

District Cllr's Annual Report - May 2023

Scampton:

The future of RAF Scampton remains uncertain. A great deal of the former iconic RAF Scampton was sold off many years ago however the remainder was kept by the MOD. It was proposed to sell off this area and under Treasury' rules have to be sold at market price. WLDC in partnership with another company had it in its sights on developing it and prepared to invest £300 million. Meantime pressure to re house asylum seekers from hotels etc led the Government to re locate these people in former MOD sites namely Scampton and other sites. Wetherfield in Essex was identified and its district council went to the High Court to stop the site from being used by asylum seekers but lost because the Government used its emergency powers to stop the injunction. The current circumstances constitute an 'emergency' within the Class Q definition and WLDC has received a similar response over its proposed injunction despite the cogent arguments to stop it. The artefacts from the museum at Scampton are now housed at RAF Waddington and the officer's Mess is being proposed to receive Listing. If RAF Scampton is being used for asylum seekers long term, it will undoubtedly scupper plans to develop it & herein lies the tragedy for this iconic site associated with 617 squadron & Guy Gibson and recently with the Red Arrows. And the backdrop to this comes as we mark 80 years of the Dambuster Raid.

Solar Farms

Putin has woken up the West to the reality that its total dependence for gas on Russia has to be reversed and the UK is now scrambling to become independent of fossil fuel by promoting renewable energy. It could be argued, that the proposed solar farms here and elsewhere resembles a knee jerk reaction. For example, nuclear fusion as proposed at West Burton is a better way forward as is opening up coal reserves which the UK has in abundance and the technology to deal with its waste is highly effective! In parallel with a move towards energy independence so goes the cry for food independence and the irony is that land accommodating solar farms cannot be used for growing food.

Corringham is identified at Grange Farm to the east of the Parish. The people living at Grange Farm will, if the Cottam Solar Farm goes ahead be no longer surrounded by fields growing crops but with large-scale solar panels. And the proposed Tillbridge Solar Farm will affect the villages of Glentworth, Harpswell and Springthorpe. The Community has formed an action group to prevent these developments and I think to scale back the density is a realistic approach. I cannot see the Government turning down the proposed developments as it tries nationally to address its commitment towards energy independence. This year should determine the future of these proposals. And with energy prices going through the roof, the public will naturally want to see the UK as independent of foreign exporters who have the monopoly of prices at this present time.

Political Scene:

At WLDC the leading group has been the Conservatives but they have been propped up by 2 Gainsborough Independents. Within the last 2 years we have witnessed a growth in independent Cllrs from 4 in 2019 to 7 by 2023. The recent District Elections have realized interesting developments, the Liberals gained 18 Cllrs whilst the Conservatives 14 and the Independents 4, no one group is in a

position to take control of the Council. The spectacle of a hung council is foreboding and in the long term unworkable. WLDC has suffered in the past with 'hung councils' which has no advantage to cllrs or the officers. It creates political deadlock. Therefore, the independents hold the key to power, and the Conservatives even with the support of the 4 independents could not take control and the Liberals could have tried to take control with 18 Cllrs but really required support from the. It required just 1 independent to resolve the matter and I decided, after conversations with the Liberal leader to support his group without conditions attached [I honoured the pledge I gave a year ago, predicting the possible outcome of the 2023 elections] and thereby allowing him to take control the Council and stave off the threat of a hung council. The Conservatives have ruled for 15 years and now form the opposition and the Liberals will have to get used to being the ruling group, a reversal of roles which will be challenging for both groups. Many of the Cllrs elected are 'raw' including a 19 year old former student of Gainsborough High School. Local politics may become far more interesting in the next 4 years as the political map has turned from blue to orange!

I was first elected in 2010 and have since fought 5 elections managing to hold my seat 11 years of those 13 years was as a Conservative and the last 2 years as an Independent and in May 2023 I stood for the first time as an Independent, which I remain, despite lending support to the Liberals.

I am to Chair my old committee, Overview and Scrutiny subject to approval in Full Council on 22nd of May.

