

## County Councillor Annual Report

This report summarises the activities of the following member of the County Council during 2020/2021.

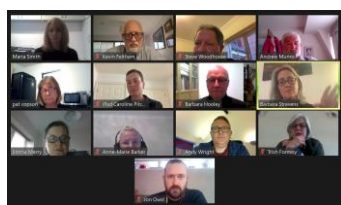
**Name of Councillor**     **Dr Kevin FELTHAM**

**representing the GARTREE Division.**

### **1) Electoral Division activities**

**Main Activities and the impact during the past year:**

I attended 43 **parish council meetings** either in person, or virtually, for most of 2020/21. Occasionally, as in previous years, they clashed with other meetings, such as Governors, church council, or if an extraordinary meeting was called, so sadly I had to prioritise which ones to attend. Very occasionally I have managed to be at the start of one parish council meeting, and then after giving my monthly report, I have given my apologies and made my way to another parish council to give a similar monthly report before their meeting has finished, but as I concluded last year, I much prefer to focus on one parish council meeting at a time, if possible. During most of the 2020/21 year, the coronavirus pandemic meant the majority of parish council meetings could only be held virtually, e.g. Zoom or Microsoft Teams, which actually let me move more easily between parish council meetings as no travel was involved!



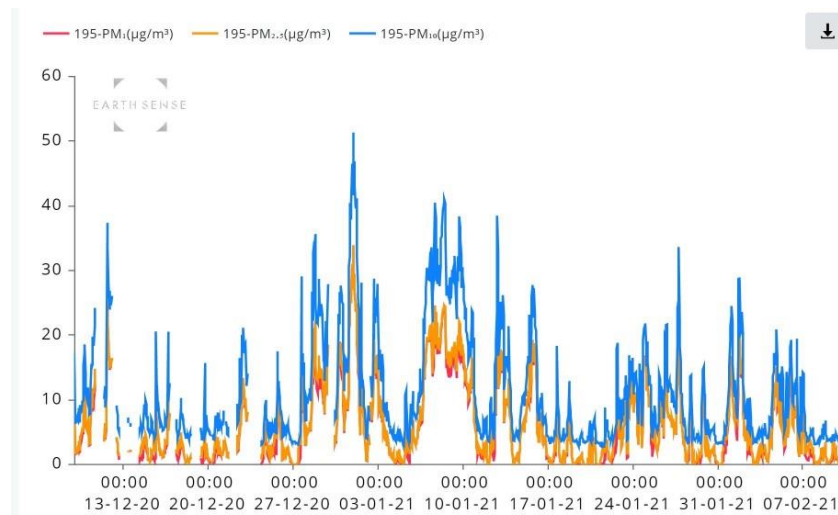
Although the new clerk for Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council was appointed in 2019, she has still needed a considerable amount of extra mentoring, especially during the lockdown, as she had no previous experience of parish council work. One of the benefits of having been a county councillor for 20 years is that I have built up good working relationships with many Harborough District Council (HDC) officers, as well as other parishes in the Gartree Division and their clerks.

In the majority of cases, where I am sent an agenda and invitation for parish council meetings, and I am able to attend, I am pleased to give an update on county council business and my activities; if I am unable to attend I always aim to provide written reports by email. I'm also happy to follow up issues raised by parish councils with the county council where the response has been delayed or requires further explanation.

The venture to create an **Autism Friendly Kibworth**, which began in 2019/20, paused in 2020/21 when the lockdown put a stop to events. I have spoken to the group and we intend getting started again in 2021/22 when we hope to help some research work with the University of Leicester who want to carry out a survey of those 65 years or older in the community.

An ongoing issue for the Kibworths is the **A6 Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)** and the need for an **A6 bypass**, so I continue liaising with the MP, Neil O'Brien OBE, ward councillors, the Director of Highways at LCC and HDC staff to measure the air quality on the A6 through the

Kibworths. The likelihood of a bypass is reducing as to fund a bypass will require thousands of houses being built to fund it, and the Kibworths are still recovering from needing to accommodate some 1,800 houses built in the last 12 years. The Zephyr real-time data from Earthsense, which can be examined via a website, is a great improvement on the previous delayed monthly averages from tubes on streetlamp posts at several locations on the A6, and the air quality monitor installed by HDC in 2019.



