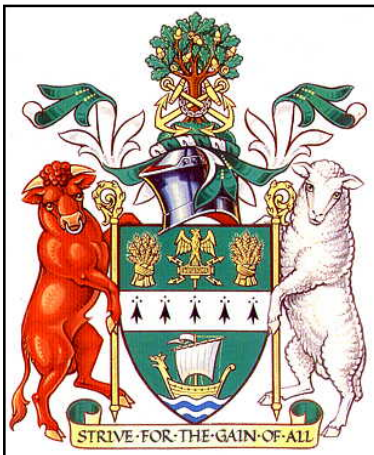


Annual Report 2023

District Cllr Report to
Hemswell Parish Council
March 2023



Hemswell & Harpswell Neighbourhood Development Plan 2023 -36:

Congratulations is in order to Cllr B Mander and his team for getting this document over the line & approved at WLDC'S Full Council on 6th of March. It represents a huge amount of work & delighted that the majority of the Community supported it.

It is a 'balanced document', in that, it aims to preserve its local heritage but not in aspic recognising that the two communities has to develop for the future but sympathetically respecting the heritage. Too many of our villages are expanding without such care and sensitivity reflecting urbanization in the rurality; this plan however resists such challenges and maintains its historic character championing quality houses for homes of the future.

Clerkship

I am delighted that after several years, the Parish Council has appointed a very able clerk who will relieve the Chairman of the dual role he has had and thereby enable him to focus on his primary role of Chairman. Clerks are like 'gold dust'!

Public Forum:

In the past year I have appreciated more members than hitherto of the parish attending the public slot for them to raise concerns & engaging with the parish cllrs. It has been regrettable that this platform has been taken advantage of in a few instances and that further repeats should be squashed immediately especially when unsubstantiated claims are made of a slanderous nature. Public platform implies a civic responsibility to be exercised with discretion and care.

Election 2023:

The District & Parish Elections are to held on Thursday 4th of May and Hemswell & Harpswell Village Hall is to act as the Polling Station. It is important that those voting come with I.D. due to new regulations. Postal Voters will receive their papers from the 17th of April.

It is the intention of the current District Cllr to seek re election. He was first elected in 2010 [he was successful following; in 2011, 2015 and 2019 elections] now having served the Hemswell Ward for the past 13 years, which has been richly rewarding.

West Lindsey Open Churches Festival

This is held over two weekends in May and for the past nine years, I have had the privilege of being its Chairman. Hemswell is not a participant whereas, Corringham, Grayingham, Glentworth, Heapham & Willoughton are regular participants and it would be encouraging to have Hemswell on board in the future!

RAF Scampton:

Its future hangs in the balance, as WLDC hopes to develop it have been dashed as the Home Office has it in its sights to accommodate 1, 500 asylum seekers. I think that this site is *not appropriate* for the Home Office & believe that greater care should be exercised in the selection of future sites despite the pressure the Government finds itself in.

Tillbridge Solar Farm:

The Government is in a 'catch 22' situation; it requires more renewable energy to make the UK more independent of foreign energy and secondly to make GB more independent of food production. The sheer scale of both Till bridge and Gate Burton Solar Farms is breathtaking. I applaud the community in opposing what is proposed, however, my personal assessment is that we can but hope to scale back the proposed plans. Meanwhile, we are on tenterhooks to see what will materialise after the Public Enquiry.

Dog Fouling:

This is a persistent problem in the village, education may help reduce the problem but to date no dog owner has been prosecuted which may act as a deterrent to other dog owners. Civic Pride is vital, especially in this village famed for being an attractive conservation area. Dog owners have a civic responsibility not to allow their pets foul public places, it's a health hazard and brings the village into disrepute.

Speeding through the Village

This needs addressing and motorists should exercise greater care and respect. I am a great advocate of 20mph through villages & disappointed that the authorities are not rolling this out

Economic Times

We are living through a cost of living crisis after Covid. And as the District Cllr I am aware of the effects it is having on both families and individuals. in the Hemswell Ward. I have families receiving food parcels and have occasionally delivered them. I have individuals who need prescriptions from Kirton and have no means to run a car and I have willingly helped out by collecting medicines. I know of one lady, almost 80 with no central heating but has a coal fire, which costs her over £35 a bag & a weekly food parcel goes some way in offsetting the weekly purchase of a bag of coal. I visited one home, which cannot be heated due to the cost with damp and mould in the bedrooms with a sick husband & the couple struggle on benefits. It is the reduction in the quality of life that I find most concerning.

In Appreciation

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the Parish Council for their vital work and support, to the Village Hall Committee as they set about a refurbishment programme, & to the Church authorities of keeping that church open. These are important Community Resources maintained by volunteers who give up their quality time for the common good and I am thankful to those involved.

I hope May Day Celebrations go well; it is a great way that the Community can get together and appreciate all the input from the volunteers

Paul DJ Howitt-Cowan District Cllr