

Annual Report by John Coxon

2019 - 2020 County Councillor for Ashby de la Zouch and Blackfordby

Since being elected in 2005, I have taken my responsibilities over these past fifteen years very seriously, feeling very passionate about my role and have an excellent attendance record at County Hall. At County Hall, it has always been my aim to prioritise Ashby and Blackfordby, ensuring they are put first.

Committees served on during the year

- County Council
- Development control and Regulatory Board chairman
- Corporate governance

It gives me great pleasure to present my annual report, with the latter of the council year being blighted by Covid 19, which has seen our country in lockdown and myself and our citizens isolating. However, this has not prevented progress within the council, due to remote meetings taking place over Skype, ensuring everyone could stay safe at home, whilst continuing to see development of our local areas. I myself have conducted meetings of the Development control and the Regulatory control board (planning committee) using the newly introduced remote methods, whereby myself, the committee clerk and the solicitor were sat in a room, maintaining a safe distance, whilst other members of the committee were able to join and be involved in the meeting from home. This has worked really well for us to be able to continue our work as a team.

I work very closely with Ashby de la Zouch Town Council, where I am the leader of the council, giving me the opportunity to bring together partnership workings between the county and town councils wherever possible. I try very hard to assist the community I serve and continuously strive to help solve problems or queries, which residents may ask of me.

I have been a long time supporter of the reintroduction of the Burton to Leicester railway and have spoken to the council chamber supporting this move, due to the benefits I feel it would offer to the residents within these areas and surrounding. It is somewhat sentimental to me as a young boy, I have fond memories of travelling on the train to both Burton and Leicester, along with seeing trains running through the station. Furthermore, I have attended several presentations surrounding HS2 and noted the implications and effects this would have on our town.

Community

As previously mentioned, I am the leader of Ashby de la Zouch Town Council, including the village of Blackfordby. Starting with Blackfordby, I have been the main instigator of Blackfordby having it's own neighbourhood plan. Many meetings have taken place between the Town Council and residents of Blackfordby, where a lot of progress has been made and we are hoping to go to referendum next year for approval of the plan.

I have also been involved in supporting the villagers against development of their village, as well as supporting a number of grants for improvements of the village such as the refurbishment of the old school rooms and war memorial and a speed camera, to name a few.

In Ashby as town council leader, I have worked with residents to produce the Ashby Neighbourhood plan, which has to be passed by the District Council and is required to be revisited in the future, for further amendments. As residents will know, the Town Council organises many events throughout the year for the town, where local people will attend, along with many travelling to the attractions. I enjoy to get involved in both the planning stages leading up to the event and helping out on the day. A town centre manager has recently been employed to look for further opportunities, to promote our town. Due to the recent outbreak of Covid 19, many events which were in the pipelines have had to be cancelled or deferred, one of which was the spectacular VE day celebration, that was a great deal of planning went into, which was due to be held on the Bath Grounds for the local residents. This brings me onto my next point, surrounding the Bath Grounds.

The Town Council has agreed the purchase of the Bath Grounds for the future generations. This was a proposal I put to the Town Council a while back.

Priorities

My priorities will be first and foremost, the wellbeing of residents, traffic around the Tesco roundabout and the pollution of the air, as these are all concerns of mine. This is why I have proposed that a survey of the air quality is conducted in Ashby. I will continue to monitor the progress of both Leicester to Burton railway and HS2.

Committee's I serve on

County Council

This is where all councillors meet at full council. I have been present at all meetings over the past fifteen years.

Development control and regulatory board

I feel very proud to be chairman of what is known as the planning committee, which deals with quarry applications, industrial buildings, schools as well as many other items such as minerals, waste and roads for example.

Corporate Governance

This is a scrutiny committee, that analyses the financial workings of the county council.

Bodies served on

- Ashby de la Zouch Town Council
- Lount Liaison Committee
- Substitute at other committees for other members, who were not able to attend

Learning and Development

I have completed training for the development control and regulatory board and to seek further learning and training, to assist the development of my role as a county councillor.

Communications

I hold regular surgeries for residents, these are usually at 5:30, before council at the Town Council building, located on South Street. Details are posted on the Town Council's website. I am also easily contactable via email, telephone or in person, as requested. At the moment, I do not use channels of social media, however due to society, this may be changed in the future to move with the times.