

County Council – East Gartree Division (September 2001)

Now that the Foot and Mouth restrictions have been lifted footpaths have been re-opened throughout the area. Many of the routes have deteriorated because of the lengthy period they have been unused and hedges along the way may need some attention. The County's tourism and recreational walking have been badly affected but hopefully the area will remain disease free and rural life can return to some degree of normality.

Recently there has been a huge growth in local heritage studies especially since popular TV programmes like Time Team and House Detectives. The County launched Heritage Watch, which is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, last October. This aims to encourage people to record, celebrate and conserve their local heritage. Heritage Wardens are volunteers from each parish who work with parish councils to help protect the local environment including geology, nature conservation and archaeology. They are provided with training and the latest guidance and legislation. Many parishes in the Chronicle area have not yet appointed a Warden and the Harborough District has the lowest percentage uptake. If you would like to be a Heritage Warden or would like more information please contact me (see below) or Dan Jacklin on 0116 267 1377 or email djacklin@leics.gov.uk.

I mentioned Village Appraisals in my June letter and I am delighted to say that the Rural Community Council reports a rise in interest from local villages. The County Council sets great store from the information that is gathered from these locally run exercises which could influence decisions on library services, traffic calming, lifelong learning and the environment.

The County Council website is being revamped later this year but it already provides an excellent source of information and statistics (www.leics.gov.uk). Amongst the many hundreds of pages is one that provides links to websites put together by Leicestershire villages. Although there are over sixty listed not one of the 26 parishes in the East Gartree Division are amongst them! I recently wrote to all these parishes and asked them to support any local initiative to put together a village website. Already I have had very positive feedback including one parish clerk who has volunteered himself and is starting from scratch! I hope that in the coming year many villages take up this excellent form of communication and what better thing to start with than the results of your Village Appraisal!

Finally, congratulations to Kibworth Town and Kibworth & Smeeton Juniors Football Clubs who have not only worked hard to level, de-stone and sow six new football pitches off Fleckney Road, and erected a clubhouse but they have also raised sufficient funds to start playing. I was pleased to add some weight to their fund-raising and wish both clubs every success. The pitches will provide a very worthwhile sporting facility to occupy many young people from both Kibworths.