



Wootton Wawen Ward District & Arden Division

County Cllr. Ian Shenton

Proud to represent Bearley, Claverdon, Earlswood, Henley in Arden, Langley, Mappleborough Green, Preston Bagot, Tanworth in Arden, Ullenhall, Wolverton, Wootton Wawen

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County Councillor's report for Henley in Arden Parish Council Meeting 20th January 2025

Happy New Year. I hope that 2025 is a good year for everyone

It promises to be an interesting year local authority wise with cost pressures affecting budgeting and possible mergers of two-tier authorities such as Stratford District Council and other Warwickshire districts and boroughs with Warwickshire County Council to form a new unitary council.

At a national level, yet another social care review as announced by Wes Streeting MP when we already have enough evidence of what is wrong from previous reviews. This latest review just "kicks the can down the road" and delays any meaningful action being taken. The Government have backtracked on what they said about WASPI (women against state pension inequality), it continues to drag its feet on compensating those affected by the Post Office Horizon scandal and even the unions railed against the government on its withdrawal of the winter fuel payments (which it failed to mention in its manifesto). So, the signs don't look good for any changes to adult social care funding.

Successive cross-party committees and governments have wrestled with the problem of an aging population and how to provide care at an affordable level, affordable to the local authorities, of which many are being pushed to the brink financially and affordable to patients and their families. It will be interesting to see in 2025 how this issue will be dealt with as only additional funding will really resolve it, for now, and the only way Government can provide that is by borrowing more (when it has already borrowed £113bn since last March), raising taxes either directly or indirectly (through revaluation of properties for council tax purposes, pension fund taxes, withdrawing concessionary bus passes, to name but a few). **Cutting costs further is getting difficult without losing the quality of the service that the County currently provide.** The other possibility as I highlight below under County News, is savings by reorganisation of local authorities. **However, could the Parish Councils be next** in line for some attention from national government as many sit on large reserves and some services could get passed down to them as part of the creation of new unitary councils. This will be interesting to watch as the government have not been as open with the electorate as they promised to be.

Turning to some good news December 2024 marks 130 years since the Local Government Act of 1894 gave women the right to stand as a district councillor. 57 per cent of Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Cabinet members are women. And 39 per cent of the District Council's councillors are women. This year also marks 50 years since the creation of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

At this time of the year, we are looking at budgeting and council tax setting. I will be attending another briefing of the budget committee later this week, where I expect to see what the implications of the central government settlement to Warwickshire county Council will be (and Stratford District Council). As soon as I can, I will send a note to you outlining what this means to the precept and the County. It's pretty certain that County will be asking for the full 2.99% increase plus a further 1.99% for adult social care.

Unfortunately, the 1.99% increase specifically earmarked for ASC will not be enough to offset the increasing costs caused by increased National Insurance costs for care homes, the National minimum wage increases and the increasing demand for ASC services. Over 65% of the council tax that the County receive is spent on ASC, Childrens Social care, SEND and Home to School transport. We are employing what is known as the Statutory Over ride which many other local authorities are using, which allows expenditure this year to be carried forward into next year and classed as that year's expenditure. This effectively means that our accounts for this financial year will look better than they really are. However, the impact on cash is felt this year. We await the verdict of the government on how this UK wide issue will be resolved as eventually the over run on cost will need to be declared in a set of accounts. This can only happen in local and national government; the auditors would never allow any other business to account like this.

Merger of Stratford District Council with Warwickshire County Council – This is a summary of the note I sent to all Chairs and Parish Clerks in December – I thought it might be useful to give you an update on this and to correct any misunderstandings about what is happening (or not happening) as the BBC have reported on this.

It is true that the Labour Government are looking to remove the two-tier system of local government that we have now, and this would mean that district and borough councils in Warwickshire would be merged with a higher authority. This could mean that all services would be transferred to Warwickshire County Council with a target date of 2026 or 2027. Warwickshire County Council is made up of district and borough councils (Stratford on Avon District, Nuneaton & Bedworth borough, North Warwickshire borough, Rugby borough, Warwick district).

It is reasonable to assume that removing a tier of local authorities could make the new unitary more efficient and save money, but the aim is to give more powers that allow decisions to be made quickly and in the interests of that unitary plus a



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corresponding settlement rather than imposing decisions from a central government. As the white paper says, we are very centralised and one of the few national governments that rely on centralised decisions and power.

The Leader of Warwickshire County Council applied by 10th January 2025 to the government with its interest in developing and proposing a merger of the 5 districts and boroughs plus the County Council into a new Warwickshire Unitary Council. If it is accepted, then it is also likely that the May 2025 County elections would be delayed by a year (or longer). The elections at that point would be to the newly formed unitary council of Warwickshire. Stratford District Council would cease to exist by 2027 at the latest with all its responsibilities being the transferred quickly to the unitary council well before the 2027 deadline.