*Earthsense readings on A6 for particulate matter December 2020 to January 2021*

Although the made **Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan** and adopted **HDC Local Plan** do not designate any further housing developments, there have been two sites with planning permission continuing to be built out during 2020/21. Some applications for more housing developments in the Kibworths have been refused because of the clear policies in the Neighbourhood and Local Plans and because HDC has a five year housing supply; they have also lost appeals to the planning inspectorate. A review of the **Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan** began in 2019/20 and includes small allocations for a few houses within the limits to development, but has been delayed due to the lockdown and is now expected to pass through the various stages and be ready for a referendum in 2022. Great Glen's review of their Neighbourhood Plan was made after a successful referendum in January 2020.

Since 2001, I have continued to contribute regular Gartree Division news articles on local matters of interest to the **Kibworth & District Chronicle**, a free community newspaper delivered to over 4,500 homes in 25 villages across south Leicestershire, many in the division; and now [online](#) since the coronavirus pandemic hit. I used to contribute similar articles to the quarterly **Glen Sence**, a free community newspaper delivered to Great Glen, Burton Overy, Wistow and Newton Harcourt but that sadly folded in 2019/20.

## Community Leadership Role

During 2019/20, I led the work, with legal support, to regularise the two joint Kibworth Parish Council committees to bring them into line with new accountancy regulations – no joint committees could have separate bank accounts, staffing or assets, from the principal parish authorities. An initial **Memorandum of Understanding** was prepared and signed by both parish council chairmen in 2019/20 so that the new arrangements could take effect from 1 April 2020. The two committees have been renamed as part of the changes to become: **Kibworth Joint Burial Board** (now the responsibility of Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council), and **Kibworth Joint Recreation Board** (now the responsibility of Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council). Representatives from both parish councils still attend these Boards.

I also led the work to have a second legal **Memorandum of Understanding** prepared and adopted in 2020/21 by both Kibworth parish councils relating to the formal line management of new members of staff – deputy clerk and groundsperson, as they were both appointed to provide support to both parish councils.

In 2020/21, it was necessary for the two parish council clerks and myself to produce a third **Memorandum of Understanding**, which was approved and signed (March 2021) by both parish councils in order to confirm the parish councils' management of the two joint boards and to confirm financial responsibility for the park areas owned by each parish council separately, and the shared responsibility for Warwick Park.

The new joint **Kibworths Parish Office** in the Kibworth Grammar School Hall, that was setup and refurbished during 2019/20 was closed for almost the whole of 2020/21 because of the pandemic, before it re-opened in May 2021. The parish office is mainly used by the two Kibworth parish clerks and deputy clerk, for briefings of the two parish and Joint Board chairmen and has been used for councillor surgeries with district ward councillors and myself.

The two Kibworth parish councils were granted money by HDC to commemorate 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. A **commemorative bench** was purchased, and I helped to install it in August 2020 by the church car park opposite St Wilfrid's Church. The inscription also commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day.

I helped define the specification for a **Feasibility Study** of community facilities in the two Kibworths in late 2019, and after obtaining a small grant from HDC and tendering, Nortoft Partnerships Ltd carried out a survey and published an initial report in May 2020, which because of the pandemic and lockdowns didn't progress much further. This is now being followed up.

After funding has been identified, I helped organise a **Kibworth Get Active Day** with both parish councils and a professional sports coaching company on the large Warwick Park between the two Kibworths in September 2020. Over 200 children took part in the variety of sports activities and another day is being planned for 2021.

In July 2020 I volunteered to be a test subject for a **covid-19 vaccine** developed by Oxford University in collaboration with Astra Zeneca. After a telephone interview I was invited to the Nottingham University Student Health Centre for tests, a further interview and then received my first jab. This was a blind clinical trial so at that stage none of the volunteers were told whether they had received the covid vaccine or a placebo, which was a vaccine against meningitis. I went back for my second jab in September and then returned every month for blood tests to check for antibodies. In December 2020, after enquiring, I was informed that I had indeed received the covid vaccine so did not need to take part in the national vaccination programme.

On behalf of Kibworth Joint Recreation Committee (as it was then) I helped the clerk apply for planning permission in 2019/20 for a **Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)** for the old skatepark site on Warwick Park. A successful section 106 application for funding meant the new facility was installed in the Spring 2020. A location for a new skate park is still being considered.



