

As summer draws to a close, I reflect back on what has been another summer to remember for this country. Starting with the jubilee celebrations in June, followed by the Lionesses winning Euro 2022 at Wembley just before Team England's great performance at the Commonwealth Games, there's certainly a lot we can be proud of. The other memory I think I'll have of this summer is the overbearing heat at times! I was fortunate enough to have been on a family holiday during the hottest temperatures in July – when I got back at the end of that week it looked like the hanging basket outside our house had been blow torched! If such temperatures become an annual occurrence in this country (as it seems they will do), that will present further challenges we will need to meet head on (particularly in regards to protecting the vulnerable). I think this shows that it is more important than ever that Local Government plays the part it can in tackling climate change by doing whatever we can to achieve our carbon neutrality targets.

£1m improvement work to leisure centres set to begin

Works to improve Charnwood's three leisure centres will soon get underway. Charnwood Borough Council, and its leisure partner Fusion Lifestyle announced the £1m investment earlier this year as part of a new contract meaning the partnership will continue for a further five years. The extensive works will see improvements at Loughborough, Soar Valley and South Charnwood leisure centres including new gym equipment. In addition, all three sites will be transformed with a new layout, lighting and flooring.

All exercise studios will be upgraded and will have new equipment. New purpose-built spin studios will also be created at Loughborough and Soar Valley and a brand-new holistic studio and sauna will be added at Loughborough Leisure Centre. A further £150,000 will be invested in LED lighting at all three centres to help reduce carbon emissions.

While works are being carried out, visitors may notice some minor disruption. Leisure centre members will receive regular email updates and visitors are encouraged to check on each leisure centre website for the latest information. It is hoped the improvement works will be completed towards the end of the year.

Facilities available across the three leisure centres include a pool and a gym at each site, fitness studios, a dedicated indoor cycle studio, sports hall, squash courts, astro turf pitch and an indoor soft play.

Up to the start of August 2022 over 400,000 visits have taken place across the three leisure centres with an average of 58,000 visits per month. For more information about the three leisure centres in Charnwood, please visit: <https://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/contracts/charnwood>.

Call for help in fight against Ash Dieback

Residents are being encouraged to play their part in keeping the countryside green by helping the county council identify and manage diseased ash trees. Leicestershire County Council is dealing with the ongoing challenge of ash dieback, which has seen thousands of ash trees wiped out. The highly destructive disease is caused by a fungus and can lead to infected trees shedding branches or limbs, or potentially falling as the tree dies.

There are no exact figures for the number of ash trees in Leicestershire, but it is estimated that there are more than half a million in the county, with around 120,000 of them at the side of roads. Many of the trees are on private land, and now the council has launched a campaign to raise awareness of

the issue among residents, businesses and landowners to remind them of their responsibility to ensure their trees do not become a hazard to road users or people using pavements.

A new booklet has been created full of help and advice on ash dieback, including clear information on the steps which landowners with infected trees on their land need to take to halt the spread of the disease, as well as pictures showing the symptoms of ash dieback. The booklets are being supplied to each of Leicestershire's 93 tree wardens to support their work with landowners, and are available to download from the County Council's website.

The county council working to protect existing trees, while also helping to plant 700,000 more – one for every person living in Leicestershire – over the next decade. The landmark of 100,000 trees has recently been passed.

Landowners are also being reminded that, with certain exemptions, all trees in Britain are protected by the Forestry Act, which means that a felling licence is required to remove them. Tree owners should be clear that their tree is in an exempted category, which includes trees in gardens; or obtain a licence, before any felling takes place.

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 cldr.james.poland@Charnwood.gov.uk

Facebook: Cllr James Poland