



Cllr Ben Taylor

Fosse Highcross Ward Blaby District Councillors Monthly Report

Villages: Aston Flamville, Elmesthorpe, Sapcote, Sharnford and Wigston Parva



Cllr Mike Shirley

February 2025 Our Month in Review



Cllr Ben Taylor & Cllr Mike Shirley
Blaby District Councillors for Fosse Highcross



BUSY A5 AT SMOCKINGTON HOLLOW

It was good to meet residents this month near the Highcross monument to discuss the diseased tree on Bumblebee Lane and what can be done.

Many thanks to the office of Alberto Costa for arranging this, including David Findlay and Davide Moruzzi.

We have had further meetings with National in which we to raised the tree issue along with ongoing safety concerns regarding the Highcross and Smockington Hollow A5 Junctions.

Following the A5 meeting we continue to review the number of accidents between the notorious junctions of Fosse Highcross and Smockington Hollow and, yet again, another road traffic accident last week. This brings the total number of accidents since 2020 to 5 fatalities, 12 serious accidents with drivers and passengers hospitalised, and numerous slight collisions and near misses. In 2020 National Highways spent three million pounds to solve the problems at this black spot. We now find that National Highways intend to spend a further four million pounds in 2 years time by carrying out more road surfacing and even more road signs, all of this to save 1³/₄ lives per year! Where are the radical improvements such as a roundabout or speed cameras?

We, as your District Councillors will continue to push for changes to save lives now, not in 2 years time.

Cllr Ben Taylor

Email: cllr.ben.taylor@blaby.gov.uk
Phone: 01455 712 108
X/ Twitter and Facebook handle:
@CllrBenTaylor

Joint Contact Details

Web: www.FosseHighcross.uk
Email: hello@fossehighcross.uk
X/ Twitter and Facebook handle:
@FosseHighcross

Cllr Mike Shirley

Email: cllr.mike.shirley@blaby.gov.uk
Phone: 07539 994707
X/ Twitter and Facebook handle:
@CllrMikeShirley



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Debate Not Hate – LGA Campaign



At **Blaby District** Council's January Full Council meeting, we debated **#DebateNotHate**. Both your District Ward Councillors along with other Councillors across political parties signed the pledge to uphold the Local Government Association's (LGA) Debate not Hate campaign message.

Press release here: <https://www.blaby.gov.uk/.../councillors-endorse-anti.../>

Around the District



First buildings complete at New Lubbesthorpe local centre

A topping out ceremony has been held at the new local centre at Blaby District's award-winning community New Lubbesthorpe.

The ceremony marked the completion of the initial construction phase of the two-storey mixed-use development known as the Brook Centre.

The event involved delegates from

various organisations including Blaby District Council, other local authorities and representatives from the NHS and local school.

When completed the Brook Centre will house a Sainsbury's Local store on the ground floor along with four other retail units including a café/bistro. The first floor will feature the Forest House Medical Centre.

Councillor Ben Taylor, Blaby District Council Portfolio Holder for Planning, said: "It's great to see the first local centre take shape at New Lubbesthorpe, a fresh landmark in the development of this vibrant, pioneering community."

Brook Centre will be the first local centre in New Lubbesthorpe which will eventually feature 4,250 new homes. Work is expected to be completed this spring.

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Email: cllr.ben.taylor@blaby.gov.uk
Phone: 01455 712 108
X/ Twitter and Facebook handle:
@CllrBenTaylor

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Web: www.FosseHighcross.uk
Email: hello@fossehighcross.uk
X/ Twitter and Facebook handle:
@FosseHighcross

Cllr Mike Shirley

Email: cllr.mike.shirley@blaby.gov.uk
Phone: 07539 994707
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Councillor Activities

During January, your councillors have attended many training events and/or meetings, including social functions:

- Blaby Cabinet Meeting – 2nd
- Devolution White Paper Briefing – 8th
- Sapcote Parish Council – 9th
- Scrutiny – Draft Budget – 15th
- Highcross Tree Survey – 16th
- Training – Personal safety for councillors – 16th
- Sharnford Parish Council – 16th
- National Highways A5 improvements – 20th
- Scrutiny – Draft Budget – 22nd
- Sharnford Fete Committee – 22nd
- Planning Committee – 23rd
- Sharnford Bacon Buttie – 25th
- District Council Meeting – 28th
- Scrutiny – Draft Budget – 29th
- Sharnford Flood Meeting – 29th

During February, your councillors will be attending meetings and training events. Because of the recent government proposals, the number of activities could increase:

- Meeting with resident concerning A5 accident issues + make a video - 1st
- View tree issues in Elmesthorpe – 1st
- Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Teams – 4th
- Audit & Corporate Governance Committee – 6th
- Sapcote Parish Council – 6th
- Scrutiny Task & Finish – Recruitment – 11th
- Planning Committee – 13th
- Sharnford Parish Council – 20th
- District Council Meeting – 25th
- Sharnford Fete Committee – 26th

News Release

- First buildings complete at New Lubbesthorpe local centre.
- Lucky Seven has been a record year in the Love Blaby Lottery
- Council to pay costs of £94,111 following the loss of the planning appeal for the Enderby Hub
- Rail Hub concerns raised to new Transport Minister
- Councillors endorse Debate not Hate message
- Appeal after tiny puppies abandoned in Enderby

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HNRFI Update – Decision Phase



The Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange will remain in our monthly reports until the final decision is made by the Secretary of State.