*Opening of MUGA and handing over of s106 funding*

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

I attended all four county council meetings during 2020/21 (May 2020 was cancelled) and all were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. As in previous years these are all webcast and can be viewed in the county council's YouTube archives. Amongst the items discussed in addition to regular reports from Cabinet members were reports on the impact of covid-19. Revisions to the Strategic Plan and Environment Strategy were approved as was the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget. There were motions on Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons, and the increasing of tree planting across Leicestershire, which I supported.

During 2020/21 I was privileged to serve once more as the chairman of the **Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)** which also meant I chaired the Joint HOSC covering Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland on the rotationally agreed basis with the city. As part of my chairman's role I received briefing sessions with the Director of Public Health, HOSC vice-chairman and spokesmen from the other groups, prior to every scrutiny committee meeting.

As Leicestershire County Council had responsibility for running the Joint HOSC meetings during 2020/21, these meetings were held at County Hall and are available as a webcast for the public on YouTube before the covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. For the majority of the year therefore, HOSC and Joint HOSC meetings and briefings were held virtually using Microsoft Teams. The Joint HOSC meeting was held on Microsoft Teams in December and was attended by 15 members of the public who had asked prior questions in writing, and several wished to ask supplementary questions at the meeting, on the ***Building Better Hospitals for the Future: the University Hospitals of Leicester £450m Acute Reconfiguration***. A number of those asking questions, and who had already received written replies from the Clinical Commissioning Groups, also asked verbal supplementaries. Although the NHS officers at the meeting were able to answer some of the supplementary questions, some had to be answered several weeks later. It was a long meeting and not made easy by being held virtually. I learnt lessons about handling such an important virtual scrutiny meeting with multiple public questions. Halfway through the meeting there was a Europe-wide breakdown in the internet which stopped the YouTube webcast and led to a brief interruption in proceedings.

As a member of the Scrutiny Commission, I attended and spoke at all seven virtual meetings in 2020/21 (one using Skype and rest Microsoft Teams) with a wide range of agenda items including the revised Strategic Plan, the Environment Strategy and Action Plan, the Youth Justice Strategic Plan Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Economic Recovery Strategy, regular reports on the impact of covid-19 and the work on recovery, tourism and place marketing, the Corporate Asset Investment Fund, an Air Quality and Health action plan, the Planning White Paper, Leicester City draft Local Plan, Freeport proposals by the East Midlands Development Corporation, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and the Airfield Farm development. All meetings were webcast and are available to be seen in the council's YouTube archives.

As a member, I attended all five of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings virtually via Microsoft Teams in 2020/21 and took part in the discussions on a wide range of agenda items including: the draft Leicestershire Children and Family Service Departmental Plan 2020-2023, the county's response to Child Criminal Exploitation, the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection report of the local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) support, the activity of the Leicestershire Fostering Agency, Annual Report of the Adoption Service, an update of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2019-22, and a review of the Youth Justice work.

I have been a Management Committee Board member for the **Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO)** for over 14 years. This is public sector owned professional buying organisation (PBO) with six authorities as members – five of them County Councils: Leicestershire

(host authority), Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Warwickshire, Cambridgeshire, plus Peterborough City. ESPO is committed to getting the most for our customers by pursuing best practice in procurement, sourcing, supply chain partner support and management, contract management and EU compliance. I also continued to serve on the ESPO Audit & Finance Committee during the year – which continued to experiment with using Skype for Business to help Board members from councils take part from some distance away. As the coronavirus pandemic hit the UK in February 2020, and physical meetings were no longer permitted, this early experience of using virtual conferencing proved invaluable, although we used Microsoft Teams for 2020/21.

The main ESPO website is being totally revamped and the new website is expected to be finished by March 2020; I am hopeful that more customers will use this form of electronic ordering to improve efficiency within the whole organisation.

The **Brookfields** supported living scheme on Bindley's Lane in **Great Glen** was opened in 2020 but the coronavirus pandemic made it difficult to visit. I eventually visited together with parish and district councillors, and the Cabinet Support Member for Adults and Communities in August 2020. It is providing an improvement in the standard of living for those in need from the Harborough area, giving them a chance to enjoy their independence with any support they require.

