

We've all seen the awful scenes coming from the Ukraine these last few weeks. Putin's war of aggression against a sovereign, independent country is sadly reminiscent of the scenes my Grandparents would have known during the Second World War, scenes we all hoped, perhaps believed, had been consigned to the history books in Europe. The free world has once again united, Russia stands isolated and alone on the international stage and I strongly believe that history will record Russia's invasion of the Ukraine as one of the great geopolitical blunders on the 21st century. Both Leicestershire County Council and Charnwood Borough Council have been flying the Ukrainian flag in solidarity with the people of the Ukraine, and we stand ready to do everything we possibly can to welcome refugees escaping the conflict to our county.

East Midlands Freeport

The East Midlands Freeport has secured formal Government approval for its plans to offer businesses locating in the Freeport special incentives. The UK's only inland freeport is set to deliver over 61,000 jobs for the East Midlands and an extra £8.9bn for the local economy over the next 30 years.

The greenlight means that from 22nd March 2022, eligible companies investing in designated areas within the Freeport's boundary will be able to access a range of benefits offered through the Government's Freeport policy. These areas, known as 'tax sites', cover the Freeport's three main locations at East Midlands Airport and Gateway Industrial Cluster ('EMAGIC'), East Midlands Intermodal Park ('EMIP') and the Ratcliffe-on-Soar Power Station Redevelopment Site.

The special incentives will be offered to companies whose development plans support the Freeport's main objectives, including promoting growth in advanced manufacturing and logistics, and turbocharging the drive towards Net Zero. By building on the Freeport's other unique advantages as the nation's only inland Freeport with unparalleled global transport links, these benefits will help attract and accelerate new high value, low carbon investment that promises to create thousands of skilled green jobs.

By creating much-needed jobs and boosting the economy, the Freeport is set to benefit communities across the East Midlands and make a critical contribution to the Government's levelling-up agenda. It is one of eight Freeports being established across England.

Charnwood Community Hero nominations open

Residents are being urged to enter nominations for Charnwood Community Heroes 2022. The awards, run by Charnwood Borough Council, are a chance to thank people, groups and organisations who have carried out a good deed – no matter how small or large – in our community. It could be someone who has helped a neighbour, raised funds or is always there for others. Or it could be a group, organisation or business which has carried out some excellent work in the past 12 months. For the first time since 2019, the Council is planning to hold an in-person awards event. There are nine categories in Charnwood Community Heroes to enter plus the Harry Cook award which will be presented in memory of the Loughborough in Bloom stalwart. The deadline for nominations is 30th April 2022.

Everyone nominated will receive a Charnwood Community Heroes Award and be invited to a special presentation on Saturday, June 18, 2022, at John Storer House in Loughborough.

The nine open categories are:

1. Young Hero - sponsored by idverde
2. Super Trooper
3. Good Neighbour – sponsored by Serco
4. Inspiring Others – sponsored by Loughborough College
5. Green Hero – sponsored by Serco
6. Business Community Action – sponsored by 1284 Ltd
7. Top Team
8. Beyond the Call of Duty – sponsored by Morningside Pharmaceutical
9. Brilliant Board/Trustee Member

The Harry Cook Award, sponsored by Serco, will be awarded to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the community. It will be chosen by Harry's family. Harry, along with wife Pat, was heavily involved in Loughborough in Bloom and their floral home not only featured on the bloom judging route but also on BBC Gardener's World. Harry sadly died in 2018. Pat is the chair of the Loughborough in Bloom Board.

People can nominate and find out more visiting www.charnwood.gov.uk/heroes.

You can follow stories of local heroes on the Charnwood Community Heroes Facebook page www.facebook.com/CharnwoodCommunityHeroes.

I hope you all have a happy Easter! If you need my help with anything please do get in touch.

Cllr James Poland CC

Tel: 07764 966677

Email: james.poland@leics.gov.uk and cllr.james.poland@Charnwood.gov.uk

Facebook: Cllr James Poland