



Cllr Ben Taylor

# Fosse Highcross Ward Blaby District Councillors Monthly Report



Cllr Mike Shirley

## **February 2026**

### **Volunteer of the Year Award**

We are so pleased to announce that the Blaby District Council Volunteer of the Year Award has been given to a resident of Fosse Highcross Ward. Laura Thirlby from Sharnford who was given the award in recognition of her tremendous efforts in the village.



**Youth Club & Community Centre** - Laura took over the running and revitalising of the Sharnford Youth Club and Community Centre around September 2021 and has seen it go from strength to strength over the last four years. Every day of the week Laura can be found overseeing the Youth Club & Community Centre, arranging receipt and/or collection of food for the Community Food Table, and applying for grants to benefit the village, amongst other varied initiatives. Laura has proved to be a tour-de-force and long may she continue. Organised the launch of the new weekly youth-club which is seeing a rapid growth in membership. Secured small-grants funding for equipment, maintenance and events, ensuring the club runs safely and sustainably. Arranged funding for provision of solar panels and battery storage. Organising events throughout the year

for all ages in the community. Helping to bridge gaps between different age groups and organisations, ie. Sea Cadets and the VE Day celebrations.

**Village Fête** - Laura took the lead as Fete secretary, helping plan and deliver the very successful fete. The fete has seen record fundraising totals which have benefitted many volunteer groups in Sharnford.

**Community Food Table** - Set up a simple, dignified "take-what-you-need" system that now supports dozens of households each week. Cultivated partnerships with local supermarkets, keeping the table stocked with fresh produce on a daily basis, and minimising food waste. Consistently spreads the word through social media, noticeboards, and good old-fashioned conversations.



These achievements have made a lasting difference to our village, and we're incredibly grateful for everything she does.

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## **Sharnford Village Development Appeal Refused**

An appeal against the refusal of a 134-home development in Sharnford has been rejected.

A government planning inspector has upheld Blaby District Council's original decision to reject the scheme. The inspector agreed with the Council's view that the proposed site, north of Leicester Road, was unsustainable and unsuitable for new housing.



Following a visit to the village the inspector noted even picking up bread and milk was not a simple task: "Sharnford is extremely limited in terms of the services and facilities within it. I accept that there is a school, public houses, play areas and a car garage, but note that there is no shop or post office."

"As such, facilities for day-to-day living and convenience are not available within the village itself, with residents instead needing to travel to other nearby settlements, such as Sapcote or Stoney Stanton for day-to-day services and facilities."

He said while bus services and walking routes were available linking Sharnford to neighbouring villages he wasn't convinced they were a practical alternative to a car. Referring to both national and the Council's own planning development policies he concluded "the appeal site is not a sustainable location and is not therefore a suitable location for the development proposed."

The decision has been welcomed by your ward representatives, Ben Taylor and Mike Shirley. Mike, in his role as Portfolio Holder for Planning & Strategic Growth, stated "We are pleased the planning inspector agreed with our view that the proposed location for this development was entirely unsuitable."

"Planning policy makes it clear any new housing scheme should be sited sustainably with options for residents to work, shop and access amenities which don't solely rely on the use of a private car. Our original refusal was based on the lack of these options and it's gratifying to see our refusal upheld for the same reasons."

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## Armed Forces Support



A pledge to continue supporting our armed forces has been signed by leader of Blaby District Council and local MPs.

Council Leader Councillor Ben Taylor, Chief Executive Julia Smith, Alberto Costa, MP for South Leicestershire and Peter Bedford, MP for Mid Leicestershire have put their names to the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a UK national promise ensuring the armed forces community receives fair treatment, is not disadvantaged due to service and their sacrifices are recognised. It is upheld through government, local authorities, businesses and charities signing pledges.

The Covenant was originally signed by Blaby District Council leaders in 2018. The re-signing comes as the authority works to secure a Gold Award in the Defence Employers Recognition Scheme (DERS).

The DERS awards signify a further commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and demonstrate being a truly 'forces-friendly' employer through tangible actions, not just pledges.

As part of its support of the Armed Forces, the Council hosts regular coffee mornings for veterans. It also raises awareness of the benefit that former service personnel bring to workforces.

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## Gearing up for food waste collections

Blaby District Council is gearing up to launch new weekly food waste collections as part of the government's Simpler Recycling reforms.

From this week residents will get a bin hanger giving an overview of the service and details of the caddy pack each household will receive during February and March. The pack comprises of a small indoor kitchen caddy and starter roll of liner bags, larger outside caddy and instruction leaflet.



Residents can sign up to a text or email alert if they want to know which week their pack will be delivered: [Food Waste Caddy Alerts](#)

Food waste will be collected separately from the outside caddy on the same day as refuse and recycling starting from 30 March.

It's simple to get involved and no amount of food waste is too small to recycle. Simply put food waste into the kitchen caddy lined with a bag – plate scrapings, bones, fruit peelings even uneaten pet food – tie the liner and put it in the outside caddy when a collection is due.

These collections divert food waste from landfill, where it rots, producing methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas 25 times more damaging than carbon dioxide.

Instead, the waste gets processed at an anaerobic digestion plant where it breaks down, generating biogas - cheap and green energy - as well as fertiliser for farmers.

The government suggests the new service will help cut the 18 million plus tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions associated annually with food waste.

