



Tom Barkley- Annual Report 2023/24-County Councillor for Syston Ridgeway

The Division comprises of the Town of Syston and the Parish of Wanlip

It is a privilege to serve the community of Syston and Wanlip which has been my focus for many years. I have addressed many residents' concerns and over the year have successfully dealt with many enquiries regarding, highways, school Placements, flooding, Anti-social behaviour and special educational needs, climate change concerns and mental health

support in the town, Adult Social Care and Childrens' services, parking around schools to name but a few areas.

Electoral Division Activities

Tackling Crime and Anti-Social behaviour

Residents have raised many concerns with me over the year relating to anti-social behaviour. It is vital that incidents are reported by residents to the relevant agencies, crime to the police and anti-social behaviour to the police and Charnwood Borough Council, so Syston, which is not viewed as a particularly problematic area, is given the attention it warrants by law enforcement agencies. Parking violations, pavement parking, parking on double yellow lines, Zig Zag lines near Traffic lights and dangerous parking are constant issues.

Highways Issues

Highways and traffic issues throughout the division, traffic flow through Syston town and air pollution are issues which remain relevant. Air Pollution modelling has shown that pollution has decreased and is within acceptable levels. I have utilised my Member Highways Grant to request Mobile Vehicle activated signs in locations throughout the Town as well as improvements to the pedestrian crossing outside Central Park, Syston Opposite the War Memorial and a bicycle rack and replacement bins in the town parks. In Wanlip we have successfully installed Mobile Vehicle activated signs as well. The car park at the bottom of School Street I got resurfaced, marked out and improved after attending with Council officers and discussing the layout and getting funding agreed. It has now been completed. I also arranged for line markings around Merton School to make road safety for the children attending the school.

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Housing Growth

The growth of housing in Syston continues to be a concern, with work continually needed to ensure that necessary infrastructure, needed because of development, such as provision of School and health facilities within the town, is given priority and sufficient developer contributions raised to enable work to be carried out. Planning is principally the remit of Charnwood Borough Council but involves County Council for road and school requirements.

Climate Change

Climate change is a particular area of interest to me, significant strides have been made to help us achieve Carbon neutrality by 2035 at County Council. The measures implemented have been timely, cost effective and enabled significant reduction in the carbon footprint saving the planet for future generations to enjoy. We are aiming for Carbon Neutrality throughout the County by 2050, by encouraging businesses to adopt climate friendly policies and actions. It is the aim of County Council to plant 700,000 trees in the County and so far, have planted 356,000 a major achievement.

Community Events

I have supported community groups in the town, which is fortunate to have a strong community spirit. The Local U3A group have operated and keep members together. Age (Concern) Syston and Syston and District Volunteer centre and Syston History Group have continued to serve the community and have received my support. Syston Town Council organised The Great British Spring Clean in March and I was happy to

attend. I attend and enjoy, whenever possible, all Community events in the town.

Mental Health Support

A mental Health support group has been established in the Town in Conjunction with the National Health Service which is now operating at the Community Centre on a Thursday from 12 midday until 3pm. Regular meetings with the National Health Service to review health provision are held which I attend. A very welcome development which has proved very worthwhile.

Business Banking Hub

I am pleased after years of effort by The Syston Town Manager- Catherine Voyce and myself along with Edward Argar MP and Town Councillor S Gerrard and Simon Bradshaw, we now have established in prime location our own Banking Hub. A very welcome addition

Community Garden

Working with residents we have been able to establish plans for a community garden in the town off Glebe Way on a piece of land owned by Charnwood Borough Council. A detailed plan has been drawn up and community consultation has taken place. It is hoped that once a lease agreement has been agreed the land can be utilised. In the Interim working with Syston Town Council, an allotment space has been allocated and various planters have been utilised.

Priorities for the immediate future

- Flooding has featured heavily in residents' concerns, and I visited residents and businesses with Edward Argar MP after Storm Babet (Oct 23) and Storm Henk (January 2024). The various agencies coordinated by Leicestershire County Council are undertaking a full review. Exceptional rainfall has certainly got to have been

a contributory factor to the awful flooding – County and Countrywide. I attended the Flood Focus group to answer questions and the meeting of the agencies and Councils held at Syston Town Council

- Working in Partnership with the police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in the division and making residents feel safe in their community.
- Highways and traffic calming solutions in the division
- Tackling Climate change and working towards Carbon Neutrality throughout the County
- Engagement with the local health centre
- Engagement with Schools within my division
- Working with Local community groups and residents to assist them

Council Activities – (Bodies served on at County Hall)

- County Council
- Corporate Governance Committee (Chair)
- Local Pension Committee (Chair)
- Investment Sub Committee (Chair)
- Scrutiny Commission

Learning and Development

- Regular Training at County Hall- briefings and updates
- Corporate Governance training
- Local Pension Committee training

Overall time spent of briefings in our own time is significant but aids in being able to be effective and assist residents.

Social Media

- Twitter and Facebook occasional user