

County Councillor Annual Report 2023/24

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2023/24

Name of Councillor

Ozzy O'Shea

Division Represented

Groby, Ratby and Field Head.

Electoral Division activities

Main Activities and the impact during the past year:

Ratby Gas Leak January 2024.

On Monday evening 29th January 2024 I was alerted to 3 separate water leaks on Main Street, Ratby by my colleague Cllr Chris Boothby after he had called Severn Trent but was not happy with the result. As cabinet member for highways, I contacted our on-call highways team who gave me an emergency number for Severn Trent. I rang Severn Trent and was given a 12-hour time frame to attend and 3 separate reference numbers. Unfortunately, by the time Severn Trent arrived on scene the following morning the water pressure had fractured the gas pipe forcing water in the gas system. As a result, residents of Ratby and parts of Kirby Muxloe found they had no Gas. It soon became clear this was a major incident with the whole of Ratby being without gas supply. I was contacted by Council officers and appraised of the serious situation, I then joined officers in the village. I then worked with Highways and Cadent to put road closures in place and attended the village hall to help and support residents. A collection point was set up in the village hall by Cadent. A Leicestershire resilience team was set up including officers from Leicestershire County Council, Hinckley and Bosworth, Blaby District Council, Leicester Search and Rescue the St Jons

Ambulance. Cadent's emergency planning swung straight into action. The Village Hall was turned into a collection point for residents. Lorry loads of vital supplies were delivered to the village hall. The Cadent operation to help residents worked like a well-oiled machine. They provided Heaters, Blankets, Hotplates for cooking on, Socks, Electric Blankets, Oil filled radiators and Draught Excluders to help residents cook and cope with the cold weather. I am pleased that we were able to support residents visiting the village hall in need of help. At one point the queue stretched back to the Bulls Head public house and some residents had to await an hour to get their warm packs. We raised this as a concern as the weather was becoming very cold and Cadent again put more staff on to ease the waiting time. I must say people were surprisingly in good spirits. It was pleasing to see younger residents coming to collect heaters, hotplates and blankets for their elderly neighbours.

The resilience team was based in the library. I liaised with officers to make sure that all vulnerable residents were visited. Several elderly residents had contacted me asking for help and I arranged with officers for heating and supplies to be taken to them. This clearly had now become a major incident.

Officers and volunteers visited homes to check for vulnerable residents and to make sure residents had turned their gas supply off at the meter to stop the water entering their domestic system. Officers had a full list of vulnerable residents in the area and made sure those persons were looked after. Teams visited every house in Ratby and 400 houses in Kirby Muxloe that were also affected. Any other vulnerable residents they came across were fed back to the resilience team who arranged for heaters, blankets and hotplates to be delivered and in some cases food vouchers. Leicester Search and Rescue and the St Johns Ambulance did a fantastic job delivering supplies to the elderly and those identified as vulnerable. I spent time liaising with officers in the control centre and meeting residents at the collection centre asking them if they needed any extra help. Tuesday and Wednesday were long days and I was on the ground for up to 14 hours. I must say but Ratby's community spirit kept us all going. I want to put on record my thanks to Cadent. They were absolutely brilliant they brought in over 200 staff from all over the country to tackle and resolve this problem that was not of their making, they did our community proud. The swift and efficient manner in which they organised lorry loads of supplies to be delivered to the collection centre was first class. Put simply they could not have been more helpful; their staff were kind and sympathetic to residents. My thanks also go to

the Council officers. Leicester Search and Rescue Team, The Red Cross and the numerous local volunteers who visited every household in freezing conditions.

The work continued on through Wednesday 31st January with vulnerable residents being cared for and food vouchers supplied. A steady stream of people collecting heating supplies from the village hall. Teams have continued to work around the clock. On Saturday the 3rd of February, I am pleased to say large parts of Ratby and most of Kirby Muxloe had their gas supplies reconnected. However, parts were still without gas including my home. However Cadent engineers worked tirelessly to get everyone re-connected. I continued to work with Council officers checking on the vulnerable residents. Our resilience team have moved to the Church rooms.

