



MARCH 2014

News from your local, Independent Councillor,

MARIANNE OVERTON MBE

Grants

Last month I called for applications for my small community grant. Thank you to all who applied. Grants have been agreed for...

- Getting our speed reduction device for the Cliff Villages back in order
- Community facilities at Nocton and Navenby,
- Children at Navenby Pre-school
- Youths at Dunston and Branston,
- Fair trade and small businesses at Branston,
- a parent-carer group and homes for
- homeless mothers with children.

Speed Limit Review

Following 570 responses, our wide-ranging series of visits, focus groups are now about to start with small invited groups. It is clear that a lot of the concern is about people not keeping to the limits that we already have or not driving to the conditions. Hence a whole package of measures may be needed. Of course, our quality of life still depends on us all keeping local residents and safety in mind, when driving. We have also found that the speed indicator devices are coming down in price and we have asked for a new sign to be designed as a reminder of the limit on long stretches.

Budgets LCC and NKDC

Thank you for your ideas on budgets, much appreciated. Rural services such as roads, buses, home care and small rural schools are more expensive to provide. Yet Lincolnshire has one of the very lowest levels of tax in the country. We are committed to the minimum wage at County and the living wage at District.

National govt has massively cut the portion of your income tax that it returns to local councils in the grant, keeping more of it in the central Government coffers. The "grants" to local Councils have been cut by 44% in this parliamentary term.

Local councils have cut their cloth and reduced reserves. At District, Laura Conway and I both worked to assist the budget process and supported savings of a third of a million bringing the budget down to £11,5m this year.

We had argued fiercely to retain the important funding for local access points and for protection of children in the Council tax scheme, but did were narrowly out-voted on those two points by the Conservative majority.

We accepted the Tenant Liaison Committee's position, increasing council rents by an average of 5% to cover improvements, though garage rents will be up in high demand areas.

Anyone who is on a transition grant to cover hardship because of the new bedroom tax or other changes suddenly applied, will need to reapply now, as the govt. has extended it one more year.

Parish Councils may have to take on more as the District and County Councils step back.

At County Council, Lincolnshire Independents have worked hard to improve the budget and priorities. We have always fought to keep tax down or static. We have supported some savings. We proposed better ways of making the savings whilst keeping sound provision, as we did with the libraries. However, this time our backs are against the wall and it becomes impossible to keep even the statutory services properly in place. That puts the council at risk of being taken to court in "judicial reviews", spending money of legal battles rather than services. (One on libraries is in progress.)

We were supported by two other groups of councillors, but overruled by the Conservative-led administration. The proposal that went through uses reserves to prop up the budget this year, which makes next year harder still. There is to be a "fundamental budget review" to try and balance the substantial problem in future.

Remuneration

The Independent Remuneration Panel met four years ago, looked in detail at the hours and responsibility and recommended a pay increase for Councillors. We accepted their professional opinion, but declined to take the money, instead donating it to carers and the local community grants you have seen me distributing. After four years the panel met again and this time recommended a 1% increase, which the Council again accepted as appropriate for the work done. It makes it possible for people to afford to do the job, even if they are not retired.

Your Opinion Wanted

Are you and your family registered to vote?

Ring NKDC on 01529 414155 to get a form. Postal votes are probably easiest and you can still take the form in on the day.

Young people do need to be heard more clearly in local government. We have a youth Council and send representatives to the national Youth Parliament. We go into schools to talk about issues. Do you know of a school group who would like a visit? Or someone who would like to get a bit more involved?

Wildlife Watch & RSPB Explorers

Got children interested in wildlife? Please ask for our new calendar and annual picture review. Next is a Farm Visit on Sunday 16th March. Children £1, accompanying adults free. 10am

More Houses

The Central Lincolnshire Core Strategy was rejected by the Inspector last Dec on the basis that consultation had been inadequate resulting in a plan for more houses without adequate infrastructure nor sites identified. Since its failure we are stuck with the National Planning Policy which is much more lenient on developers and speculative applications are coming in. There is a test case at appeal now.

I have at last got a reserve seat at the table. The new plan is beginning on March 12th and is due to run until 2036. Hopefully the consultation will be genuine this time, with the formal consultation in October/November this year and finally completing in October 2016. The budget has reduced to around half a million per year. I will keep you informed of events, now the "Central Lincolnshire Local Plan".

Information

Broadband

I am supporting broadband rollout as soon as possible, both nationally and in Lincolnshire, though it uses wires, which put BT in the driving seat. In Lincolnshire we spend £41m on capital and £9m running costs to support BT to get the rural areas included covering 89% of the County by April 2016 with speeds of up to 24Mb/sec. (Mine is now less than 1Mb/sec) We aim to access new money from govt to increase coverage to reach 95pc of homes. A third project using fixed WIFI, not wires, has raised speeds at Boston to 50Mb/sec, using £2.8m of EU funding. To find out when it is coming to you, go on www.onlincolnshire.gov Mine is scheduled for the first half of next year, and they are currently slightly ahead of schedule.

