



**Wootton Wawen Ward District & Arden Division County
Cllr. Ian Shenton**

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

District Councillors Report as at 20th March 2023

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Bearley Specific

Scrap year at Bearley sidings

The last note I have on this concerned a fire and smoke at the sidings at the end of January. Planning Enforcement responded with

The matter of having bonfires on the land is a matter for the Environment Protection Team to look into and I will forward your email on. From your email it would appear that the activities noted relate to site clearance works and the fire maybe related to those works. I will contact the owner just to confirm the situation.

Countrywide stores 21/00973/(OUT

In January the only point of clarification left to resolve appeared to be the s106 agreement so I have asked for a further update on this application

Golden Cross

A query was raised about the plans for dealing with foul drainage. The response I had was:

As I understand it, as part of the application 21/02556/FUL a condition (number 5) was used to ensure that prior to first occupation of the replacement dwelling a scheme for foul drainage should be provided and approved. This has not yet been submitted (though the ‘trigger’ point has not yet been reached, so I am not concerned about the lack of submission). I am unsure quite what the resident is requesting, but it seems it may be more of an environmental health issue than a planning one? Or perhaps even for building regs? I apologise I cannot provide a better response, but this does not seem to fall within planning.

Budgets

The District Council budget has now been approved by Council (all others had been approved). The Band D council tax position for 2023/2023 is as follows

	2022/23	2023/24	% Increase / (decrease)
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	£154.12	£159.12	3.24%
Warwickshire County Council	£1,590.93	£1,653.57	3.94%
Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner	£262.71	£276.71	5.33%
Sub-total	£2,007.76	£2,089.40	4.07%
Town and Parish Councils (average)	£66.08	£69.26	4.81%
TOTAL	£2,073.84	£2,158.66	4.09%



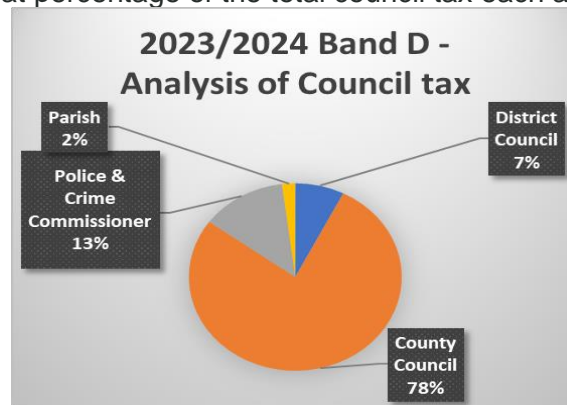
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Whilst the table shows the average Parish Precept, the actual precept for Bearley was £80.78 (£80.80 2022/2023) meaning that the band D charge for this year will be £2170.18 (£2088.56 2022/2023) an increase of £81.62 (approx.).

The reserves position for the District Council over the next 5 years shows that they are likely to fall close to the minimum level of £3m but, as we have seen over the last few years this is very heavily influenced by the Government settlement which have been more generous than expected.

You can see from this chart what percentage of the total council tax each authority represents in WW case.



Council Tax Elsewhere in Warwickshire

The levels of Council Tax to be charged by the other Borough/District Councils in the county for a Band D property in 2023/24 are:

	2022/23	2023/24	Increase	%
North Warwickshire	£222.30	£228.86	£6.56	2.95
Nuneaton and Bedworth	£248.51	£255.94	£7.43	2.99
Rugby	£204.72	£210.84	£6.12	2.99
Stratford	£154.12	£159.12	£5.00	3.24
Warwick	£176.86	£176.86	Nil	Nil

Other than Warwick DC, all district and borough councils chose to increase their Council Tax rates by the maximum permitted without triggering a referendum. Despite WDC not increasing its Council Tax, **SDC remains the district in Warwickshire with the lowest level of Council Tax.**

Key points of the County Council Budget can be found at Appendix 1 and the District budget at Appendix 2

General Information

Bus Service

Warwickshire residents are encouraged to choose cheaper bus travel this year as a new scheme to save money on fares launches and has welcomed news, released by the Government, that bus fares will continue to be capped at £2 for a further 3 months (scheme now ends 30/06/2023)

Read more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/3964/-2-bus-fare-cap-to-be-extended-in-warwickshire

In Warwickshire, the following operators are signed up to the scheme:

- Stagecoach
- Arriva



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- National Express Coventry
- National Express West Midlands
- Pulhams
- A&M Group - Flexibus (Service 9 only)
- IndieGo PLUS Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP)

The consultation ran until 6th March 2022.