When you realise the full extent of the problem that Cadent were facing, they really are doing a wonderful job. Water had contaminated 30 km of the gas pipe network. **We really do have a wonderful friendly community. I am so proud to represent them as their Councillor.** I continued to work with officers for the following 10 days checking on vulnerable residents. Severn Trent agreed to replace affected boilers cookers and gas fires and since that date I have helped well over 100 residents to get their appliances replaced when they faced a brick wall with their loss adjusters. I have worked with a senior director to achieve this. I write a monthly regular article in my local magazine, and I asked residents to contact me if they are having problems with the loss adjusters. During my recent holiday in Spain I must have dealt with 10 to 15 residents needing their appliances replaced. I am still helping people today in June with their issues.

Over the past year I have continued to work with Highways officers and with developers to reduce the impact of road closures on Markfield Road, Ratby. We have been constantly impacted with numerous developments passed by the local planning authority on Markfield Road. None have been popular with the community. I have kept the community fully updated on the road closures of which there have been several including a 6-week total closure We have two major development's taking place at the same time. Ratby has had numerous road works on all 3 major roads in the village and I have worked with our Network Management team to keep them to a minimum.
HGV's

I have continued to liaise with both the police and highways officers regarding the ongoing problem with HGV'S breaking the weight limit coming through Main Street, Ratby to attend the Pound Stretcher warehouse in Desford. Several drivers have been spoken to

New Doctor's Surgery

I have supported the development of the new doctor's surgery, which is located on Desford Lane, Ratby. I worked with both the Borough Councils planning department and County Highways. I am proud to say that I was invited to the official opening and thanked for my support with both planning and Highways issues by the doctors.

Burroughs Road, Ratby.

After Burroughs Road, Ratby had been closed to traffic for the 5 months last year due to severe road damage caused by heavy tanker vehicles taking slurry up to Preston's Farm to fill their slurry pit. After we carried out highway repairs the tankers started using the bridle road again Unfortunately, they are using it on an industrial basis with heavy tractors pulling tankers full of silage to tip on site some days constantly one after another. Mr Preston has failed to put in place passing points which he agreed to do. I receive constant complaints from the residents in the 5 dwellings at the end of the track. I have arranged with senior highways officers and legal to work with the Burrough Councils Planning department to see if there is a way to reduce or stop these constant tanker deliveries and the road again is starting to show signs of damage,

Ratby Library.

As previously reported, I have continued to support the library wherever I can and was pleased that working with them and our local MP last year their finances have improved this volunteer group run a wonderful community library and are a credit to our village.

Groby Flood Alleviation Project.

Flooding on Leicester Road, Groby dates all the way back to 1993. After working with residents and Severn Trent and our Highways drainage team for the past 5 years

As reported last year I am continuing to work with residents, Severn Trent Water and Highways officers to resolve the flooding on Leicester

Road and Ratby Road, Groby. I still attend 3 monthly progress meetings at Severn Trent's Leicester Office with a resident group. I also receive a monthly update from the project lead at Severn Trent. I am pleased to report that We have now moved forward and worked Started last October. The two Sites are Leicester Road and Ratby Road, Groby. The work on Leicester Road is due to be completed at the end of June. Work on Ratby Road Starts in July during the school holidays, there has been and will be a lot of traffic disruption at both locations. I have kept both residents and the Parish Council fully updated in my monthly magazine articles. However, I am sure that residents will be pleased, that the work we have done over the past 5 years has now come to fruition.

Policing.

I work very closely with my local beat team and have regular meetings with officers, and I am in close contact with Sgt Jarrod Patterson. Who I have worked with on aspects of ASB with certain families, I also work closely with the Borough Council ASB team also and Housing Associations,

Footpath Newtown Linford Lane, Groby update.

I am pleased to report that the footpath I had been working on my last report has been completed and improved for both residents and wheelchair users has now been completed by Highways with part funding by Hanson's who own Groby Quarry Highways have been cut the overgrowth and bushes back.