Easy information on iphones and ipads

If you haven't yet started using a QR reader app on your iphone or ipad, then search and download "QR reader" for free. Your phone scans the dots and goes directly to the right page on the web. Very neat.

The Princes Trust has grants available for rural businesses.

The Open Spaces Society is offering help in protecting green spaces.

Free Wildflower Seeds

This summer you can help our bees, butterflies and other insects by growing your own mini meadow. To claim a free packet, send your name, age and address to Wildlife Watch watch@wildlifetrusts.org by 1st June 2014.

Help save lives and keep countryside clean

Report Potholes	01522 782070
Report Litter	01529 414155
Adult Concern	01522 782151
Non urgent	Health 111, Police 101

Public Planning Inquiries

We had two public inquiries this month. I attended the one on the Lincoln bypass as it cut across an access road for a village into Lincoln and through a farmer's fields. Second was a speculative bid for a new housing estate outside the village curtilage of Branston was heard. We await the Inspector's decisions.

Some March Events

March

- 4th Flippin pancakes at St Peter's Church Hall, Navenby between noon and 2pm. Pancakes and coffee £4.50 – all proceeds to St Peter's Church
- 7th World Women's Day of Prayer at St Chad's Welbourn with Elizabeth Megahay speaking and tea. 2pm
- 7th Harmston Happy Hour at Memorial Ha. 5-8pm **Free**
- 8th Navenby Bowls Coffee Morning at the Venue 10.30-12
- 8th Welbourn Book Sale Vill. Ha 2-4pm
- 9th Free Dunston Brass Band Fun Day Vill Ha. Book on 01526 3233 860 2-4.30pm brassylady@talktalk.net
- 12th Dunston Chapel gift wrapping demonstration
Booking essential £5 from Diana 01526 320460
- 12th U3A Wellingore Mem' Ha, Lincoln's Victorian Prison 10am
- 12th Coffee morning & book borrowing at Coleby 10.30am
- 13th Dunston Hub Vill Ha 2-4pm Collecting for charity, glasses, food for the homeless, ink cartridges, wool.
- 13th Potterhanworth Party for Chocoholics 7.30pm
- 15th Wellingore Bake-off with prizes and tea. To enter, ring Toni 01522 811242 Awards at 4pm.
- 16th St Swithins Annual Brunch, Leadenham Village Hall 10.30-1pm £7.50/£5
- 16th Wildlife Watch Farm Visit, Beckingham 10am
- 16th Silver Sounds Band Open Day, new players welcome 11-18yrs 2-4.30pm
- 21st My visit to Buckingham Palace for Royal Investiture.
- 21st Kier Dance Threads at Harmston Mem' Ha £8 from 01522 722462 7pm
- 22nd St Chad's Roving Supper Welbourn, tickets £17.50 from Fran 01400 273734 7pm
- 28th 4 Trophies Quiz, at the Venue for Air Ambulance 01522 686 879 7.30pm
- 29th Coffee morning and table top Sale at Wellingore Memorial Ha 10.30-12.30pm
- 29th Navenby Coffee Morning 10.30am
- 29th Wellingore Mem' Ha' Table Top Sale 10.30-12.30pm
For a table, Ring Rosalie 01522 810480

Thanks

Thanks to all the organisers of an excellent series of local events in March. I got to as many as I could, and there were many more happening.

I run Wildlife Watch with Jean Martin and colleagues, calendar available.

Our three U3A's continue to thrive, with their own host of activities.

Branston Biz continues to thrive with some shared marketing projects planned.

The Venue, Community halls and our pubs and restaurants have exciting and often very full programmes, and are keen to see more events.

I hope you find this newsletter of interest. You can also get more frequent snippets by following me on twitter #overtonMarianne or facebook.

With Very Best Wishes,

Marianne

Councillor Marianne Overton MBE

www.independentvoice.org.uk

Follow me on  or 

A few recent events



I attended a meeting in Edinburgh of Local Government leaders from England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales to discuss devolution and share good practice...



Mr Pickles, Minister of Local Government at our annual Parliamentary Reception attended by Laura Conway and colleagues (He does have a sense of humour!)



Some of the Local Government Independent Group at our big regional event at Lincoln Cathedral.



New Banks Exhibition at the Collection is brilliant with free entry. In my youth I worked at the Natural History Museum in London cataloguing the paintings ready for lithographing. Strange to see them again after 30 years!



LCC put in a new bridge at Boston last week: Two bridges, installed 101 years apart!