

District Councillors Annual Report **April 2019**

It is 45 years since Daventry District Council was established, we are now about to start what is expected to be its last year before being abolished to make way for a new Unitary authority that will encompass Daventry District, South Northamptonshire, and Northampton Borough. Later in this annual report we touch on the Unitary plans in more detail.

We will continue to represent all constituents of Weedon Ward as we go through the preparations for the new authority, we expect local elections for the new unitary authority to take place in May 2020. Further updates will follow in the coming months.

1) New Daventry Development Link Road.

It is just over four and a half months since the New Link Road was opened and from day one, the Link road has proven to be a success. On the evening of the Open Day, the Motorway (North bound) was closed for hours due to an accident. The Link road took the traffic, leaving Flore and Weedon free of the usual 'gridlock' that was experience over the many previous decades.

An observation that may be of interest.....three months ago Cllr Amos was walking through the village of Flore to the Post box in, at around 10.30pm over three consecutive nights and he was taken aback by how silent the village was. Usually you could hear the hum of motorway traffic in the distance, but not so much now. This the coordinator of the Link-road said that this may be due to the section of the new Link Road, that is 'cut in', thereby absorbing some noise from the M1.

Many people have said how impressed they are by its construction, but also by the quality of the build and the way it winds through the countryside. It is hard to believe the proximity of the new Link road to the villages of Flore, Upper Heyford and Weedon.

The Link road is a great time saver too. Traffic calming measures are now being looked at by Flore and Weedon.

2) Recycling of Compost

The new contract for waste management began last Summer – a joint strategy with Norse and Daventry District Council. In the lead up to the change-over, much speculation was given on the amount of extra fly-tipping that could occur owing to the cost imposed on Residents by charging for compost bin facility. Such concerns have proven to be unfounded and overall the uptake on the service was higher than anticipated. This turned out to be beneficial for Charities, as the Weedon Ward District Councillors fought a campaign and won to get Charities exempt of being charged and were reimbursed later. Just to remind Parishes, that those who use the compost service, will need to renew their contract with Norse/DDC for 2019/2020. £36 for the year. Go to www.daventrydc.gov/gardenwaste

3) Cinema Complex, Mulberry Place, Daventry

Proposals are well under way for the cinema complex, restaurants and cafes. Work is hoping to start in July, after all the planning and other preliminary works have been finalised. The development is expected to comprise a 3/4 screen cinema with 2 restaurants fronting onto/facing a square for outdoor events. Adjacent car parks provide approximately 300 free car parking space. There are no plans to introduce a parking charge.

4) Proposed New West Northamptonshire Unitary Authority

Potentially this coming year will be the last for Daventry District Council. Essentially Central Government has determined that Northamptonshire should put forward proposals to form two new unitary authorities: one comprising of Northampton Borough, Daventry District and South Northants, to be known as "West Northamptonshire"; and another covering Wellingborough Borough, Corby Borough and East Northants, to be known as "North Northamptonshire". At the end of August 2018 councils in Northamptonshire voted in favour of a move to unitary authorities. Of the 8 councils (7 districts + NCC) only Corby voted against the joint bid to split the county into "North Northamptonshire" and "West Northamptonshire".

Generally unitary authorities are thought to be a better way to run local government than the two tier system we have at present. Unitary councils remove the confusion about who does what, allow coherent strategic thinking within a single authority rather than having to align two or more bodies, and provide an opportunity to reduce expenditure on councillors and multiple chief executives. Nonetheless, they are not magic bullets and it must be recognised that particularly in the "West" region we have been well served by two very efficient councils in South Northamptonshire and Daventry District.

We now await confirmation from the Secretary of State that he will be placing the order for the new authorities to be formed from May 2020. At this stage we simply do not know whether Brexit will delay this very important decision.

It has been a pleasure to serve you and look forward to doing so over the next year.

Cllr Johnnie Amos

Cllr Adam Brown

Cllr David Smith