Over the past year I have again continued to work with the residents of Field Head who are objecting to large scale planning application. I have held regular meetings with the residents group giving them advice on highways matters.

Community Leadership Role

I continue to go to the Ratby village hall drop-in session on a Thursday morning where elderly pensioners go for a cup of tea and a chat. I see if anyone has any needs from social services. I also advise on scams or housing issues. I have again invited the police to give talks to residents at the drop-in session during the past year where they have given home security advice. I continue to work with the police on ASB in Groby and Ratby. Being a retired police officer, I know how important it is to nip these problems in the bud before they become a bigger problem and have an excellent relationship with the local beat team. As I reported last year, I have worked with my local schools to have the mandatory no parking Zig Zag lines put outside schools that wanted them. They are now all in place and our camera car enforces them. I have also had the pedestrian Zebra cross re painted in Ratby in recent weeks. I attend Ratby and Groby Parish Council meeting each month and provide both a written and verbal report as their County Councillor.

Engagement with the Council, other statutory bodies and public utility companies (Water, Gas etc) about services in the area

As above I have been in constant contact with both Severn Trent and Cadet Gas over this issues in Ratby in January and still in constant contact with them both.

I engage regularly with all Council Departments including Highways, Education and Adults and Communities. I work closely with all departments; I have helped several vulnerable residents whom I have personally classed as vulnerable and referred them to the correct department for support. I have successfully worked with Highways officers to secure SEND transport for several children in both my ward and the across the County as Cabinet Member for Highways.

I work very closely with our Trading Standards department highlighting current scams to my community and referring elderly vulnerable people to them that have had scam calls and arranged to have telephone blockers fitted for them.

I hold 3 monthly meeting with Severn Trent regarding on going works in my ward so I can keep residents updated. I hold regular meetings with both the Borough Councils ASB team and Housing team to directly sort issues out for residents. I also work with the Borough Councils benefits and Council tax team for residents. Many residents do not understand the difference between the Borough Council and the County Councils responsibilities. I will never pass people from pillar

to post I take ownership and deal with the issue to the best of my ability.

Priorities for the immediate future are:

To get the road between Kirby Muxloe and Ratby Resurfaced when funds become available. This is still on my list from last year hopefully we will be able to complete this from Network North money when we receive it if Labour does not cut it.

Council Activities

County Council Committees You Served On

Cabinet Member for Highways Transportation and Flooding.

Local Committee/Outside Bodies

I sit on the A5 partnership
The A46 Partnership
Bradgate and Groby Quarry liaison committee
Charnwood Forest Committee
Transport for East Midlands.

Learning and Development

I have attended local police briefings.
I have attended Chief Constables briefing
Freeport briefing
Strategic Growth Plan
Star Chamber Briefing Highways, Financing, Adults, Children and Health.
All Member briefings

Other Matters

I attend a weekly Lead member meeting with the Director and two Assistant Directors of Highways and Heads of Service.
I attend site meetings around the county. I also meet fellow councillors around the county to discuss highway concerns in their area with highways officers.

I have attended Midlands Connect meeting on line and around the midlands.

I have attended Rail connectivity meetings at Parliament as Highways Lead,

Over the past year I have personally dealt with over 360 highways enquiries/complaints both within my ward and across Leicestershire as the lead member. Residents regularly contact me directly with their complaints as the lead member.

I have also attended numerous site visits around the county, meeting councillors in their own wards to discuss their local highways issues.

Communications

I write a regular monthly article in both the Local magazine that goes to Ratby and the Spotlight magazine that goes to Groby and Fieldhead. I keep residents updated on local issues, I warn of current scams and any police reports that are relevant. I work closely with Trading Standards and the police. I provide a monthly report to my Parish Councils. I also use spotted Ratby and Spotted Groby for urgent Facebook posts. I also have my own Councillors Facebook Page.

Signed by Councillor:-

Ozzy O'shea

Date:- 24th June 2024