Nothing is set in stone yet and there is a great deal of uncertainty, but we should hear within the next 3 weeks whether we will be in the first wave of newly formed unitaries.

More details on the white paper can be found by clicking here [English Devolution White Paper - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper) . or by pasting this link into your browser - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

Flu Vaccinations - Protect yourself and others this flu season. From October, get vaccinated and reduce the risk of flu-related complications. Check your eligibility via www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations #FluVaccine #GetWinterStrong #FightFlu

Small works - Gully Cleaning and potholes – Please ensure that all gullies that need cleaning and potholes that need repairing are recorded on the County website using the link mentioned below. In the case of potholes, if you record these through the Parish Clerk you will automatically receive a message when the repair has been carried out. This is a more efficient way of handling issues going forward as we have installed new software which is more dynamic in what it can do. Potholes should be reported through the directly on the WCC website <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/4085/warwickshire-county-council-encourages-residents-to-report-road-issues> .

Let me know if you have any small roadworks, white lining, or Rights of Way issues I will investigate these for you and get a quote for any works that need to be conducted. _To report a Highway fault, use this link <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/reportaproblem> .

Issues log – The following extract from my log are all the issues remaining outstanding as at 06/01/2025

Ref	Date	Parish/Town	C or D	Issue	Action 1	Action 2
150	08/08/23	HIA		Traffic and parking issues	17/08/2023 This would limit the possibility of residents and children crossing the road except by the lights plus it will deter motorists from parking - GS/DW - what are the implications and could a scheme be drawn up. Effectively the PC want black railings - ,ockup photos available	18/01/2024 team set up to look at this and I have a response from GS on the practicalities of what is being suggested. 21/03/2024 Ideas received from sub committee and passed to GS and DW for consultation 27/03/2024 GS has confirmed the extent of the public pathway and the ownership is split between the shops and WCC . Note sent to sub committee 01/04/2024 Note put in PC report from me 13/08/2024 Note received from the sub committee 21/11/2024 draft minutes of meeting at WCC held 06/11/2024 circulated 13/12/2024 Final version (V5) issued
185	20/10/23	HIA		Floods and drains in HIA	13/11/2023 whole of HIA to be jetted 05/12/2023 - camera survey ...repairs to gullies that could be lifted 29/01/2024 DW says it might be soonish 29/01/2024 - DW will walk Back Lane and by the golf club with me to talk about resolutions to issues	30/01/2024 - AL of Streetscene has been emailed about frequency of sweeping roads from Liveridge Hill to high Street. 31/01/2024 Note from Angela Lloyd. The sweeping on Liveridge Hill is every 8 weeks. It should have been swept last week. If there is an issue with this ae please let me know 11/04/2024 SD sent note regarding sluice gate at Blackford Mill - this doesn't
207	14/12/23	HIA		State of road and surface dressing	14/12/2023 DW no defects that reach our intervention levels, there is minor surface wear in areas, but nothing dangerous requiring immediate attention. I have suggested High Street for a future surface dressing scheme as the majority is wearing in areas, please note there are no guarantees with this but it will be looked at by our delivery team.	01/04/2024 unlikely to be this year 13/08/2024 O/s
325	09/05/23	HIA		Dropped kerb Chingley Bank	P9.05/2024 note to DW asking if there are others and whether they are higher priority.	13/05/2024 sent note to DW authorising this 17/06/2024 land to side being looked at by DW 30/07/2024 Resident asking for an update on when this will be carried out 05/11/2024 DW - passed to minor works for work to be carried out
370	14/06/24	HIA		(1)Blocked gullies Nuthurst Grange (2) Damaged verges (3) eroded highway surface	19/06/2024 Note to DW and to resident, copied in TIA parish clerk	19/06/2024 Dylan raised jetting job and edge repairs....he is dealing directly with it and the resident
388	30/06/24	HIA		Damaged bridge Claverdon/Rowington	07/08/2024 Further note sent to resident	Note to resident and to RB 13/08/2024 long conversation with RB . This bridge is on the NE side of the A3400 on the oath from the railway bridge heading up towards Haven Pastures. The bridges (there are 2 are the responsibility of Network rail legacy dept. Send email to Network Rail copy in RB
391	01/08/24	HIA		PROW and damaged bridge		
395	08/08/24	HIA		List of gullies on the system that have issues.	12/09/2024 Until Millfield Ct is done this will not progress per DW	05/11/2024 Millfield Court now done but there are some repairs there
411	02/10/24	HIA		Stylers way from HSL through to PH car park lighting not sufficient resident request	02/10/2024 Note to Lee Wragg	
412	02/10/24	HIA		Bridge over R Alne - safety concerns raised by resident.	04/11/2024 RB dealing with this...quote received	
417	02/10/24	HIA		Footpath inspection	Chair to let me know when she wants to inspect the pavements with me.	
449	04/12/24	HIA		Work being carried out on green belt land Brook End Drive	04/12/2024 Note sent to resident and to Mike Rice - District matter	
460	19/12/24	HIA		Parking issue Prince Harry Rd	Note sent to PC Sean Lovett	



