

# Leader's Statement

## 22nd February 2023

### Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange

Earlier this month developers Tritax Symmetry lodged their application for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) to the Planning Inspectorate. We had 14 days to comment on whether we believed the developer's consultation on the plans was adequate.

Our response has been submitted and our position is that we do not believe the consultation was adequate, we believe it was incomplete and inaccurate with vague information.

There remains insufficient recognition of the impacts of the increased barrier down-time at Narborough Level Crossing, questions have not been answered on landscape impacts and I am not satisfied that the highways issues have been adequately considered.

We are a statutory consultee on this major infrastructure project so we cannot decide on the application but I assure everyone we will be vigorous in our scrutiny of all aspects of the development and critique it at every point.

### Election Changes

This year we will be having both District and Parish elections and for the first time in 20 years we will see some changes.

Following a review by the Local Government Boundary Commission Blaby District has had its ward boundaries redrawn and the number of Councillor seats reduced. Some residents will find themselves in a different ward with a different name and will be listed to vote at a different polling station.

That is not the only difference our residents will see this May. New legislation means anyone wanting to cast their ballot will need to show a form of accepted photo ID to prove their identity.

These are new challenges for us all but I'm certain our dedicated Council colleagues and our residents will take them in their stride.

## **Sporting Champions**

Together with our leisure centre partners, Everyone Active, we are delighted to be supporting potential Olympians of the future thanks to a free membership scheme. Our centres at Enderby and Huncote are taking part in the Everyone Active Sporting Champions programme, now heading into its seventh year.

The initiative offers aspiring athletes the chance to use leisure centre facilities for free to help them develop their talents and achieve their ambitions of sporting success.

The programme is open to young hopefuls right now and I would encourage anyone interested to find out more and make an application.

## **Glenfield Neighbourhood Plan**

As a District Council we have helped a number of our Parishes design their own Neighbourhood Plan and now it is the turn of Glenfield. The Parish has submitted their Plan to us and we are running a consultation so local people can air their views before the document is adopted.

Along with our own District Plan this new Neighbourhood Plan will inform decisions on planning applications and what areas of land have value in terms of historic value or green space.

These documents are important defences against unwanted, inappropriate or ill-designed development across our District and now is the chance for the people of Glenfield, and anyone with an interest in the area, to have their say.

## **Youth Conference**

The end of this month sees the return of our very own Youth Conference with pupils attending from Countesthorpe Academy, Winstanley Community College, Brockington College, Thomas Estley Community College, St Peters C of E Primary School and Danemill Primary School.

The Youth Conference is organised by Blaby District Youth Council and Youth Green Forum and gives young people the chance to engage within local democratic decision-making structures, as well as raise issues and concerns impacting on the youth of the District.

Last year three key issues were highlighted at the Youth Conference - hate crime, vaping and the Green agenda. The groups have been working hard to tackle these issues by taking on Hate Training, Carbon Literacy Training and have had many presentations delivered to them by NHS and Leicestershire Police.

This is a valuable opportunity for our young people to engage and understand the politics which shape our everyday lives and perhaps provide a stepping stone for Councillors and politicians of the future.

## Fosse Meadows Update

One of our most popular green spaces has been getting a revamp recently to improve facilities for visitors.

We recognised Fosse Meadows car park had deteriorated over the last few months so it was a priority for us to bring it back up to scratch.

Work has been carried out in stages so people could still visit and use a section of the car park while the rest scraped and grid reinforcing laid which has been filled with pea shingle to improve drainage and keep the area looking natural.

Our contractors have also replaced old fencing and added high visibility strips to posts to act as parking space indicators to allow for better parking. We hope visitors will welcome the upgrade.



## Blaby District Carbon Neutral by 2050

### Depot Electrification Roadshow

On 24 January we hosted the Electrifying Council Depots – East Midlands Roadshow. The event was well attended by Councils from across the Midlands and featured presentations by Midlands Net Zero Hub, Hilson Moran, National Grid (Western Power Distribution), BP Pulse and Dennis Eagle.

There was a tour of the Whetstone depot where delegates were shown how to get ready for EV's.

There were also demonstrations of an electric refuse lorry and a street sweeper by Dennis Eagle and Bucher Municipal.

Blaby's Depot at Whetstone features in the Electrifying Council Depots guide (produced by Hilson Moran and Midlands Net Zero Hub) which provides a route map for councils to switch to electric vehicles by explaining the infrastructure requirements and how to get there.

More than £600 in income was raised from the event which will help other local authorities in their journey to Net Zero.

### Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

Following the success of Local Authority Delivery phase 2, Blaby has again worked with East Midlands Homes (EMH) and the Midlands Net Zero Hub to facilitate the retrofit of social housing in the district.

Addressing the carbon emissions from housing in the District is a key part of our journey to Net Zero by 2050.

In 2022 EMH were awarded more than £1million of government funding to upgrade more than 70 homes to a target energy efficiency rating of EPC C, or EPC D where this is not possible.

So far energy saving measures have been installed at more than 40 homes so far which will help those residents to save money on heating and reduce carbon emissions.