



‘A Coalition of Parish Councils in Leicestershire & Rutland’

Welcome to Villages Together!

My name is Phil Tenwick. I am Chair of Ratby Parish Council and the founder of Villages Together.

My professional background has taught me the importance of collaboration—the cumulative strength that comes when people share knowledge, experience, and insight in pursuit of the common good. That idea of *cumulative impact* sits at the very heart of Villages Together.

When I became Chair, I was new to the role and increasingly conscious of how isolated individual Parish Councils can feel. We were facing what seemed like a relentless wave of planning applications, each one treated in isolation, each village expected to respond alone. That model is not only exhausting—it is ineffective.

Rather than accept that reality, I began speaking with fellow Chairs of neighbouring Parish Councils, sharing concerns and asking a simple question: *are you feeling this too?*

The answer was immediate and unanimous. Every conversation confirmed the same truth—our villages are facing shared pressures, shared risks, and shared consequences. Out of that shared understanding, Villages Together was formed.

Today, entirely through word of mouth, Villages Together has grown to 22 approved member Parish Councils. That growth is not accidental; it reflects the scale of the challenge we face and the strength of the collective response now emerging. With continued momentum, we believe this model could unite hundreds of Parish Councils across Leicestershire.

Importantly, Villages Together is not an oppositional movement. It is a constructive, evidence-led partnership. We are already supported by a number of Borough and County Councillors, and by two of our local Members of Parliament—Dr. Luke Evans and Peter Bedford—both of whom have engaged positively with our work.

Villages Together exists because local voices matter, because cumulative impact matters, and because decisions affecting our communities are strongest when they are informed by collaboration rather than isolation. We are not resisting change—we are insisting on *better* change, shaped with villages rather than imposed upon them.

List of member Parish Councils

Ratby Parish Council.
Leicester Forest East Parish Council.
Groby Parish Council.
Kirby Muxloe Parish Council.
Glenfield Parish Council.
Markfield Parish Council.
Desford Parish Council.
Enderby Parish Council.
Newbold Verdon Parish Council.
Narborough Parish Council.
Newtown Linford Parish Council.
Kirby Mallory Peckleton Stapleton Parish Council.
Woodhouse Parish Council.
Cossington Parish Council.
Barlestone Parish Council.
Glen Parva Parish Council.
Cosby Parish Council.
Huncote Parish Council.
Bagworth & Thornton Parish Council.
Scraptoft Parish Council.
Quorndon Parish council.
Thurnby & Bushby Parish Council.

History Timeline

Group formed - in July 2025, inaugural meeting was held on Thursday 14th August 2025

Open letter - sent to Directors of LCC, Heads of District Planning, Police Commanders and MP's on 18th September 2025

Press release – October 2025

<https://www.leicester.news/campaigners-claim-villages-becoming-rat-runs-in-wake-of-new-homes/>

https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/campaigners-claim-leicestershire-villages-becoming-10544381?utm_source=mynewsassistant.com&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=embedded_search_item_mobile

First meeting – Held at County Hall on Monday 24th November 2025

Minutes of the meeting – Circulated January 2026

Follow up document – circulated January 2026

Second meeting - scheduled for Wednesday 4th March 2026 – County Hall

Overview

The issues we face are not emerging risks—they are present and escalating realities. Residents across our villages are already being placed in harm's way, even before many consented developments have been built and long before the hundreds of additional applications currently awaiting determination are decided.

The volume, scale, and nature of planning applications now being submitted are unprecedented. Yet they continue to be assessed using planning frameworks and assumptions that are demonstrably out of date. This is not a minor technical flaw—it is a fundamental failure of the system to reflect current conditions.

Critically, there remains no effective cumulative assessment of the combined impact on:

- **Traffic**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Noise Pollution**
- **Air Quality**
- **Public Safety**

Applications are still being justified in isolation and by using traffic data that is often more than 12 years old and modelling tools designed around the behaviour of drivers on major highways—not the constrained, unsuitable village routes that are now carrying ever-increasing volumes of traffic. When this is combined with infrastructure that has no realistic capacity for expansion, the outcome is entirely predictable.

Accident data compounds the problem. Recorded collisions, injuries, minor incidents, and near misses significantly understate what residents experience daily, creating a false sense of safety that does not withstand even basic scrutiny.

Village roads have become de facto rat-runs, carrying traffic volumes they were never designed to accommodate. In many cases, there is no feasible or deliverable engineering solution capable of making these routes safe. Approving further development in these circumstances cannot be justified as responsible or proportionate decision-making.

This is not a single-village issue, nor a collection of isolated hotspots. It is a systemic, county-wide problem.

Once these developments are approved, the consequences are permanent. The harm cannot be mitigated after the fact, and it cannot be undone.

