

Ms Kim Russell
Chairman
Norton Parish Council
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Northamptonshire, NN11 2XN

22nd August 2018

I hope you are well and you are enjoying your summer. I trust all is well within your parish and it isn't as frenetic as Westminster - the current recess is a welcome break I can assure you.

I am writing to every Parish Council Chair across my constituency with a view to getting some crucial feedback on two important matters: the future of Local Governance in Northamptonshire and local bus services. In addition I want to highlight how I have been trying to get around to meet people and find out what issues are concerning them.

Taking that last point first, you may well be aware that over recent months I have been hosting coffee mornings in villages across a number of parishes in the constituency of Daventry. These have been a great success and have proved very useful in learning about crucial local issues and are all part of a broader goal of mine to connect with my constituents. As a local resident myself I am committed to seeing the local area move forward and improve.

If I have yet to visit your parish with one of these coffee mornings I do hope I will find the opportunity in the near future. Alternatively if you would like to organise a coffee morning in your parish, please feel free to get in touch.

Moving to a subject you will undoubtedly know a great deal about, the future of Northamptonshire County Council (NCC). This is a matter of vital importance to, and will have consequences for, every parish in the county of Northamptonshire. I have encouraged any constituents that have contacted me about this subject to contribute to the, now closed, 'Future Northants' consultation. I have also met with residents and hosted meetings across my constituency to find out what people think is best for the future of the county.

Whilst the results of the consultation haven't been released, I believe it is highly likely that in May 2020 NCC and the various Districts and Boroughs in Northants will be replaced by two unitary authorities - one covering the East of the County and one covering the West.

With this in mind, I would be keen to hear your thoughts on this likelihood, whether these may be concerns you have or potential opportunities.

Secondly, I have heard a great deal from concerned constituents about the future of the bus services in the county. Living in a Pitsford I know that for many people a local bus service is essential.

Consequently, I have worked extensively to find a solution to changes NCC are making to the local subsidised services. This work has led me to engage with the University of Northampton (UoN) on a radical new solution called the "Demand Responsive Transport Proposal."

I have attached a briefing from Mr Tony Ciaburro, Project Director of Transport Transformation at UoN. The document elaborates on the current consideration and what can be expected from the scheme. Although you will read that this briefing considers asking parishes to help with costs, the UoN are also working on an entirely separate commercial plan as well.

Once again, I would be grateful for your thoughts. Your constructive feedback on the attached proposal will hopefully go some way to ensuring Northamptonshire receives a fully functioning bus service.

Although I am sure you are extremely busy, your valuable time on these two matters is much appreciated. I thank you in advance for your useful contributions.

I do hope to see you in the future at some point. Until then if there is anything you think I may be able to assist with, please do not hesitate to get in touch and I will endeavour to help.

Yours sincerely,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY