

Barry Champion CC

County Councillor for Market Harborough East

(incl. the parishes of East Langton; Great Bowden; Thorpe Langton and West Langton)



2022 has really been about recovery from Covid and dealing with the backlash from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

With so much financial support from the Government, filtering down through County, Districts and Boroughs and so much disruption to our normal working lives, there was always going to be period of reassessment and resetting, not only financially but also with new ways of working as 'work from home' took hold.

Budgets have been under tremendous pressure and the Council has continued to work tirelessly, looking for savings with the least impact, in just the same way everyone of us has had to do at home.

There are many positives to be taken from the changes we are seeing, but with change comes disruption and this has been a busy year, trying to ease these changes in with as little disorder as possible.

Electoral Division Activities and Committees

Firstly Highways. Although I am not on the Highways committee, most emails from residents are usually concerned with Highways matters.



One issue brought to my attention by the Little Bowden Society concerned Bellfield Lane in Little Bowden. A road, with no warning signs, leading to a sharp turn under a narrow railway bridge. Numerous near misses were observed by residents, including myself, but the Society were unable to get Highways to make any improvements.

After some lengthy discussions and perseverance, I was able to get road narrowing signs put in place and the situation has now improved.

I met with Arriva last year with our MP Neil O'Brien and my fellow county members to press for improvements to our local bus services. Services were being cancelled or delayed due to the fallout from Covid, with many drivers taking early retirement and difficulties in re-filling the roles. Arriva assured us that they were dealing with these issues by having to hire contract staff and put them up in hotels, It highlighted just how much the pandemic had changed the things we took for granted.

My Members Fund projects are progressing with MVAS (Motor Vehicle Activated Sign) installations, signage repairs etc. and working with the Council to get drainage improvements in Thorpe Langton.



One area I'm currently working on is Clarence Street in Market Harborough. This is a very narrow road (single track due to parking allocations) that causes numerous hold ups, cars driving along pavements, cars speeding to get through the section of road to avoid hold ups and so on.

I have been in discussions with Highways on a possible one-way system and to get things started, with the help of local residents, I have put out a survey to over 200 homes to ask the residents for their opinion on such a change.

The response as you can see on the right has been excellent, and I can now feed this through as I work with both Leicestershire County Council and Harborough District Council to get traction on this project.



I have also dealt with additional issues relating to verge repairs after developers have left site, the high kerbs on the Great Bowden railway bridge (which are now to be lowered) and working extensively with the newly formed Market Harborough Town Forums to improve the cycling and walking pathways.

With the budget constraints reported last year relating to LCC's Community Life Choices (or day care as it is better known) provision within the division. I have continued to monitor the situation and have been kept informed by the team to ensure all our residents are well cared for during changes to the system. So far, all has gone well, with no reported issues to myself.

Pressures on the Adult & Communities budgets have been significant, and although the Covid pandemic may be over, far more people are needing care as they leave hospital.

As a carer myself, I experienced first hand the difficulties faced by many as elderly family members are discharged from hospital, a shadow of their former selves.

I was lucky to experience our HART team (Homecare Assessment and reablement Team) in full swing. They help newly discharged patients to find their feet again, ensuring all necessary equipment is in place so that residents can get back to their old life within their own homes. I can't praise them enough for their professionalism, cheery disposition and level of care shown.

It's an excellent service that county provides free of charge (including the equipment).

My role on the Leicestershire, and Rutland Combined Fire Authority has continued. The CFA is made up of Councillors from across the three authorities, where senior officers are able to keep the CFA members informed of the fire and rescue services performance, equipment, staff, training, finances and so on.



The service recently took delivery of its new high reach appliance, and back in November, I along with other CFA members were given the opportunity to try it out.

As you can see below, The view of Birstall HQ from 42 meters up was quite impressive.



The CFA is currently in the process of acquiring a site for a new training facility. Thankfully, we have far fewer fires than in the past, however, the knock-on effect is that firefighters do not get as much on the job training. The new Service Learning and Development Centre will have a Fire Behaviour Unit, where crews can experience realistic firefighting.

With my previous experience as Planning Chairman for Harborough District Council, I have been able to actively aid the team liaise with planning officers, parish councils etc. to help bring this project to fruition. Details of location and costs are exempt at the moment, but hopefully, I'll be able to report in full in my next report.

Council Committees and outside bodies I serve on

- County Council
- Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Employment Committee
- Corporate Governance
- Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Combined Fire Authority
- LLRCFA Employment Committee - Chairman

Signed by Councillor Barry Champion

Date: 03rd July 2023