At this point, continued reliance on outdated data, incomplete assessments, and procedural compliance in place of real-world evidence is a choice.

And so, the question that must be confronted—by every decision-maker involved—is this: **is this the legacy you are prepared to stand behind?**

Summary of the Key Issues Facing Every Parish Council

Parish Councils across the county are now confronting the same fundamental challenges:

- A **real and present danger to resident safety**, not a theoretical or future risk
- A **total lack of infrastructure capacity** to support unprecedented levels of housing and commercial growth
- Villages increasingly functioning as **rat-runs**, carrying traffic volumes they were never designed to accommodate
- The **absence of any meaningful cumulative impact assessment** for planning applications
- An **inability to mitigate harm once permissions are granted**, leaving communities to live with permanent consequences

These issues are systemic, not isolated, and they are escalating.

Our Aims and Objectives – Short Term

1. Formal Recognition of the Problem

Explicit acknowledgement from Leicestershire County Council and District Councils that the issues raised by Parish Councils are **real, urgent, and county-wide**, and that current approaches are no longer sufficient.

2. Place Before Movement

<https://www.leicestershirehighwaydesignguide.uk/using-design-guide>

Residential villages must be treated first and foremost as **places where people live, walk, and socialise safely**—not as traffic corridors created by strategic failures elsewhere in the network.

This principle must underpin all highways and planning decisions.

3. Consistent Application of Existing Policy

Immediate and consistent application of established national guidance, including:

- **Manual for Streets**

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7e0035ed915d74e6223743/pdfmanforstreets.pdf>

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67aaf8f3b41f783cca46251/NPPF_December_2024.pdf

These must be applied **consistently and rigorously**, not selectively or retrospectively justified.

4. Enforcement of Latest Government Design Guidance

Full enforcement of the latest Government guidance for developers, particularly where it reinforces the need to maintain and enhance **quality of place** in the face of new development.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-design-guidance-to-raise-the-bar-for-new-build-developments>

The guidance is explicit that developments should:

- Improve the quality of place
- Make streets safer
- Reduce car dominance
- Support walking, cycling, and public transport
- Integrate with existing communities rather than overwhelm them

This aligns directly with the concerns being raised collectively by parishes through **Villages Together** and provides a practical framework for shared working.

Each development should therefore be tested against a simple and transparent set of questions:

1. Does this development make the area safer for people, particularly children and older residents?
2. Does it reduce overall traffic impact, or merely accommodate more vehicles?
3. Does it improve the quality of place for existing communities—not just new residents?
4. Does it make walking, cycling, and public transport more attractive than driving?
5. Does it address cumulative impacts, rather than considering the site only within its red-line boundary?

Approaching applications in this way—**jointly and consistently**—would:

- ensure adherence to national and local policy,
- reduce pressure on Highways to act simultaneously as assessor, mitigator, and long-term maintainer,
- support better decision-making,
- protect vulnerable road networks and communities, and
- secure appropriate levels of **S106 and CIL funding**.

5. Cumulative Impact Assessment

Developers and planning teams must assess the **combined effects of existing and proposed developments**, rather than treating each scheme in isolation.

Assessments must clearly demonstrate that:

- the existing network can safely and sustainably accommodate growth, and
- infrastructure limits are acknowledged and respected.

6. Environmental and Public Health Safeguards

Formal recognition that **air quality and noise pollution are public health issues**, not secondary considerations.

Local policy must incorporate **measurable reduction targets**, not aspirational statements.

7. Meaningful Local Input

Planning departments must actively seek and incorporate evidence from **Villages Together**, including:

- locally gathered data
- known infrastructure constraints
- pilot schemes
- community consultation outcomes

Local knowledge must inform decisions **before**, not after, harm occurs.

8. Representation

Villages Together or respective Parish Councils to be allocated **15 minutes of representation** at relevant planning meetings where applications materially affect member parishes.

The Question We Now Need to Answer Together

What can we do—**working collectively and consistently**—to ensure that imminent decisions are made using **accurate, cumulative data**, and that local knowledge and evidence are properly embedded in future planning and highways decision-making?

Because once these decisions are taken, the consequences are permanent—and responsibility for those outcomes will be equally permanent.

Contact Details

If your Parish Council would like to be part of our growing and collaborative group, I'd be delighted to hear from you.

Email: phil@ratbyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Mobile: 07825 265398

To join, we simply ask for:

- The name of your Chair and/or Clerk
- An email address and phone number for contact
- Confirmation that your Parish Council has agreed to:
 - Join the group, and
 - Allow the use of the Parish Council's name in any publicity we may share

We very much look forward to welcoming you and working together for the benefit of our communities.