

## **District Councillor Report (06/12/2021) – Matt Jennings**

### **SDC Covid Cases –**

Last time we spoke Henley-in-Arden & Claverdon had 32 cases – it is now at 50.

Stratford District 542 per 100,000 (was 445 last time)

Warwick 411 (517 last month)

Solihull 456 (414 last month)

Redditch 497 (368 last month)

People aged OVER 12 who have been vaccinated in the District :

1<sup>st</sup> dose numbers : 87 %

2<sup>nd</sup> dose numbers : 81 %

3<sup>rd</sup> dose number : 44 %

Usual message - If you know of anyone who has not been jabbed – please encourage them to do so.

## **District News**

### **Avian Influenza Update**

This is now all over the District - whilst the danger to human health is low it is still vital that you do not touch dead birds. For all us dog walkers be extra vigilant. If you need to report this contact either the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999 or SDC on 01789 267575.

### **Levelling Up Funds**

Two projects were put forward to central government – the creation of a World Shakespeare Centre and another for pedestrianizing Stratford Town Centre. Unfortunately both didn't get funding. We are awaiting feedback and this should help learn and improve our new bids next year.

### **Riverside Project Approved**

Last week, Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Planning Committee approved plans for the Riverside Project on the outskirts of Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Riverside Project will see the development of Lench Meadows and the adjacent Fisherman's car park on the Warwick Road to enable greater access to nature and improve the site for wildlife.

Under the plans, access off the main road will be improved and extra paths and cycleways will be created, including new bridges providing better access for people in wheelchairs. Work will be carried out by specialist teams to retain and enhance biodiversity.

### **Victorian Christmas Market**

It was cancelled last year but is back on this year with an extra day ! Starting Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> going through to Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>. The Victorian Christmas Market is a themed event with stall holders dressed in Victorian costumes. There will be entertainment throughout the town; a stage in Henley Street will host a programme of performances. There will be a traditional funfair, which will include a carousel situated at the bottom of Wood Street and on the Rother Street market area.

The Christmas market will be on Waterside, Bridge Street, Henley Street, High Street and Meer Street, with stalls which will include street food and drink-related produce being positioned on Wood Street. Obviously there will be several road closures so take this into account if you are travelling to or through Stratford !

## **Planning**

Recruitment continues to be a major focus within the team. Following the departure of two senior planners some well-deserved internal promotions have been triggered. We are recruiting assistant planners to fill the current vacancies. The recruitment freeze earlier this year, combined with a number of departures, has impacted the key performance indicators on the smaller household application turnaround times. This will, however, greatly improve and return to our normal levels once the new starters arrive. Fortunately this time of year tends to be a quieter period for applications. We have received more applications for extensions this year which reflects the change towards hybrid working as an impact of the pandemic.

## **Materials Recycling Facility (MRF)**

This project is still on time and within budget ! We hope to have this fully operational by August 2023. It has shown that 8 different Councils can work with each other when they have a common aim. This state-of-the-art facility which will be one of the most advanced in the world. This guarantees that we have a high quality facility for the next 25 years at least. After The Pure fire this year and costs incurred it has really emphasised the need to take back control of our waste costs.

## **Heart of England Forest**

I visited the woodland educational and tree planting day with The Heart of England Forest. They run some education programmes and planting the right trees in the right area provides oxygen whilst capturing carbon and restoring forests and woodlands. This provides a natural habitat for bio diversity, walks for everyone, shade and helps in flood protection.

## **Arts**

I am in the process of organising a quarterly Arts & Culture newsletter from 2022. This will cover events and activities not only in Stratford District but also Warwick District.

## **Town and Parish Council Precepts**

In order to be able to accurately include the precepts set by individual town and parish councils in the Council Tax Demand Notices to be sent to residents in March 2022, Finance Department must have been informed of the agreed precepts of all town and parish councils **by the end of January 2022**, without fail. All Councillors have been asked to ensure their town and parish councils are aware of this requirement. They will need to make the necessary arrangements to meet, discuss and agree their precepts so that Finance Department can be informed of their decisions before the end of January.

## **SDC / WDC Merger**

The proposed merger goes to both our cabinets this week. The full report is available online - [Proposal to create a South Warwickshire District Council](#) – which provides comprehensive evidence for elected members at Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council in relation to the proposal to create a South Warwickshire District Council.

A recommendation will be made by both Cabinets separately, either to formally request the submission of a business case proposal to the Secretary of State at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to create a South Warwickshire District Council, or to reject this proposal and this will then be considered by both Councils on Monday 13 December.

## **Venture House**

‘Online Events’ for November :

[AutoCAD Beginners to Improvers](#) - Coventry Uni, 7 Dec

[Selling & working with Public Sector](#) - Cabinet Office, 15 Dec

### **Local networking**

Take a look at our [list of local networking groups](#) to see what you might like to get involved with. If you run an online networking group that does not appear on this list, please tell us about it and we can add your listing.

For further information visit : [www.venturehousestratford.co.uk](http://www.venturehousestratford.co.uk)

**It therefore leaves me to wish everyone a Merry Christmas & Prosperous new year !**