place. As well as the Town Council supporting the Pre School at an event in the Thorpe Astley Community Centre and providing funding for those that needed it. A few pictures captured over the weekend.

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As a Town Council, we felt that lighting of a beacon, wasn't the right way to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee when we have recently declared a Climate Emergency. So we will be having 2 areas in the town to be planted with a Queen's Canopy, one will be in Thorpe Astley, and one within Mossdale Meadows.

Queens Death 8th September

Just 3 months after the Platinum Jubilee, the Queen sadly passed away. It was an honour to speak in the Full Council meeting that was arranged to mark this point in History. I thought it was important for me to include my Speech in Full.

'I am sure like me you have heard so many great tributes for Queen Elisabeth II and on behalf of my group I would like to raise my own tribute to the Queen.

The collective loss, that many of us feel, from the local people I spoke to at the proclamation in my division of Braunstone Town to my family and friends. To the local reverend, that opened the church for quiet time for parishioners. It seems the feelings people had about the Queen were similar and connected some-how.

People feel that the Queen has offered an ever constant in our lives, some remember her coronation, but for most of us we have only ever known a single British Monarch. She has always been there. Her death has meant a pause in our normal, for some this, is a ripple and for others her loss has been felt much harder. I do think that grief is an emotion that has no real rules, we feel the loss we feel and I'm sure the rituals we are seeing will offer some comfort for those who are finding this difficult.

Her life of service, her life as our Monarch and Head of the Commonwealth she had a vast array of obligations and it's clear from her actions that she didn't waiver from her vow to serve and this was evident in her speech during the early days of Covid gave people hope that we would be able to see each other again to her dutifully observing the rules at her late husband, Prince Philips funeral.

My favourite story from the past weekend was that of some American tourists who she'd met whilst walking with an aide, they didn't realise she was the Queen and became interested when she suggested that the aide had met the Queen many times. I'm sure it must have been a rare moment for one of the most famous people in the world to have that moment of being unknown.

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Finally our thoughts are with the royal family at this difficult time. I watched the royal family pay a silent Vigil to guard the late Queen in Edinburgh, such a poignant moment. How did they find the strength after losing their mother to undertake this vigil and many of the other historic customs in full public view? The family now led by our King, Charles the third, I'm sure will continue to fulfil the roles the Queen has undertaken for more than 70 years. Long Live the King.'



There is a sense that time moves us on. The national time of mourning was surrounded by the duty of the Royal family and progression of the towards a new monarch. One of the areas of duty that is performed really quickly is the Proclamation of the New King. I attended the proclamation at the Braunstone Civic Centre.

In June 2023 we saw the coronation of the King, which I will report in 23/24.

Working for our Community

In addition, to being a County Councillor I have continued to be a Town Councillor and have been proud to be involved with a progressive Town Council and following my attendance at the Carbon Literacy Course in December 21, our Town Council agreed and have funded a programme of measures

to Net Zero the Town Council. The Strategy towards net zero is the Town Council's opportunity to lead by example the changes we can make to become more sustainable. Agreement for Solar Panels, EV chargers and more sustainable heating at Thorpe Astley Community Centre was all agreed.

Main Activities throughout the Year



The new ways of getting out and about that I picked up during Covid have continued in 2022/23, although hampered by an injury but I've been out picking litter as often as I can, it gets me out and about, but it also allows me to speak to people who are around and keep in touch with our local facilities.

I'm pleased to report, that the stray Pinecones I collected in April 22 along Narborough Road South were used to great effect and offered a great activity for the children at the Christmas Fair in November 22. We were still finding glitter in the town council meeting room in March!!

Until my injury in November I continued to run the area regularly, it's my sort of patch walk as I report things as I go, it's also handy to be able to see things up and close. It was on one of my runs in September that I was stopped by another local resident about the pathways over the Kingsway. They were in a dreadful condition, and I

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was so pleased to see that they had been repaired earlier in 2023. We got several positive comments about the new pathway.

I am fortunate to be involved in the Town Council as the team keep me in touch with local issues, but it also means I can call on them for very localised concerns. In April 2023, I made the decision not to stand again for the Town Council, after 12 years it was important for me to hand over the baton. It was also becoming too much to be a Town Councillor in Thorpe Astley and representing the remainder of the town at County level.

Some of the other key things I have been doing:

- Worked with the local beat team on crime issues across the beat.
- Its been another difficult year for secondary school intake year for September 2022, so I have spoken to many families worried about what to do.
- Many one-to-one sessions with local people on individual casework.
- Met again with Millfield School, Highways and the lead member for Highways around the traffic at pick up/drop off time.

One area that has caused the community some concern this year is the application for a 5G Mast on the Kingsway. There are many concerns that were raised and I put forward a response on behalf of the public. The areas of concern included:

- Impact on the local highway, in terms of visibility
- The fact that the Kingsway was protected from development in the 1960's for 100 years

The District Councillors led the representation at the Planning Committee. The District Council rejected the plans. Unfortunately, the Planning Inspector decided to approve the plans on appeal. So I wrote to Alberto Costa MP, about the situation, how the planning inspector can rule against the decision of the planning authority, but also on the basis that the land should be protected. Frustratingly the MP, indicated that the issue is a civil matter. One that the community had already won in the courts in the 1960s.

Flooding

We have continued to have a few issues with flooding in the subways, although this time it was sorted out more quickly than the central subway. The Subway closest to Fosse Park went out of action in early winter, the repair was agreed quickly, but there was a delay on the supply of the part needed. I managed to get highways to agree drain the subway before the last couple of weeks before the break-up for Christmas, but the cold snap meant the water froze and therefore made the subway unsafe to re-open. The repair was completed a little after Christmas.

We also had some re-occurring issues on Braunstone Lane East in November, after heavy rainfall. The County recommended some clearance areas for Leicester City Council (as the problem is within the city boundary) and for Severn Trent to complete. We have had some further flooding in May 23 and additional works have been advised by County.

Committees

In May 2022 I changed committees and joined the **Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee** I am involved in scrutinising a wide range of Highways issues. This year we have looked at:

- Special Education Needs Transport
- Street lighting
- Member Highways Fund
- Melton Distributer Road
- Highways Design Guide
- Flooding
- Gulley Cleaning
- Performance

Whilst I handed over Labour spokes for **Environment** I attended the meeting in November, when the water companies that I had been asking to present to us finally attended to explain their current predicament in relation to the rivers and waterways in Leicestershire.

As Leader of the Labour Group, I pick up the role of **Scrutiny Commissioner** we have a programme of reports that are reviewed on an annual cycle as well as others that are reviewed less frequently. Most reports are seen by a Scrutiny Commission before they go to Full Council.

Alongside being a County Councillor, I am also Deputy Leader of Braunstone Town Council and attend, Corporate Governance, Policy and Resources, Community Development and Full Council.

Communication

Return to almost business as usual has meant that the local Labour team has been out an about speaking to residents. This is an important part of keeping in touch with local issues. We were back out on the doors throughout the year.

Save Park Drive GP Practice petition

The petition was presented in the previous year, but several reports were received into 2022. After the process closed, I felt that the response from the NHS was not in the spirit of what had been promised. So I met with the CEO of local services and continued to meet him until October 2022. When it was proposed I got involved with the transport for the new practice. At this moment in time, I was not prepared to commit time and resources to something that meant the door was closed to Park Drive. Councillors are due to meet in the next few weeks to discuss future campaigns.

Through this year I have been in touch with Community Groups and worked with the Braunstone Town Council colleagues to provide additional grant support to local groups.

I work with the local media and share press releases with all the local newspapers.

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