The consultation is based on a desktop study and nothing has been decided. The maps in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) show how the Parish **could be expanded**, not how it will be expanded. It is important to stress that the SA is only one piece of information and evidence that will help to narrow down potential locations. Many questions about the SWLP can be answered by looking at the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on the website at [South Warwickshire Local Plan](#) or by sending an email to swlp@stratford-dc.gov.uk

It is key to understand that nothing has been decided yet, no decisions have been taken on where and how much development might be encouraged in any village or Parish. You can influence the decision by engaging with the process and submitting your views.

Energy payments for park homes and houses of multiple occupation

Residents have been invited to register on a Government website to receive the £400 payment that the rest of us are already receiving. The registration opened on the 27th February. Copy the link below into your browser to go to the Government website

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-energy-bill-support-if-not-automatic>

This scheme is for those households that have not received any of the £400 EBSS payment. Typically, this will be residents who live in park homes, care homes, houses of multiple occupation. Go to the website for full details

The exact detail on this have not been made available to me or the District Council but I am telling Parishes that I will run surgeries in those Parishes where there are residents who do not have internet access, do not use the internet or cannot register by phone, to ensure that they are registered as quickly as possible.

This is important for all Park home residents, residents of canal boats, care homes, homes of multiple occupation etc., who should register either using the on-line form or by telephone. If you do have any problems registering then please contact myself as soon as possible.

Alternative Fuel Payment

If residents use tank or bottled gas, liquid petroleum gas (LPG), oil, wood or solid fuel because they are not connected to mains gas, they may be eligible for a £200 Alternative Fuels Payment (AFP) if both the following are true:

- the household is not connected to the mains gas grid
- they use alternative fuels as the main form of heating

This should be paid automatically via your electricity supplier bill from February onwards but if it isn't you may have to apply for this payment through the AFP Alternative Fund if you do not get it automatically - for example, because you do not have a contract with an electricity supplier. Paste this link into your browser: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-alternative-fuel-bill-support-if-not-automatic>

If you cannot apply online, call the helpline. Telephone: 0808 175 3943 Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Wellesbourne Airfield

This project is moving rapidly to a point where a new runway and employment site to support the adjacent University of Warwick's Innovation Campus Stratford will become a reality. Stowford has been selected as



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the development partner. With a following wind (pardon the aviation pun), there could be a planning application in by the end of the summer. This site could create 4-5,000 highly skilled jobs over the next 5-7 years which would be a great result for the District as a whole.

Warwickshire Police

Warwickshire Police has carried out a reorganisation of the way the service is delivered across Warwickshire. The County has now been divided up into three areas of which SDC, along with WDC, fall into the South Warwickshire area. Each team will have access to its own support network ensuring that when local officers need that support, it will be delivered from within the area rather than competing with other calls from across Warwickshire.

The South Warwickshire team is being led by Chief Inspector Faz Chishty. This will result in a more focused delivery of policing across South Warwickshire, considering the differing crime profiles seen in the more rural south to those in the east and north of the County.

Pest Control

The decision has been made to withdraw from directly delivering the pest control service. Pest control has been a challenging service to deliver over the past twelve months, especially with only one member of staff and has consumed considerable resources. Our pest control officer is, however, continuing to service the existing commercial contracts, all of which will end by 1 April 2023.

Planning

The latest performance figures show that applications are being dealt with well within the National guidelines as can be seen below (the figures relate to January 2023).

	Target	Actual	No. of apps
Major applications	60% within 13 wks.	100.0%	3
Minor applications	70% within 8 wks.	81.8%	33
Householder apps	70% within 8 wks.	79.7%	74
Other applications	70% within 8 wks.	78.6%	98

Looking at the current fiscal year we see the following:

	Target	Actual	No. of apps
Major applications	60% within 13 wks.	91.2%	57
Minor applications	70% within 8 wks.	82.0%	372
Householder apps	70% within 8 wks.	79.70	754
Other applications	70% within 8 wks.	78.2%	1,027

Stratford District has one of the busiest planning departments in England. Whichever set of numbers you look at, the performance is good. There is always an opportunity to do better but that should not detract from what is a particularly good set of performance figures for this year.

Customer Services

We are still the only Warwickshire council to be fully open to our residents. We observe ever longer queues when we go into Elizabeth House – need is increasing.

