**Member Led Pothole Scheme**

I deal with many issues via my email inbox, and most are to do with carriageway and pavement defects. We have just come to the end of a “Member Led Pothole” scheme where each County Cllr was given an allowance of 36 potholes. I contacted all my 10 PCs to nominate their worst holes. It seems some County Cllrs did not use all, or any, of their allowance, so I kept submitting them. I have submitted 51 reports covering about 80 holes, which are progressively being done (should be all done by April). It does mean I have been getting more complaints about roadworks. I believe that 13 of the submissions cover Great Waltham!

I have thanked the Highways Cabinet Member for running the scheme and  have lobbied the Highways Cabinet Member to consider a Pavement version of this scheme and I am pleased to say that ECC have allocated £4M for such a scheme (along with an additional £%M for Highway maintenance, which is double the amount used for the current scheme and will include pavements and carriageway. Precise scheme details yet to be released.

**LHP:**

**SID Poles:** LHP requests for additional SID poles require a speed survey to show speeds in excess of the speed limit by 10mph. Alternatively, the Parish Council can fund these. A cheaper option will soon be available whereby the Parish Council can request existing lampposts to be audited to assess if they can be used to mount a SID.

**School signage** – I have raised an LHP request (LCHE223011) to correct the signage outside Great Waltham school.  I had a complaint that it says “Patrol” and should say “School” as there isn’t an SCP there. I discussed with LHP about a cheap method being a sticker, stuck over the existing sign. The LHP budget for 23/24 has been allocated, so it is unlikely that this request will be seen as priority. Does the Parish Council see this as a high risk and wish to fund it?

**Ford End Raised kerbs** – This is still allocated for 22/23 completion, but I do not have a date yet.

**2023 RideLondon-Essex**

RideLondon will return Sunday 28th May along the same route as last year. This route goes through 3 of the Parish’s in my division, but also effects all the others. Because of the issues last year, I insisted on being on the Steering Group and particularly wanted to make sure that the businesses that were badly affected last year, do not suffer the same issues. More info at ridelondon.co.uk/community-info including info on how local access will operate.

There will be two Public Meeting/Consultations in my division: - 13th March at Writtle College, and date-to-be determined in Great Waltham

**Recycling Centres Booking system**

ECC have decided to implement a booking system for the Recycling Centres from Monday 13 March. This was a Cabinet decision and I have to admit that I am not fully on board with it! I understand this is to help manage waiting times, reduce congestion, and improve the customer experience.  The booking process has already been trialled using the Rayleigh Recycling Centre. I am a member of the Scrutiny Committee that reviews this decision and I will ensure that the decision is well scrutinised. - in terms of benefits and drawbacks (e.g., impact on fly tipping). Some sites do suffer queues, sometimes backing onto major roads. I am told that just applying the booking system to these, could result in residents travelling to other sites and creating queues there. There is no restriction on the number of bookings you can make as long as the waste you are disposing of is household waste.  I understand that same day booking will be introduced. More info at <https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/booking-system-planned-for-essex-recycling-centres>

**Park and Ride Consultation**

I attended a presentation on 25th Jan where the expansion of the Chelmer Valley P&R was presented. There is an expectation that demand will increase with the extensive new developments on the North and East side of Chelmsford and as WFH patterns return to pre-Covid normal. ECC decided to expand existing facility by 500 spaces rather than operate a new P&R Widford. Public consultation runs 30 Jan to 12 March. Two drop in consultations will be held at High Chelmer Shopping Centre. 9 Feb and 25 Feb.  Decision Spring 2023, Construction 2025 to early 2028.

I urge Parish Councils to respond to the consultation if they want their views to be heard!

**Climate and Traffic**

I attended a presentation on the effect of traffic on Climate change. Without going into detail, an interesting comment was that traffic levels are approaching pre-Covid, but central City car parks have not recovered by a long way. With the expansion of WFH, commuter journeys have dropped off (hence the empty car parks), but the people at home are making more short journeys!

ECC is promoting bus travel (Digigo, £2 single fare cap on buses to March 23), School Streets, Walkable Neighbourhoods, Bike Loan, eScooters, Essex Pedal Power promotion, RideLondon, Local Walking and Cycling projects (LCWIP), Travel Essex Journey Planner, Bikeability Training, Cycle routes, Car-free day for 2023 promotion.

**Coronation**

ECC have received correspondence from the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, stating that the Coronation will see people across the UK and the Commonwealth come together to celebrate. The Coronation programme will include the procession and service at Westminster Abbey on 6 May, the ‘Coronation Big Lunch’ across the country on 7 May (with a concert taking place in Windsor in the evening), and ‘The Big Help Out’ community activity on the bank holiday, Monday 8 May. The letter goes on to say that councils should encourage events and relax road closure rules and offering guidance on street meets. National Lottery funding is available of up to £10,000 for events and activities through the National Lottery Awards for All programme and you can encourage community groups to apply. The awards for All does not have a deadline, but it can take up to 12 weeks from the point of application submission to receiving funding, which means applications for the Coronation weekend should be made before the middle of February

**City Council Matters:**

Parish and City Council Your vote matters on 4 May 2023

This May, local elections are happening to elect councillors to all wards across Chelmsford City Council, as well as some parishes. Councillors make important decisions about your local area so make sure to vote and have your say! Everything you need to know about the elections can be found at [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/elections](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/elections).

Registering to vote - You need to register before you can vote in UK elections and referendums. You can do this at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. The deadline to register is Monday 17 April 2023. You don’t need to re-register if nothing has changed since you last voted, such as your name or address.

Voter ID - You now need to bring photo ID to vote in person. There are lots of different versions of ID that will be accepted, including passports, driving licences, bus passes and blue badges. If you don’t have any ID that you can use, you can apply for a voter authority certificate for free before Tuesday 25April. Visit <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voterID>.

Postal and proxy votes - If you will be away or can’t make it to your polling station on 4May 2023, you can apply to vote by post or by proxy on the Chelmsford City Council website: [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/elections](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/elections). The deadline for a postal vote is Tuesday 18 April, and the deadline for a proxy vote (appointing someone to cast your vote for you) is Tuesday 25 April.

Could you be a councillor? - If you want to get involved in local democracy, then you can either stand as a representative of a political party or as an independent candidate. The deadline for nominating yourself is Tuesday 4 April. A briefing session will take place in early March. Find out more at [www.chelmsford.gov.uk/voting-and-elections/stand-for-election/](http://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/voting-and-elections/stand-for-election/).

**Ukraine**

The hosting scheme is now a year old. I have received correspondence that says that Govt continues to support Ukraine refugees with £150 million of new UK-wide funding in the 2023/24 financial year to local authorities and devolved governments to help support Ukrainian guests move into their own homes and reduce the risk of homelessness. There is a launch of a £500 million Local Authority Housing Fund, which will provide capital funding directly to English councils in areas that are facing the most significant housing pressures as a result of recent Ukrainian arrivals.

However, the reality is slightly different. Many District Councils, including Chelmsford City Council, have a long waiting list for social accommodation. Private rental requires Guarantors which District Councils are unwilling to provide because of the onerous and open ended commitment. In my opinion, continuation of hosting is the easiest option, but some hosts, having provided accommodation for a year, are limited in what they can continue to do.  I am aware of some hosting coming to an end, and difficulties in obtaining their own homes, and would ask anyone to contact me if they can commit to being a host.

**A Personal Note:**

I have just renewed my 3 year First Aid certificate (including defibrillator training), so I am available to support any community events that need a First Aider