

Leader's Report for Council Meeting 16th December 2019**Congratulations, commiserations and thanks**

Of course, I am referring to the results of last Thursday's General Election and the re-election of both Neil O'Brien OBE as MP for Harborough, Oadby & Wigston; Alberto Costa as MP for South Leicestershire and the election of Alicia Kearns as the new MP for Rutland and Melton. Congratulations to them all and to the Prime Minister Boris Johnson on his spectacular victory.

I am looking forward to working with all three of our local MPs on a wide range of issues that concern and affect local residents and businesses as well as their support across a range of key issues such as fairer funding for Leicestershire; infrastructure investment; better health services; more police etc.

Commiserations also to all those candidates who were unsuccessful in this election, but I'd like to offer thanks to all the HDC elections team, all those seconded in and all the staff involved in the running of the polling day services across the district across several council areas as well as the counts on Thursday evening.

Now they, like us, can all concentrate on the impending Christmas season and New Year festivities.

Planning – how do you want to be involved?

People across the district are being invited to have their say on how the Council consults on planning and development matters. The Council has launched a consultation on a revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which invites comments on how people are involved with planning related matters across the district.

The SCI sets out who, when and how the Council will consult when developing new planning policy and processing planning applications.

The seven-week consultation runs until 5pm on Wednesday 8 January 2020 before it is considered for adoption in early February 2020.

People can respond to the draft SCI through the Council's website and paper copies of the consultation are available at the Council's Offices at The Symington Building in Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, and at libraries within the district.

To take part in the consultation at www.harborough.gov.uk/sci

Surface water issues

Following recent incidents with surface water issues on three development sites in the Harborough District I have asked the senior officer team to review the circumstances surrounding these three sites; The three in question are Burnmill Farm, Market Harborough; Saddington Road, Fleckney, and Kilby Road, Fleckney. Investigations are ongoing and a report will be brought back in the new year.

Supporting Emergency Services and NHS workers to relax!

Last week it was announced by SLM, the Council's leisure contract operator for Harborough and Lutterworth Leisure Centres, that they will be offering complimentary use of the centre facilities during the festive period to Emergency Service workers and front-line NHS workers. This has the Council's full support.

It's Christmas - well nearly!

With the festive season well and truly upon us, officers have been busy organising a number of popular Christmas events including the lights switch on in Market Harborough and our inaugural Winter Food and Drink Festival which proved very popular this year following on from the similar festival held in the summer.

It is great to see so many festive events across the district creating such a festive atmosphere and the positive effect this has for local businesses and community spirit.

Once again, we have been offering FREE parking in all Council-owned car parks across the Harborough district on Saturdays in the run up to Christmas to encourage people to 'shop local'.

The free parking will still be available on 21 and 28 December 2019. (Parking on Sundays and public holidays is already free).

The initiative is run on the same basis as last year enabling shoppers to park for free for up to four hours in short stay car parks, and all day in long stay car parks in Lutterworth and Market Harborough. Drivers will still need to register their stay and can simply do this through the Pay by Phone App or by getting a free ticket from the machine.

Also, look out for the 'luggage label' style tags being placed on your bins to let you know when your bin will be collected over the Christmas period.

Harborough District Council will be open until 4pm on 24 December 2019, and will close for the Christmas period, re-opening on 2 January 2020. Our Lifeline service remains open 24/7 to support subscribers and for **emergencies**.

Residents can continue to access a range of Council information, during this period, via our website.

Our dedicated web page will contain everything you need to know about the festive season - including how to recycle your Christmas tree, cards and wrapping paper.

www.harborough.gov.uk/christmas

Finally...I'd like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year in 2020!

Cllr Phil King

Leader

16 December 2019