Other News

Child Friendly Warwickshire competition



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Win £2,500 from Child Friendly Warwickshire for your school or college to spend on activities or projects to support children and young people to be happy, healthy, heard, safe and skilled. Get involved today at <http://bit.ly/CFWcomp2023>

Cost of Living Support

Cost of Living

General messaging		
Cost of living tips video	<p>Concerned about how to keep your home energy costs down? Here are six tips to reduce your energy usage and your bills at the same time.</p> <p>For more advice and support: https://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/</p>	<p>L1 or L1-square (video)</p>
Cost of living support	<p>The rise in living costs is having an impact on household budgets for many and people are making some tough decisions about what to prioritise. Support is available on the Warwickshire Cost of Living website: https://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/</p>	<p>L2</p>
I need support now	<p>If you are feeling overwhelmed by the rising costs of living and need advice on what you can do now to get the support you need, visit the "I need support now" page on the Warwickshire Cost of Living website.</p> <p>You'll find advice on how to pay for your food, energy and water, how to get money advice, how to manage aspects of family life, how to access emergency food and what to do if your mental health has been affected.</p> <p>Find help here: https://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/home/i-need-urgent-help</p>	<p>L3</p>
Help for households	<p>The Government has put support packages in place with help for eligible individuals. Help for Households information is available at www.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport.</p>	<p>L8</p>
Housing		
Housing support	<p>Having a safe home is something we all need, but sometimes we can experience housing difficulties that cause a lot of stress and make it difficult to enjoy family life.</p> <p>If you need support to deal with a housing problem, visit the Warwickshire Cost of Living website: https://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/housing-support/housing-support-1</p>	<p>L9</p>
Food support		
Food support	<p>If you're finding it hard to feed your household, help and advice is on the Warwickshire Cost of Living website: https://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/food-support/food-support-1</p>	<p>L10</p>



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As always feel free to contact me at any time to discuss any issues that you feel I can help with and I will do my absolute best to help.

Appendix 1 Key points of the County Council Budget

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out several areas for investment, including investment of:

- £5.4 million in our children's social care services, including investment of £3.3 million for additional staffing to improve outcomes for young people.
- £24.8 million to protect our elderly citizens and vulnerable adults to fund additional demand and manage the cost of placements, whilst continuing to make progress on our vision of greater integration between health and social care and the adult social care reform agenda.
- £1.8 million to continue to support children and young people with disabilities placements and to ensure they can access appropriate support within their communities.
- £1.5 million to increase capacity in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) assessment and review service, and the admissions and attendance services.
- £8.2 million in home to school transport to ensure we continue to provide services in line with our policy whilst being able to respond to the increasing demand and cost of the service, which has been particularly impacted by inflation.
- £0.3 million in support for apprenticeships and reskilling across the county, with an emphasis on reskilling for the changing economy
- £0.8 million in the Fire and Rescue Service to review current strategies and processes for prevention activity and identification of high-risk premises; £1.2 million to meet the current levels of business and customer support needed in response to the demand pressures in children and families, education, and adult social care; and
- £1.2 million in the Waste Management service to meet the increased demand and cost as a result of housing growth and the increased domestic waste generated due to more people working from home.

Appendix 2 Key points of the District Council Budget

- Council approved the Budget for 2023/24 on 27 February as proposed.
- The unanticipated interest largess that was generated in 2022-23 from SDC's liquid assets (latest estimate £1.5m) has effectively been rolled over into 2023-24 to enable the budget for next year to operate on the basis of a budgeted deficit of a little under £1.0m. This is all a matter of judgement – how much to spend for good reasons set against the maintenance of the general reserves to meet future financial uncertainties.
- We decided to accept the Lib Dem proposal in principle to allocate £50k for additional staff resource to support enforcement and regulatory work, to be allocated as the relevant Head of Service decides will be most effective. This money will not be for the sole purpose of increased enforcement activity but will be used where the Head of Service judges makes most operational impact within his Service.
- The budget was passed at full council on the 27th Feb 2023.
- The District budget was set at a £5 increase over the year or a 3.24% increase. This sets a band D property council tax at £159.12.
- The District Council had to dip into its reserves this year although not as much as was expected.
- Frustratingly, we still only have a one-year settlement from Government and grants like the new home's bonus have now ceased
- This years' settlement turned out to be more favourable than expected plus, due to the increase in interest rates, our investments gained a better rate of return.
- Even so, if the projections made are realised then the reserves will hit the lower limit of £3,040,000 by 2027/28 (this is the minimum allowable reserves that must be held by law).
- The finances of the council are in good shape, no statutory services (see below) have been cut and considering the current financial state, SDC compare most favourably with a number of councils that are already in danger of a visit by the Government.
- Given all of that, the Council set up a £500,000 fund over two years to help families disadvantaged by the cost-of-living crisis. The funds will be given to charities and organisations best placed to distribute them