

Member Annual Report 2023/24

Michael Charlesworth CC

Another year against the backdrop of an underfunded local government landscape and being ignored by central government as usual. Some tough decisions have been made and will continue to be made in the coming months. More and more of the budget is being consumed by particular departments to the detriment of others. Whilst this is understandable, it begs the question from council taxpayers, 'why aren't the potholes/footpaths/grass/libraries etc getting their usual budget'. I can only hope that the Cabinet are aware of this dichotomy.

I continued sitting on the Health Committee as Liberal Democrat spokesman and find the work of this committee very rewarding. Looking at Leicestershire's health services gives me an insight into the many challenges local health services face. Be it Dentists or waiting times, we have looked at many issues and have seen progress in several areas. Much work is still to be done, but the plans we have seen give us some hope that Leicestershire's health services may be going the right way.

I also remained on the Planning Committee. The workload this year has been lighter than previous years for some reason, with some scheduled dates not taking place. I don't know whether this is down to less applications or that officers are taking more delegated decisions. Either way, we looked at a variety of applications that needed deciding. It is one committee that has a large degree of public interest – which is exactly how it should be.

Patch issues are pretty much as you would expect – potholes/grass cutting/school places etc. The one area of real concern is the potential for flooding, drains are no longer routinely emptied, and brooks/streams are not kept clear, this along with housing development in known flooding areas are a recipe for disaster. Significant works are being done to address this problem on a couple of new estates already. With the potential for more and heavier downpours it is about time this was taken seriously.

I continue to deliver a newsletter to all 5,500 properties in the East Wigston Ward 4 times a year, this is written, printed and delivered by me and my wife (many thanks). I realise that I should be doing more on some form of social media and will take the plunge soon.