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## **Councillor Activities**

Ben and Mike will attend Parish Council meetings, committee meetings, cabinet meetings, local functions and meetings with residents.

- Bi-monthly meeting with Executive Director Place – 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Local Plan Development Group – 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Veteran Coffee Morning – 4<sup>th</sup>
- Sapcote Parish Council Meeting – 5<sup>th</sup>
- Dallington House opening ceremony – 6<sup>th</sup>
- Chairman's Quiz Night – 6<sup>th</sup>
- Clerk's & Chair Parish Liaison meeting – 10<sup>th</sup>
- Joint Cabinet & Council Review – 11<sup>th</sup>
- Cabinet Meeting – 11<sup>th</sup>
- Sharnford Fete Committee – 11<sup>th</sup>
- Sharnford Parish Council Meeting – 19<sup>th</sup>
- Cabinet Meeting – 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Full District Council Meeting – 24<sup>th</sup>
- Cabinet Meeting – 25<sup>th</sup>
- A5 Partnership Meeting – 26<sup>th</sup>
- Blaby Youth Conference – 26<sup>th</sup>

## **Blaby News**

- Appeal lodged over Sycamore Street site in Blaby Village.
- Gearing up for food waste collections.
- Have your say on budget proposals.
- Tackling homelessness challenges.
- Lottery anniversary special.
- Sharnford village development appeal rejected.
- Community volunteers recognised.

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## New Local Plan



The Blaby Local Plan moves one step closer with the 'Statement of Common Ground' proposal approved at Full District Council.

The submission made by Cllr. Mike Shirley, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Strategic Growth to full District council on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026 is copied in full below. The decision to approve the proposal was unanimously agreed by councillors.

*"This report provides information on a Statement of Common Ground which has been prepared by the*

*Leicester and Leicestershire authorities to demonstrate effective cooperation and joint working in plan making. It also provides, for information, an update on National Planning Policy guidance in respect of Duty to Cooperate and Submission deadline, relevant to the Statement of Common Ground.*

*On 19 July 2022, this Council signed a Statement of Common Ground which gave Blaby District Council a housing requirement of 687 dwellings per annum to deliver through the Local Plan. The number was formed of Blaby housing need of 341 dwellings per annum and 346 of unmet housing need for Leicester City. This was informed by independently produced Housing Economic Needs Assessment and Housing Distribution evidence.*

*In December 2024, the Government issued revised housing numbers, known as the 'Standard Method' for each of the Local Planning Authorities. Although there was very little change in the overall Housing Market Area, Leicester City Housing Need reduced considerably while increasing in most other districts, including for Blaby. The Housing Need rose from 341 to 539 dwellings per annum.*

*On the back of the revised numbers, the Authorities in Leicestershire have worked collaboratively to commission an independently produced Housing Distribution Paper which has provided the basis and evidence for apportioning unmet need from Leicester City.*

*The output of that work is contained in Table 1 of the report. For Blaby District this provides a total figure of 654 dwellings per annum. This is formed of the 539 housing need for Blaby District and 115 unmet housing need for Leicester City. The amount taken by Blaby district is informed by the physical proximity to the City and the considerable shared boundary, as well as the levels of commuting and migration as a consequence.*

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*It is worth recognising the annual housing target for Blaby District contained in the Statement of Common Ground, at Appendix A of the report, is a reduction of 33 dwellings per annum and an improved picture when compared to the 2022 Statement of Common Ground.*

*This Council is being asked to approve the signing of the Statement of Common Ground as contained in appendix 1 of the report and 654 dwellings per annum to deliver through the Local Plan.*

*Other Districts will be seeking approval for signing of the Statement of Common Ground at Appendix A of the report through their own political and governance processes over the coming weeks.*

*The report clearly sets out why this Council should sign the Statement of Common Ground at Appendix A of the report. The Statement of Common Ground is a key element of the Local Plan evidence base and is required to demonstrate compliance with the Tests of Soundness at Examination, and to adoption of the Local Plan, and with that, regaining control of growth in the district. Not signing the Statement of Common Ground therefore carries a substantial risk to the council in plan making. It would leave Blaby at risk to increased speculative planning applications, and undermine the delivery of strategic infrastructure, making it essential for the Council to approve and sign the attached document."*

Please check the dedicated New Local Plan Blaby District webpage to find out more:

<https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/new-local-plan/>

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## **Planning Updates**

### **Major Planning Applications**

**25/1114/OUT** – Land West of Sharnford Road, Sapcote

Outline application for development of up to 79 dwellings and associated infrastructure.



We will continue to monitor this application and if we can provide any more info, please don't hesitate to reach out.

The final decision on this application will be for the Planning Committee. The date for this meeting has yet to be decided.

**25/1026/RM** – Land to the North of Leicester Road, Sapcote

Reserved matters approval for development of 80 dwellings.

### **Local Planning Applications**

**25/1109/LBC** – 4 Wortley Cottages, Station Road, Elmhurst

Refurbishment of existing roof to include the removal of Swithland slate to allow replacement of rotten timber rafters and laths.

**25/1070/OUT** – 2 Station Road, Elmhurst

Outline application for the erection of one self-build dwelling

### **Planning Enforcement**

**Lychgate Lane – Near the M69**

Unauthorised works and additional caravans onsite. We are awaiting further information from Blaby DC as to the next steps, including potential retrospective planning applications.

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