Selective Licensing:

It was proposed that Selective Licensing be extended into the North ward of Gainsborough and into Wold View, Market Rasen and the Hemswell Wards. This was fought off by a united group of 4 Cllr 2 were Liberal, a Conservative and me as the Independent. A compromised position was reached and within 2 years it *may* be revisited. It was strongly argued that there was sufficient powers to address rogue landlords in place and in the pipeline and that more enforcement officers are required to be much tougher on these rogue landlords. This represented a substantial u-turn at WLDC and I was pleased to have supported like-minded colleagues.

Second Central Local Plan for Greater Lincolnshire:

The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan has been adopted and will be used in making decisions on planning applications across the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey areas.

This new Local Plan is pioneering in placing climate change at its core and will help ensure Central Lincolnshire is a net zero carbon area. This trailblazing approach will also lead the way for other areas to follow in tackling climate change.

The new Local Plan introduces a number of new policies to guide development in Central Lincolnshire, including:

- Climate change – an ambitious and groundbreaking set of policies aimed at making Central Lincolnshire net zero carbon, including in making sure new homes are efficient, attracting renewable energy generation, and ensuring new homes are adaptable to climate change.

- Housing – new housing sites, capable of meeting our needs to 2040 and policies to ensure that the housing is in the right location and will be well designed.
- Jobs – protection of existing employment sites and land available for more employment development in locations where housing is or will be built.
- Shopping and city/town centre – policies to enhance our city and town centre’s and ensure they remain a destination, and to protect local centres which provide essential services across the area.
- Tourism – policies to support the tourism industry in Central Lincolnshire and to ensure that any tourism development is in the right location.
- Environment – a suite of policies seeking to protect our environment including delivering biodiversity net gain, protecting our valued landscapes, protection of high-quality agricultural land, and protecting trees and hedgerows.
- Infrastructure – policies to help ensure that the infrastructure needed to support new development is delivered in the right places.
- RAF Scampton – a policy which will allow the future redevelopment of this site be properly planned to deliver great benefits to Central Lincolnshire.

The new Local Plan was adopted by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee at its meeting on 13 April 2023 and will be used in making decisions on planning applications immediately. The Central Lincolnshire committee is made up of a partnership of City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District, West Lindsey District and Lincolnshire County Councils. It represents a joint vision for how Central Lincolnshire should evolve between now and 2040.

My comment is that there is nothing about business growth thereby helping businesses to thrive which gives employment etc. the business sector is the ‘wealth creator’ needing greater support !

Gainsborough

There are several welcomed developments in the town;

- The former Lindsey Centre has been removed in preparation for a cinema complex which will have a car park and a few shops one of which is a gambling shop now in Silver St but to be relocated.
- The former Gainsborough Standard 18c building has been restored and refurbished into 3 flats with a shop below.
- There are several 18c properties being restored on Lord St
- Whitton’s Gardens is to be refurbished subject to a recent public consultation
- The bus station is to undergo a refurbishment.
- The Tuesday and Saturday markets remain challenging and empty shops are a real problem.

Contrary to a newsletter circulated recently in one of my parishes, the Hemswell Ward except in one instance has managed to obtain a complement of Cllrs to serve their communities and to have the services of first-class clerks, which is a healthy start to this 4-year term of office. The Parish Meetings of Heapham, Springthorpe and Grayingham are pro-active and the work of their chairs is appreciated. And I look forward to working along side colleagues in *making a difference* in the Hemswell Ward.



On Saturday 13 May 2023, Lea Fields Crematorium will be opened its doors for guests to take an informal look around the facilities.

A calligrapher from Hilton Studios was demonstrating his skills creating beautiful artwork inscribed in the onsite book of remembrance.

Staff will be demonstrating how it recycles shredded paper into beautiful seeded paper, which are available to anyone wishing to leave a message for their loved ones and are later sown in the wild flower areas.

The opening day took place from 10am until 4pm with staff on site to answer any questions guests may have.

It was free for everyone to attend, with light refreshments being served throughout the day and a chance to enjoy the gardens that are situated on the hillside benefitting from striking views.

