

Leader's Report for Council 27th February 2023

Item 4 refers

District Councils Deliver

At last week's Districts Councils Network (DCN) Annual Conference 2023, exclusive new market research about how residents in two-tier areas view their councils was unveiled. The DCN also launched the DCN Innovation Spotlight to showcase great examples of how member councils are delivering innovation to improve outcomes for their communities.

Their new report "***Districts Deliver: How local people view their councils***" is based on polling of residents in two-tier areas by BritainThinks, the research and insight company. It offers compelling new evidence that residents across England value and trust their district councils. The key findings are:

1. District councils have strong name recognition and awareness among residents. In two-tier areas many can only name their district council.
2. There is a widely held view that the services delivered by district councils are important for their local area.
3. District councils enjoy high levels of satisfaction across a range of measures, more so than county councils.
4. Residents feel that their district council understands and cares about their local area. They have a high level of trust in their district council's ability to tackle local issues.
5. Local government is more trusted than national government to tackle local issues.

I recommend that all Councillors and any prospective Councillors take time to find out more, so please take a look at their [press release](#) and read the [full report](#).

Harborough District Council delivers on EV Charging infrastructure

Last week saw the long-awaited announcement by the Government that Harborough District Council has been awarded £1.15 Million by the Government to increase charging infrastructure across Harborough and Leicestershire. Drivers in the Harborough district and across Leicestershire will benefit from the installation of 63 EV charge points and the expansion of EV car clubs.

Alongside all seven district and borough councils across Leicestershire, and with support from Leicestershire County Council, Harborough District Council has led on this £2.3million collaborative project called Flex D to expand electric vehicle charging across the county. The other £1.15million of funding was previously secured from the Business Rates Pooling Fund.

The Flex D project consists of the following key aspects:

- solar powered charging hubs in each district and borough area providing up to 12 charging points at each hub.
- development of rural EV car clubs enabling rural mobility and driving uptake of EVs and use of chargers with the provision of a number of standard dual chargers in smaller village locations. This will support the development of the network of charging between hub towns and satellite villages.
- the council will work with local communities to support the move towards EV charging through roadshows and how to develop local car clubs.

However, separate to this funding, but linked to the ARG money we received from the Government after the pandemic, on Friday we announced that the County's FIRST rural electric car club has been agreed in Tilton on the Hill.

Harborough District Council has teamed up with Leicester-based Green Fox Community Energy Co-operative (Green Fox) and residents of Tilton on the Hill to develop this club.

Tilton on the Hill, which has no public transport, school or doctors' surgery will now benefit from two electric cars as pool cars from Green Fox which the residents can book to hire out when needed. The village will also benefit from two double EV charging points located at the village hall which the council has funded and will allow up to four electric cars to be charged.

The installation of an electric car charging station will offer fast charging for the electric car club and residents without off street parking. Tilton on the Hill was earmarked by Green Fox to run its own electric car club building on the environmental reputation of Tilton Green. After lots of members of the community responded positively to a survey in 2021 Green Fox is helping to make this a reality.

With financial support from the national Motability scheme, Green Fox are one of four organisations taking part in an 18-month national pilot to help develop a blueprint for rolling out electric car clubs across the country. With a focus on improving rural mobility, the electric car clubs will be open to all in local communities and offer a volunteer drivers scheme to help residents who can't drive with medical appointments, shopping, visiting friends and days out.

This new funding for Flex D and that we already have from ARG and are waiting to receive from the Rural Prosperity Fund will help to supercharge the EV infrastructure across our district, thus enabling more car-clubs to be developed.

Any community interested in finding out more about this contact:
business@harborough.gov.uk **#Cleaner and #Greener**

Ukrainian Refugees

Last week saw the first anniversary of the illegal and barbaric invasion of the Ukraine, an independent and sovereign nation, by Mr Putin's Russian armed forces.

The residents of the Harborough District have embraced the refugee challenge and official data now shows that well over 250 refugees are now living in our district.

On Friday, this Council took part in the national 1-minute silence; the Chairman and other Councillors later attended the Churches Together service at the Methodist Church in Market Harborough to commemorate the invasion and the sacrifices of those who remained to defend their homeland.

To all those residents of our district who bravely opened their homes via the Homes for Ukraine scheme or who have, given donations and other support – I humbly thank you all.

To those who have escaped from the barbarous war zone, I salute you.

Sláva Ukrayíni! Слава Україні!

Brooke House College

Like me, I expect many in our community will have been saddened to hear about the recent death of the young man Duangphet Phromthep, aka 'Dom' one of 12 boys rescued from a Thai cave in 2018, at Brooke House College.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his relatives, friends and all those at Brooke House College as they come to terms with this unexpected loss.

Cllr Phil King

Leader