### **Priorities for the immediate future are:**

The key priority for the Kibworths is the recognition by the highways authority, police and national government that speeds along the A6 through the Kibworths need to be monitored, ideally with average speed cameras, to maintain traffic speeds below 30 mph. A **Community Speed Watch** (CSW) at two locations on the A6 was due to be started just before the March 2020 lockdown, and projects have not yet restarted. Together with Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council and residents, over 200 signatures of residents asking for a CSW) were obtained in 2019/20. This should have led to some 30 volunteers being trained during summer of 2020 in the use of the equipment but again the coronavirus caused this to be postponed until 2021/22 when hopefully the work can commence. I met with the police to agree three locations for the CSW to take place.

A Kibworth bypass would benefit the community but is not likely to be revisited without being funded by thousands of new houses. The current Harborough Local Plan does not include large housing development in the Kibworths or Great Glen, and both have Neighbourhood Plans in place; Great Glen have reviewed theirs and it also has been made. The Kibworths review is underway..

Another step towards evidence building is continuation of the real-time nitrogen dioxide monitoring on the A6. An additional air quality Zephyr monitor is due to be installed in 2020 to provide real-time data for other pollutants - **Particulate Matter** (PM1, PM2.5 and PM10). It is always a surprise for those not living in the Kibworths to realise that the A6 through the Kibworths has over 20,000 vehicles using it every day, and was listed as the fourth worst nitrogen dioxide polluted area in the East Midlands in 2019.

Another key factor is the ongoing ad hoc measurement of speed on the A6 by the police. Several motorists have been caught and prosecuted for speeding in excess of 100mph on the bypass between Great Glen and the Kibworths.

I was not a supporter of the **Strategic Growth Plan's** proposals for an **A46 Expressway** to the east and south of the Leicester Principal Urban Area so was pleased when Midlands Connect reported that this route was not being supported. There are still ongoing discussions about finding locations for housing that Leicester City say they cannot take, and there have been rumours that the area north of Great Glen is being reviewed as a possible site for thousands of houses to take the city overspill. If this is to go ahead, it will need considerable infrastructure, especially

highways, so although the A46 Expressway may have been dropped, there will need to be something to take the traffic away. I shall be continuing to press that an A6 bypass around the Kibworths should be an essential part of any plans.

**Anti-social behaviour** problems (ASB) have continued to cause problems in the Kibworths and also in Great Glen. The **Kibworth Meadows** Facebook page is for residents living in the 570 house estate off Wistow Road, mainly in Kibworth Harcourt. This social media source continues to provide evidence of burglary, car theft and damage and ASB. I liaise with the Local Policing Unit, the three Kibworths Ward members and the HDC Community Safety Partnership. Following a well attended public meeting to discuss local ASB issues in June 2019 a series of meetings were held with parish councillors and representatives from the police, HDC, schools, churches and other organisations to follow up as an action plan to reduce ASB. Although these meeting stopped in 2020, there are plans to start them again in 2021.

**Community Governance Review** – HDC has approved the proposals by the Kibworth parish councils that I researched for the whole Kibworth Meadows estate north of the Midlands Mainline railway line to fall within Kibworth Harcourt parish instead of a quarter of it being located within Kibworth Beauchamp parish. Although this proposal has been approved, it will not come into effect until the next parish council and district elections in 2023.

**Capacity in local schools** continues to be an ongoing issue, but with less houses being built in both the Kibworths and Great Glen, there have been slight reductions in the pupil numbers for both primary schools, although the secondary Kibworth School (now renamed Kibworth Mead Academy) continues to experience space challenges. I will continue to work with the teams at County Hall to review pupil numbers and discuss future strategies. An application for a primary free school has been approved by the Department for Education and land off Warwick Road in Kibworth Beauchamp identified, but this location will be challenging if approved.

## **2) Council Activities**

### **Committees you serve on at County Hall 2020/21**

Chairman of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Chairman of the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee.

Chairman of Members Learning and Development Working Group.

Member of the Scrutiny Commission.

Member of the Children & Families Scrutiny Committee.