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POLICE

[For general vehicle crime advice please click here](#)

In an emergency call 999, for non-emergencies call 101

Police antisocial behaviour patrols - Warwickshire Police is conducting targeted patrols in hotspots to tackle antisocial behaviour. The Focusing on those locations aims to prevent crime in the specific areas and reduce overall crime levels in the wider area. Discover more about Op Resolve: <https://www.warwickshire.police.uk/police-forces/warwickshire-police/areas/warwickshire-police/campaigns/campaigns/2024/op-resolve/>

Instagram videos you can watch on Op Resolve and antisocial behaviour:

- **Verbal abuse** - <https://youtube.com/shorts/rkKkODSysKQ>
- **Noise** - <https://youtube.com/shorts/vVgK-qPfZcc>
- **Littering** - <https://youtube.com/shorts/Blc75FMDxto>

Other County Council announcements



Winter flu vaccination

Flu is very infectious and easily spread to other people. It's important to get your winter flu vaccination if you're eligible. Getting vaccinated every year will top up your protection and reduce your risk of getting severe symptoms.

Check your eligibility via www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/

#FluVaccine #GetWinterStrong #FightFlu #Winterillnesses



Cold weather alert

The Met Office has issued a weather warning for snow and ice, and temperatures are expected to drop. As they do, road conditions can become unpredictable. Stay safe on your journeys with these simple tips:

- **Slow Down:** Wet, icy, or frosty roads mean longer stopping distances. Reduce your speed and give yourself extra time to react.
- **Check Your Tyres:** Ensure they have enough tread for good grip in wintry conditions.
- **Be Visible:** Use your headlights in low light and make sure all your lights are working properly.

Plan Ahead: Allow extra time for your journey and avoid sudden manoeuvres.

Tips to keep warm Low indoor temperatures can have a serious impact on your health, especially if you have a medical condition or are older. Here are a few tips to keep warm:

- try to heat rooms you spend a lot of time in, such as the living room or bedroom, to at least 18°C
- try to reduce draughts; you can fit draft excluders around doors cheaply
- keep your bedroom windows closed at night
- wear several layers of thinner clothing; this could keep you warmer than one thicker layer

For more information visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/keepwarm



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Fire safety – portable heaters

With the cold weather setting in, portable heaters can be a lifesaver. However, they can also be a fire hazard if not used correctly. Here are some tips to stay safe:

- Placement is key: Keep your heater away from flammable materials like curtains, furniture, and bedding.
- Safety features matter: Choose a heater with tip-over and overheating protection.
- Never leave it unattended: Turn it off and unplug it when you leave the room or go to bed.
- Direct plug-in: Avoid using extension cords or power strips.
- Regular checks: Inspect your heater for damage and keep it clean.
- Smoke alarms are essential: Make sure they're working properly.

Read more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/home-fire-safety-tips/safe-home-heating/2

#firesafety #wintertips #homeheating

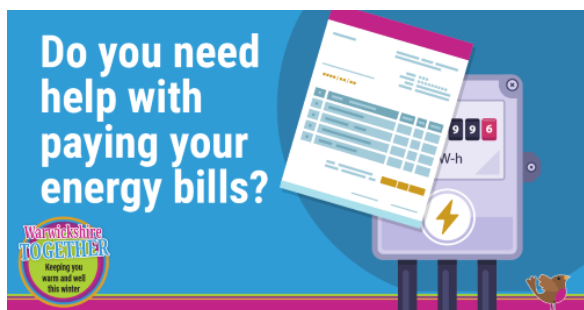


Be better prepared for extreme cold weather

Take a few minutes to learn how to keep your home running smoothly in cold weather. Find out how to prevent pipes from freezing, and more top tips at

www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/extreme-cold-weather/

#BetterPrepared



Energy bill support available this winter

The Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme is distributing funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund to support people who may be struggling with energy bills this winter.

Learn more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5860/energy-bill-support-available-this-winter

Hospital to Home

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service helping patients to return home safely from hospital

Find out how Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service is helping hospital patients to return home safely with their Hospital to Home service:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5863/warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service-helping-patients-to-return-home-safely-from-hospital



Parents have less than two weeks to apply for their child's 2025 Reception or Junior School place

Less than two weeks left to apply for Reception and Junior School places for 2025! Submit your application by 15 January at:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/primaryplace