West Lindsey Churches Festival:

This is being held over two weekends in May this year. I am encouraged by St Laurence's Church Corringham which received 196 visitors [up by 50 on 2022] and had 7 volunteers to help with its five star catering. And raised c £800 [up by £100 on 2022] in offertory, donations and from its catering. There are 87 churches/ chapels taking part and I hope they have been as successful as Corringham. In the Hemswell Ward; Corringham, Glentworth, Grayingham, Heapham, and Willoughton have taken part.

Schools;

The Schools in the Hemswell Ward [Corringham Willoughton- Hemswell Cliff] were graded Good in recent Ofsted inspections and I wish to pay compliment to Mrs Waplinton who is retiring as the Head of the Joint Willoughton- Hemswell School which has a high reputation in pastoral care. I hope she enjoys a long and happy retirement

Neighbourhood Development Plans:

There are 5 from Hemswell Ward Willoughton was the first, followed by, Corringham, Glentworth, and recently by Hemswell and we await Hemswell Cliff which has been held up by extenuating circumstances beyond its control but is on track to be approved this year.



The Delters History Group from Gainsborough unveiled a new 'blue plaque' at the weekend, dedicated to the workers of Roses of Gainsborough.

The plaque is one of 17 that can be found around the town that tell the lesser-known stories that link to Gainsborough's fascinating past.

Invited guests gathered at the Riverside in Gainsborough where members of the Delters History Group, along with founding member Thelma Childs, celebrated the final plaque recognising the significance this local company had in the town. The event also received fantastic support from the public as a crowd formed to watch.

Group member Darron Childs thanked various special guests for attending, including Keith Vince, who runs the Roses of Gainsborough Facebook page; Sue Edlington, author of *Roses of Gainsborough*; Gainsborough Heritage Centre; the Friends of Gainsborough Old Hall; and Linda Browning, whose father met Guy Gibson and Bomber Harris whilst working for Roses.

Members of the Rose family were also able to attend. Annabelle Farmer, great-granddaughter of the founder of Roses, who attended along with her children, Joseph, Ellie and Alfie, spoke of her pride in the dedication of this blue plaque.

Darron also paid tribute to founding member, Thelma Childs, who has worked tirelessly over the last 35 years to share her knowledge and memories of Old Gainsborough, through slideshows, publications and talks. She has also been instrumental in the installation of all 17 plaques.

Thelma was delighted with the attendance at the event. She said:

“It was lovely to see so many people come support the unveiling of the blue plaque. I guess this is because Roses played such an important part in the families of so many towns folk, including my own. My father, Eric Barlow, worked as Alf Rose’s personal mechanic and my husband, Dave Childs, started his apprenticeship at Roses in 1953 aged just 15.”

Roses of Gainsborough was formed by William Rose after he designed the world’s first tobacco wrapping machine. His invention then later evolved into confectionery and other items.

Their revolutionary flare for design also led them to play an essential role during World War I and II and is said to have made parts for the Lancaster’s that carried out the Dambusters raid.

Special guest Group Captain James Beldon MBE unveiled the plaque alongside cadets from 203 (Gainsborough) Squadron. He thanked everyone for attending and gave a fascinating overview of Roses work and how it played such an important role during the War.

Gp Capt Beldon was delighted to be invited to such an historical event. He said:

‘It was an honour to unveil the Delters’ blue plaque commemorating and celebrating the role Rose’s of Gainsborough played in the Second World War, especially in support of the Royal Air Force and, in particular, the famous Dambusters raid almost exactly 80 years ago. The blue plaque will remind future generations of Gainsborough, residents and visitors, of the vital work that the staff of this great company conducted during this country’s darkest hour.”

A wider project for the Delters History Group is also underway, creating a printed trail that will take people round the entire collection of plaques. The booklet will provide further insight into the stories behind each plaque, with an opportunity to find out more online.

The trail booklet is being funded by West Lindsey District Council and forms part of the town’s developing visitor offer.

Faye Pudney, Visitor Economy Officer at WLDC also attended the event. She said:

“It has been a pleasure to support the Delters History Group to install and unveil the Roses plaque. Roses of Gainsborough resonates with so many people, and are well known nationally, and internationally, so it made sense to dedicate the final plaque to the company and their workers.

“This is just the start of a wider project, and we will continue to work with the history group to develop a trail around all the plaques, adding more reasons to come and explore the town.”

PDJ Howitt-Cowan