### **Local committees/Outside Bodies**

I have been a parish councillor on **Kibworth Harcourt Parish Council** since 2015, and Chairman since 2016; re-elected in May 2019 as councillor, and re-elected chairman for 2019/20 and 2020/21. As I was a parish representative on the Kibworths Neighbourhood Planning Group from 2016 to 2018, I volunteered for the review of the Kibworths Neighbourhood Plan which has been meeting since 2019 and, but for the lockdown, would have held a public consultation on the review changes in 2020/21 and now intend doing this later in 2021. It has been updated to ensure it is conformity with the HDC Local Plan adopted in 2019. I was a member during 2020/21 of a Steering Group that started looking at improved community facilities, the future location of the community library and the use of the Kibworth Grammar School Hall as a community centre.

I continue to serve as a parish representative on the **Kibworth Joint Recreation Board** and was

re-elected vice chairman for 2020/21. Having been co-opted to be a parish councillor for Kibworth Beauchamp Parish Council in 2018; I now attend their meetings not just as an observer as I have since 2001, but as a full member. Together with another parish councillor on both Kibworth parish councils, we feel it helps ensure that strong relationships continue to grow between the two parishes. The Board began working with a designer to improve park spaces in 2020/21.

The chairman of the **Kibworth Joint Burial Board** resigned in 2020/21 due to ill health, and I volunteered to take on the role until somebody else came forward. The cemetery is a peaceful sanctuary for relatives and friends of those buried in the quiet grounds, as well as local residents walking through the grounds, and it is important this continues. We have commissioned a tree survey by specialists to ensure the 40+ mature trees are checked for health and safe structure.

After agreement from the Board, I have requested that the 19<sup>th</sup> century **Lychgate** be considered for listed status by Historic England. It has exquisite, stained glass windows and wooden pillars. It had electricity recently added and still has the original hand drawn bier preserved inside the building. The Lychgate is included in the Neighbourhood Plan as a local heritage asset.



I continued as a committee member for the **Kibworth & Smeeton Village Hall** during 2020/21 which saw a considerable amount of refurbishment undertaken during the lockdown period including the addition of new facilities in the toilets and implementing a broadband connection for WiFi.

I remain a committee member (Treasurer) of the **Kibworth Improvement Team** formed after the highly successful BBC TV series 'Story of England' by Michael Wood and Maya Vision International. During the year I continued to help with the ongoing contributions to the online Museum section of the [www.kibworthvillage.co.uk](http://www.kibworthvillage.co.uk) website that continues to publicise the heritage of Kibworth Beauchamp, Kibworth Harcourt and Smeeton Westerby.

### **Other bodies – School governors/community and charity organisations etc**

During 2020/21, I remained a member of the Local Governing Board (LGB) at the **Robert Smyth Academy** in Market Harborough, which is now part of the Tudor Grange Multi-Academy Trust. Our LGB meetings were virtual and held using Microsoft Teams. I have governor responsibility for Behaviour with the senior management team to help other governors at Exclusion Appeal meetings with parents, pupils and staff. Having served over 25 years as a governor I attended my last meeting and retired on 22 June 2021.

I am an appointed Trustee of the **Nicholson Memorial Charity**. During 2020/21 the Trust continued to approve grants to young individuals and youth organisations. The proceeds from the sale of a property in Market Harborough were added to the value of the Trust fund, so enabling more grants to be made available.

I continue to be the **Kibworth Parochial Church Council** Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer for

### **3) Learning and development:**

We did not have any meetings of the Members Learning and Development Working Group in 2020/21 due to the pandemic and most council staff and all members working from home.

I attend as many all member briefings as I can, or study the follow up of emailed slide presentations if I am unable to attend a briefing in person.

One of the novel changes during the coronavirus pandemic on all member briefings was the use of Skype for Business, and then Microsoft Teams, to hold regular Tuesday afternoon briefing sessions from the end of March 2020. The initial member take-up grew markedly once the technical joining matters were clarified and some members were offered additional online training in the use of Microsoft Teams. This has been an unexpected benefit of the virtual briefings for members and it is excellent that they are being used for Induction training of new members from May 2021.

### **4) Other Matters:**

With over 50 years of experience working in and around the NHS, including short spells at major London tertiary hospitals (Guys & St Thomas, Imperial College), and officially retiring in December 2018, I occasionally still get involved in strategic planning for new laboratory computer systems by both commercial suppliers and NHS Hospital Trusts.

### **Social Media**

Twitter: @kevin\_feltham

Website: <http://politics.leics.gov.uk/mgMiniSite.aspx?UID=280&EID=0&PID=131&PG=1>

**Signed by Councillor:**



**Date 23/06/2021**