**REPORT TO PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING: GREAT PAXTON** Monday 17th May 2021

This report covers the last year. It has been sad for many losing family members with lockdowns taking away the social meetings we enjoy so much. Using zoom we have been able to carry out council business. Thousands of words have been written and spoken about COVID 19 (coronavirus) I do not feel I need to add any.

For all parish councils and the district council there are and continue to be issues which demand our attention i.e. the new A428 and now the East West Rail Consultation which will run until 9th June 2021.

During the public briefings East West Rail have said that the environment is especially important during the planning of the route. This should mean the protection of the historic landscape which is enjoyed and is important for residents and visitors in and to the ward.

Huntingdonshire District Council have supported route E and in their press releases speak about economic growth and housing development. It is my duty to support the best interests of local villages.

I have received a request from Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to become part of a focus group to discuss public transport provision and the first meeting of this Group is in mid-May. I understand parish councils will be part of the focus group and I am sure that if the service meets the needs of residents and if they have confidence in the service provided it will be used.

In this unprecedented year, everyone has had difficult times. My good friend Councillor John Davies, Chairman of the District Council passed away. We enjoyed a good working relationship as chairman and vice chairman of the Council. We also lost Councillor Jill Taverner. We worked together on the District Council’s Employment Committee as chairman and vice chairman. Jill was a supportive and caring member of the committee with a positive attitude to staff issues.

At the district council, I have had the role of chairman of the Employment Committee and chairman of the Hinchingbrooke Country Park Joint Group in association with Cambridgeshire County Council. I also remain a member of the Corporate Governance Committee, of the Licensing Committee/Licensing Protection Committee and of the Senior Officers Committee.

Service Levels do cause me some concern. The district council are investing in equipment and staff to reduce/ improve waiting times for telephone answering, the planning service have had a change of leadership and senior management is seeking to improve officer performance to deliver an enhanced service to meet the expectations of applicants, agents and residents.

In the determination of planning applications, there have been inconsistencies, and local residents observe that outcomes do not take into account local health and education considerations.

Cambridgeshire County Councillor Mrs Wisson did not seek re-election in May. I am sad to see her go. So many did not see the work she undertook on behalf of the ward. Julie’s approach was always sensible and balanced, and I wish her a happy retirement. Remember though Julie you are still young enough to return one day!

RICHARD WEST