

## James Poland CC – East Goscote Annual Report 2026

Although last winter the village thankfully didn't suffer a repeat of the devastating flooding we saw in January 2025, work to prevent flooding, and limit its impact where it does occur, have been a key part of my work. Flood Wardens play a key role across Leicestershire in making communities more flood ready and resilient, they go out in all weathers and at all times of the day to do whatever they can to tackle floods in their local areas. When I spoke with Flood Wardens during the damaging floods of January 2025 many said to me "we do what we can, but unless we have the power to close flooded roads, vehicles driving through flood water will still cause damage to property". That is why I launched my campaign to give Flood Wardens in Leicestershire the power to close flooded roads.

Despite initial resistance from the County Council (who were concerned about the legal, insurance and health & safety implications of giving volunteers road closing powers) I pushed on with my campaign and I was very pleased to get the agreement of Full Council, passed unanimously in December, to introduce a trial scheme to give Flood Wardens the power they've asked for. When the scheme goes live (which will be later this year) this scheme will give Flood Wardens the power to act quickly, close roads and prevent vehicles going through flood water which so often causes extra damage to property by creating bow waves. This scheme (known as the Community Flood Signage Scheme) will protect properties make communities even more resilient.

A factor which can contribute to flooding is blockages in brooks, rivers, and other water courses. I was contacted by a resident who was concerned about the number of trees growing in Queniborough Brook where it passes the village. After taking a look at the issue, I reported this through to the Environment Agency in February who cleared trees from the brook in March. The water is now flowing better but I will continue to monitor the situation to ensure the water flow remains free.

An ongoing issue related to Queniborough Brook is the state of the pipes running across the brook east of the Melton Road bridge. The pipes have been there for decades (records suggest most probably since the Second World War when the area was a military depot and ordinance factory), there is significant corrosion in some of the pipes. The issue is concern about the safety of children who, despite warnings not to use the pipes to cross the brook. This work has taken a long time due to questions over land ownership, what cabling is running through the pipes, which companies are responsible for maintaining them and other similar issues. After research going back to the 1940s, meetings on site and significant work identifying companies and authorities responsible, at the time of writing it looks like a permanent fence will be erected and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) asked to come and advise what their professional view is on the safety of the pipes (the HSE have the power to require companies to take preventative safety action if they deem that necessary). At that point the temporary fencing can be taken away! I want to place on record my thanks to East Goscote Parish Council, and in particular Village Clerk Liz Pizer and Cllr Dick Peberdy for the work they have put into this matter too.

Another key campaign I have been running for more than a year now is my campaign to stop the expansion of the city of Leicester. Local Government is currently going through the largest changes since the 1970s, with the two-tier council structure we have now (Charnwood Borough Council and

Leicestershire County Council) set to be scrapped, with a single council which has the power of both put in its place (known as a unitary authority). As part of these changes, the City Mayor of Leicester Sir Peter Soulsby wants to massively expand the size of the City of Leicester, doubling the population of the city and taking its borders out to include Queniborough and Syston (amongst many other areas around the city). That would put the border of the city right on East Goscote's doorstep. In addition to starting a petition last year, signed by thousands of people locally, I also called an emergency meeting of Leicestershire County Council in which we passed a motion explicitly making opposition to any city expansion the official position of the County Council. I will continue making the case, alongside our Member of Parliament Edward Argar, that city expansion is wrong – local people don't want it and if it goes ahead, it will leave what remains of Leicestershire with real question marks over its long-term financial viability.

I want to end this year's annual report by thanking East Goscote Parish Council for all the work they do for the village. I'd especially like to thank Village Clerk Liz Pizer and Deputy Clerk Charlotte Turlington for everything they do for our community. Thanks also to our Borough Councillors and to Edward Argar MP, with whom I work closely for residents in East Goscote and across Syston Fosse Division.

If there is anything you need my assistance with, please do get in touch.

James Poland CC

Tel: 07764 966677

Email: [james.poland@leics.gov.uk](mailto:james.poland@leics.gov.uk)

Facebook: Cllr James Poland