HNRFI decision delayed

As you will be aware, the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) decision has been delayed to 10 March 2025 by the Secretary of State for Transport. The Secretary of State published two documents; a Minded to

Refuse Letter (explaining why the application may be refused) and a Recommendation Report (outlining advice from the Planning Inspectorate to the Secretary of State) and gave the developers Tritax Symmetry, until 10 December 2024 to submit further information.

Rail Hub Concerns raised to new Minister

Grave concerns about the impact of the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) have again been raised by Blaby District Council. Councillor Terry Richardson, Council Leader, and Councillor Ben Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Planning, outline major issues in a new letter to government. Both have written to Heidi Alexander MP, following her recent appointment as Secretary of State for Transport. They call for an early decision to reject the plans.



Date: 22 January 2025
My Ref: HNRFI
Your Ref:
Contact: Terry Richardson
Tel No: 0116 272 7055
Email: cllr.terry.richardson@blaby.gov.uk

Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Sent by way of email

Dear Secretary of State

HINCKLEY NATIONAL RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

Firstly, we would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment.

The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) application which has been submitted purporting to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project in Southern Leicestershire, off Junction 2 of the M69. The 662 acre development is principally located within the borders of Blaby District although a small portion lies within Hinckley and Bosworth Borough. The Applicant, Tritax Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited, is seeking a Development Consent Order (DCO) for a large controversial logistics development comprising a rail freight interchange and 850,000 square metres of warehousing.

Due to the weakness of the legislation concerning strategic rail freight interchanges there is actually no requirement for any goods to arrive or leave by rail and it was clear during the public examination that there would be a significant reliance on road transport which would have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area.

We agreed with your predecessor's stance that she was "Minded to refuse" the DCO, taking into account the Examining Authority's Recommendation Report, which outlined a number of concerns that ourselves, other local authorities and residents raised through the process. Most notably the following:

- the safety concerns raised in respect of the M1 J21/ M69 J3 and the lack of adequate transport modelling at this junction;
- the increased Highway safety risk in Sapcote village; and
- the concerns regarding the impact on increased rail usage at Narborough Level Crossing for pedestrians; and
- a lack of measures to avoid or mitigate identified harm to the occupiers of the Aston Firs Travellers site.

Continued.....

Blaby District Council Council Offices Desford Road Narborough Leicestershire LE19 2EP
Telephone: 0116 275 0555 Fax: 0116 275 0368 Minicom: 0116 284 9786 Web: www.blaby.gov.uk



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However, despite these concerns the applicant has been afforded a further opportunity to attempt to overcome what are fundamental flaws in the scheme with the submission of additional information to yourself by 10th December 2024.

Whilst we and other authorities were provided with the information directly from the applicant on 10th December 2024, the new information was not available to other interested parties until well after this date, eventually being made available on 20th December 2024, some 10 days after the deadline. We do note that due to this delay the original deadline for interested parties to submit responses of 31st January 2025 has been extended to 7th February 2025. However, this Council still has grave concerns over both the DCO itself and the nature in which the additional information has been submitted without the requirement for further independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate. This is surely against the principles in your manifesto to provide decision making at a local level and for all decisions to be made on an open and transparent basis.

Given the unified strength of concern, it would be remiss not to raise this matter with you following your recent appointment. Whilst southern Leicestershire is a key part of the Nation's logistics sector, we continue to experience significant issues in relation to the strategic highway network – most notably at the M1/M69 junction at Junction 21 of the M1. The HNRFI, by not properly addressing its own impacts, will overload this already oversaturated junction and will reduce the region's capacity for further economic growth.

We therefore urge you to carefully consider the negative social, environmental and economic impacts of the HNRFI on the residents of Blaby District, and Leicestershire as a whole, and consider the highways infrastructure mitigation that is required in this part of the region.

We hope that the recommendation provided by the examining authority and the total lack of effort on behalf of the applicant to mitigate the issues raised will lead you to reach the same conclusion as your predecessor.

This extended wait for a decision is having a material impact on local plan making but more importantly is causing a huge amount of stress to the residents in this area especially those under threat of losing their homes due to compulsory purchase.

