



County Councillor Max Hunt Annual Report 2023/24

I always welcome any questions from residents

Formal Council Committee work

I served on the **Children and Families Scrutiny Committee** which oversees and scrutinises the county's limited educational policies, the SEND services for Children with High Needs. I articulate my views in a clear and logical way through this committee.

I have also served on the **Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee**. This year the Council voted to delay [Net Carbon Zero](#) by a further five years and I am pressing the Cabinet to say what is being dropped. I also spoke against the proposal to delay when that was put to full Council.

Like all councillors, I attend all 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:

The local residents' organisations I engage with 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 has been 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 the responsibility for the Thorpe Acre Trail which I created with residents for the Millennium.

Stonebow Village Parish Meeting has not met, mainly because of the small electorate of less than a dozen. When it is reconstituted I will attend.

I have started a residents group to represent strong local interest in the Garendon Park Listed Park and Gardens.

I have raised the possibility of a Town Council for Loughborough.

I attended the Borough Local Plan Hearing at the town hall and made a written submission on the Transport and Viability of the Plan.

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



1 Ratcliffe Power Station to close in 2025

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)

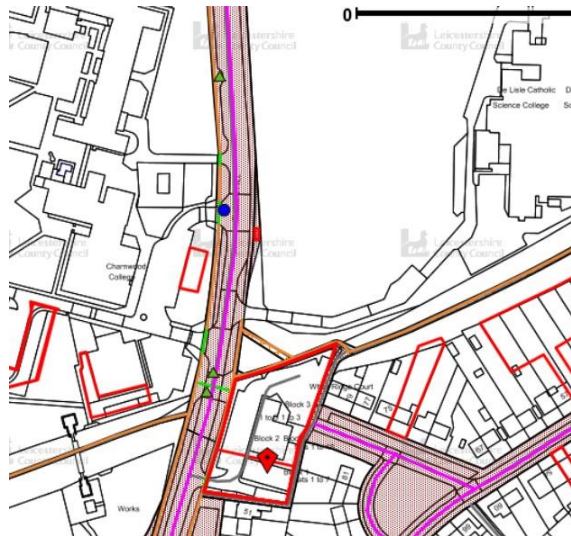
with particular reference to the place given to parish councils and place. I think the team do a good job, and have accepted the remarks in the Corporate Strategy which also apply here.

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

Priorities for the future are:

- To *build a strong and green local economy.*
- Promote the Loughborough town centre, university and LUSEP.
- Ensure Social Care services deliver better services to SEND children with a positive contribution from the TSIP programme.
- Sufficient high-quality school, pre-school and childcare places in the area I represent. Including Charnwood College and DeLisle RC College.
- Promote early carbon zero measures widely.
- Continue to closely monitor detailed plans for West of Loughborough/Garendon Park development as they emerge, particularly appropriate footpath and cycleway surfacing and other Conditions and Sections 106 agreement to P/14/1855/2 and subsequent applications.
- Promote Travel Plans for schools, colleges and businesses. 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.
- Support more bus shelters.
- 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 especially on Garendon Park.



Local Issues for residents and individuals.

- The development of the Garendon Estate I have reported regularly to residents who are on my mailing list.
- Stop university related parking outside residents homes and promote Travel Plans to reduce parking.
- HMOs: Continue to press for complete embargo (0%) on further HMOs. This will be decided by Charnwood BC within the Draft Local Plan. I gave evidence to the Public Enquiry and currently await the outcome.
- 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 (Italic) I brought to residents:

Garendon Latest & Friends of Garendon

The barriers are still in place around Hathern Drive because decisions are still awaiting on footpaths. These include the routes to schools including Stonebow and the Secondary schools. It also includes decisions on disabled access. It is no longer acceptable to create parks which aren't accessible to everyone. See the picture below from work being done by the National Trust at Ilam.



There are about twenty woods to manage and Persimmon are undertaking that under a Forestry Commission licence. The woods were not well managed in recent years but I'm assured best practice is now being followed.



As more people enjoy walking in the Park, I'm concerned that visitors will park cars around entrances. I've raised it in the Charnwood Plans committee and the chief officer said that car parks would be created as needed. I have learnt to doubt such statements.

There will be a need for signage and names everyone can recognise. The Bavarian Gate is not covered by restoration plans and remains a private residence. The farm will still be active and there are different legal rights for new residents of the development who have to pay for the upkeep of public areas. Persimmon will hand over the ownership of the Estate and Park to another private company later.

Will Garendon Park really remain private and will it truly be a country park. Interesting times. [Join the Friends of Garendon Park!](#)

Local Activity

Although our secondary schools are managed by Academy Trusts and no longer the County Councils, I'm still invited from time to time. Recently I visited Charnwood College and was really impressed with what they are doing. Definitely, five stars!



There is still no news about the old Garendon High building, but I'm pleased to say, the sports grounds



are not for sale.

The bus shelters I ordered (two years ago!) are now being fitted on Sharpley Road. It seems everyone else has one! They are badly needed with all the rain we now have.

Please report any vandalism to as you would report any road problem.

I've reported some lights out on the Old Railway Path. They will be fixed but it's a bigger job because all the lights need to be upgraded to the more efficient halogen variety. Meanwhile the path is being de-littered (technical word). In the future the path will be given a sealed surface to avoid users sinking into mud. It will be lit where possible and extended into Garendon Park at Snells Nook, which now open for walks with good footwear

The Price of Potholes

You will have noticed that potholes are increasing. This rumble strip is crumbling too. It's one of the many results of cuts from central government. They are uncomfortable and for cyclists they can cause serious injuries. Every year the County has been lucky to receive an extra handout from government. This year we received some more for resurfacing, not just filling holes which are only a temporary fix.



