

Leader's report

for Council 7 October 2024



Key updates

Nominations now open for Community Awards

Anyone can nominate voluntary and community groups, charities, volunteers, individuals, or partnerships for specific awards to recognise and thank them publicly under the council's new Community Awards scheme.

Award categories are: Volunteer of the Year; Voluntary and Community Group of the Year; Young Person of the Year (11-18 and 19-25) and Special Recognition Award for an individual who has made a significant, long-term contribution to their community. The awards event will also incorporate a presentation of the Citizenship Cup by the Harborough Civic Society.

The first awards event will take place on 5 December 2024 and will be held in the Council Chamber in the council offices in Market Harborough. Future events will be rotated around different venues across the district and could be bigger, with business sponsorship being a potential source of income to cover some of the cost of the event itself. Further information is at: www.harborough.gov.uk/communityawards24

Successful Lutterworth Leisure Centre open day after refurbishment

Lutterworth Leisure Centre hosted a spectacular Open Day on Saturday 28 September 2024 to celebrate the completion of the state-of-the-art refurbishment and renaming of the facility.

Sporting celebrities British swimming legend, and multiple gold-medallist, Mark Foster, and local Olympic rowing gold medallist, Lauren Henry, were on hand to pose in photographs and chat with delighted fans.

Lutterworth Leisure Centre has been renamed from Lutterworth Sports Centre to represent the improvements brought about by the capital investment from Harborough District Council alongside operator Everyone Active. The refurbishment of Harborough Leisure Centre is on reschedule and an open day will take place on Saturday 30 November 2024.

Seeking to correct misinformation about housing numbers

I continue to push for a ministerial meeting to discuss the wide range of issues that are surfacing in respect of the government's proposed approach to revising the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

There has been speculation and inaccurate information distributed to residents in Great Glen which is dangerously upsetting to the community. There have been inaccurate claims including that 1.5m homes will be built in the area and that a new town of 10,000 homes is being forced next to Great Glen. We are taking steps to correct these claims and replace them with facts.

Harborough in Bloom

Congratulations to all the winners from the Harborough district at the East Midlands in Bloom contest.

- Market Harborough in Bloom were crowned winners of the Large Town category for the third year running
- Lubenham in Bloom won the Best Village category
- Little Bowden Bowls Club was given a Judges Award for its garden
- Stamps Funeral Directors in Little Bowden received a Gold Award for its floral displays

Congratulations to all who have played their part in brightening up our town and district. It's wonderful news about these achievements. These beautiful flower displays always do so much to boost the mood of the day. My thanks again to everyone involved.



New process for signing off open space works on new developments

The council is developing a process which invites greater involvement from ward members and residents in the sign-off of open space works on new developments (Practical and Final Completion Certification).

I hope this will send a strong message to developers that we are now giving residents a greater voice to help to get it right the first time and that the council won't be looking to sign sites off until all parties are satisfied.

Fleckney benefits from village centre makeover

A programme of measures to enhance and improve the centre of Fleckney for residents has been completed.

High Street shops have received grants to make changes to signage and repaint their frontages. The area by the village pond has had new benches and knee rail posts installed, the trees have been cut back and damaged railings have been replaced and painted. The library and museum have a new sign that makes it clearer to visitors what local services are provided. Work to the wall at the entrance to the village hall car park has been carried out, graffiti has been removed from road signs and traffic calming signs on the highway have also been refreshed.

The improvements, carried out by Harborough District Council, are government funded with £25,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and a contribution of £8008.80 from Fleckney Parish Council.

Small market manager of the year winner

Congratulations to Gail Bates, the council's Market and Events Manager, for winning the Market Manager of the Year Small Market award in the recent National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) awards. These prestigious awards celebrate the dedication, innovation, and service of individuals and teams who contribute to the success of the UK's vibrant market industry.

Despite being relatively new to the industry, Gail has led a significant revamp of her historic market, creating a thriving and community-centred marketplace with exciting events like the Comedy Festival and Young Trader Markets. A huge thank you to Gail and her team at Harborough Indoor Market for their ongoing dedication and hard work.

Football success

Congratulations to Harborough Town on their FA cup success. Dunton & Broughton Ladies must also be congratulated for getting through to the 3rd qualifying round.

Working more closely with parish councils

I have met with more parish councils, including the Kibworths, Broughton Astley and Great Bowden, which have been very positive and productive. Parishes are keen to work with the council and have shared information about the issues and priorities of their communities.

Corporate Peer Challenge in November

The council has arranged for the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) from 11 - 14 November 2024. The last peer challenge was conducted in 2018 and are normally done every five years.

The peer team has been selected by the LGA independently. Meetings with specific members, such as leaders and chairs of committees will be arranged, as well as meetings with other members from all parties to get a holistic view of the organisation. Key staff member meetings and staff focus groups will also be arranged with the peer team to ensure that both members and officers are fully involved in the process.

Following a corporate peer challenge, a report outlining the key findings and recommendations from the peer team is shared with the council. In the spirit of openness and transparency, councils are required to publish this report, alongside an action plan.