An early decision to finally reject this proposal would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Terry Richardson
Leader - Blaby District Council

Cllr Ben Taylor
Portfolio Holder for Planning
- Blaby District Council

Cllr Ben Taylor

Email: cllr.ben.taylor@blaby.gov.uk
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The 662-acre HNRFI scheme from developers Tritax Symmetry is considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. It features a rail hub and 850,000sqm of warehousing on countryside southwest of Elmesthorpe. The area lies between the M69 and Leicester to Birmingham train line.

It is due to be decided by Ms Alexander following a lengthy review by the Planning Inspectorate. Last September, her predecessor, Louise Haigh MP, said she was 'minded to refuse' the scheme. However, she gave Tritax more time to submit evidence in support of their application.

With those documents received, interested parties have until February 7 to make further comments.

The letter highlights various negative impacts, most notably on the already overloaded surrounding motorway network. It says the scheme could stifle, not encourage economic growth.

Ms Alexander is urged to "carefully consider the negative social, environmental and economic impacts of the HNRFI" and "consider the highways infrastructure mitigation that is required in this part of the region."

The Councillors say: "We hope that the recommendation provided by the examining authority and the total lack of effort on behalf of the applicant to mitigate the issues raised will lead you to reach the same conclusion as your predecessor.

"This extended wait for a decision is having a material impact on local plan making but more importantly is causing a huge amount of stress to the residents in this area especially those under threat of losing their homes due to compulsory purchase."

Councillor Ben Taylor said: "We have always said this scheme would destroy vast swathes of countryside and ruin the rural character of our District forever. We have also raised continual concerns about the huge negative effects it would have on our highways and motorways and the lack of measures from Tritax to overcome these. As the deadline for the decision on the HNRFI scheme approaches and with a new Secretary of State for Transport in place, we felt we should again express our grave concerns. We hope Ms Alexander takes these on board and agrees with the previous position that the scheme should be rejected."

A decision is due on the HNRFI by 10 March. For more information on HNRFI and to read the letter in full visit: [Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange – Blaby District Council](#)

New Local Plan



We continue to work on our Local Plan which will guide growth across the District up to 2041, shaping where housing, employment and retail sites should be developed and where development should be restricted.

For the latest info on our new local plan, please see Blaby District Council's dedicated webpage: <https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plan/new-local-plan/>

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Major Blaby District Planning Applications



24/0004/FUL – Land off Gillam Butts, Countesthorpe
Development of 41 dwellings
Application to be determined by Planning Committee on 13th February 2025

24/0527/OUT – Land off Oak Road, Littlethorpe
Outline application for the erection of up to 155 residential dwellings
Application to be determined by Planning Committee on 13th February 2025

24/0874/FUL - The Works Aston Lane Sharnford Leicestershire
Demolition of existing pre-fab offices and siting of 29 self-storage containers with erection of new boundary fencing and landscape bund
Application to be determined by Planning Committee on 13th February 2025 after ‘call-in’ by Cllr Taylor

25/0016/VAR – Bouskell Park, Welford Road, Blaby
Variation of Condition 2 (approved plans) and removal of Conditions 3 and 4 (relating to surface water drainage details) of permission 24/0746/FUL
Application to be determined by Planning Committee on 13th February 2025

24/1040/FUL – The Gables, Chapel Lane, Sharnford
Residential development of 3 new dwellings and alteration and extension to ‘The Gables’.
Application to be determined by Planning Officer under delegated powers

24/1079/FUL – 27 Leicester Road, Sapcote
Alterations and extension to the property, change of use from a dwelling to an 8-bed, 8-person house in multiple occupation (HMO)
Application to be determined by Planning Committee at future meeting after ‘call-in’ by Cllr Taylor.

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@CllrBenTaylor

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Email: cllr.mike.shirley@blaby.gov.uk
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Local Minor Planning Applications

24/0994/FUL – 8 Station Road, Elmesthorpe

Erection of single storey outbuilding for storage incidental to main dwelling.

24/0539/HH – 1 New Walk, Sapcote

Retention of wooden trellis and picket fence to form means of enclosure within the curtilage of a listed building.

24/1002/HH – 65 Calver Crescent, Sapcote

Building front and rear dormers to create more bedroom space and rear kitchen/dining room extension.

25/0033/HH – 7 Tuckey Close, Sapcote

Front and Rear extensions to bungalow. Installation of log burning stove and flue.

25/0046/HH – 17 Buckwell Road, Sapcote

Single storey front extension and white render to front and sides of existing dwelling.

Appeals

02/0184/1/PX – Applicant appealed against decision by BDC to refuse Retention and use of mobile home for residential purposes in breach of Condition 2.

Local Planning Enforcement

None

Cllr Ben Taylor

Email: cllr.ben.taylor@blaby.gov.uk

Phone: 01455 712 108

X/ Twitter and Facebook handle:

@CllrBenTaylor

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Web: www.FosseHighcross.uk

Email: hello@fossehighcross.uk

X/ Twitter and Facebook handle:

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Email: cllr.mike.shirley@blaby.gov.uk

Phone: 07539 994707

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