This is how the County's Director of Transport explained her situation:

"Current levels of funding are not sufficient to maintain the present standards of Leicestershire's highways (including cycleways, footways, verges, bridges, signs, and lines). Without additional funding from other sources, the condition of the County's roads and other assets will continue to decline.

There are also likely to be significant costs to the Council in respect of climate change. This is both in terms of the resources and work required to support efforts to decarbonise travel and transport in the County to the degree necessary to meet net zero requirements and from the impacts of increased extreme weather events on highway assets."

Council Tax and the Cost of Living

The County raised our tax by 5%. This was the maximum allowed, set for the fifth year running. This follows the pattern of other councils who are all fighting the increased cost of services and the increasing number of elderly people in care. County is not going bankrupt but their finances are described as 'dire'. Whilst it's good to see the council's lowest paid getting an uplift in the minimum wage, this also results in pressure on council tax. The majority of County Council costs are due to the rising number in care, and 'looked after' children. These are services that people don't see unless they need them



Incidentally, for Loughborough people there is a small rise in our "special expenses". We have no Town Council as in former times. The bulk of that money goes on maintaining sports fields and local park and play areas. Because we have no local

council it seldom gets much scrutiny and is formally agreed by the whole council not just those from Loughborough.

Parking near Schools

Some problems just get worse. In the 1970's nearly 80% of children walked to school, but by 2016 this had declined to 46% and no doubt it's still falling. I'm



thinking of the complaints I receive of inconsiderate car parking. Such is the increased number of vehicles around schools in the morning and the middle of the afternoon.

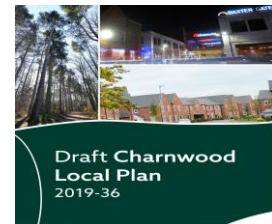
Recently I've made two personal surveys of Booth Wood /Old Ashby Road, and Thorpe Acre/Alan Moss. In each case despite making a full report with photos I receive similar answers.

If this affects you, [please read the Council's response](#) and you are welcome to get back to me. It's clear that staff resources are a factor but it's primarily due to more vehicles on roads which

were built for so many.

Local Planning new Housing

Government Planning procedures aren't working for Leicestershire and badly need a shake up nationally. Planning Inspectors have visited the town three times and each time they've found problems with Charnwood's Plans. Because of this, developers can continue to avoid many of the costs that go with an agreed Local Plan.



The main problem is about the cost of new road capacity to cope with new residents. There are already more families living in Shepshed and driving into Loughborough. The County Council hasn't the money anymore and the developers won't pay the whole bills. New schools are paid for but there are other community facilities needed like community centres, police, doctors, parks and libraries.

You may have heard that several millions have been promised by government for to counties for roads, but there are several conditions on this. For example, it has to be spent across the county including on minor roads and it is only paid in smaller chunks over a seven-year period, and backloaded.

Incinerator, Recycling and Air Quality

As a result of the concerns expressed to me, and on facebook, about smells and pollutants in the air from the incineration plant. Having asked everyone to report smells I'm pleased to say I had no further complaints. Even the two reports on facebook turned out to have nothing to do with the site.



So if you do experience horrid smells over an extended period, first ask Charnwood's Environmental health team to track down its origin. If it is coming from the plant go to www.garendon.freeuk.com/efw.htm for instructions.

If you would like to visit the plant on a future occasion, let me know. On a recent tour the group were horrified to see huge quantities of cardboard going in. Recyclables are supposed to go ' for recycling! The company has notified the provider that they don't want "non-type" materials. However in practice the company doesn't inspect what they receive. A gas cylinder went through last year ... and made quite a bang!

It's worth saying that the motorway is our most serious source of dirty air. This is monitored by [National Highways](#). The County's policies are provided in their latest [Air Quality Strategy](#).



"No University Parking" Rules.

Car parking by students and university visitors on Garendon Road, New Ashby Road and surrounds is getting worse, especially now the campus has more restrictions on campus parking. There seem to be only two ways of tackling this.

1. Residents Parking Zones. These were rejected by residents several years ago because (a) the problem was created by the university not them (b) the annual charge would fall on them, (c) more streets would need to be covered than immediately effected and they also objected, (d) the street wardens aren't enough to patrol any new areas.
2. Existing University Student Regulations need to be enforced. These include (a) registering their cars, (b) prohibiting cars for those in Halls (c) restricting student cars on designated streets. All these rules apply now but are not properly enforced. The designated streets are identified by blue signs, as you can see on Ashby Crescent. These need extending into streets like Garendon Road and beyond. I and my colleagues are pressing the university hard on Option 2. Meanwhile the University is developing a new [Travel Plan](#). Thanks,



District Heating from Waste

There has always been a plan to investigate a district heating system from the Newhurst Incinerator at J23. It seems they may now come to fruition as the owners (Biffa/Encyclis) are negotiating with the University to pipe hot water across the motorway down through the Science Park and onto the campus. Even perhaps on to Thorpe Hill schools.

This is well developed technology and more efficient way of delivering energy than from the incinerator into the grid. The decision will focus on cost and the value for money with the university.

Visits and Contacts that I have made

- Sir Robert Martin Court (Sheltered flatlets)



- Hanover Court (Sheltered flatlets)
- ARECA
- Persimmon Homes Consultation Committee
- Newhurst Local Liaison Group
- CBC Planning matters
- Visits to Family Hubs
- Loughborough Campus & Community Liaison Group



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

I cycle to my meetings at County Hall on most occasion, demonstrating Active Travel in its most enjoyable form.

Wish best wishes to all residents of Thorpe Acre and Ashby Ward in North West Loughborough.

Signed:

Max Hunt



Max Hunt CC
May 2024