



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
Mob: 07971 343074 E Mail: ianshenton@warwickshire.gov.uk



District & County Councillor's report for Ullenhall Parish Council as of 30th September 2024

As some will already know, I made the decision a few months ago not to seek reselection by the Party and re-election by the residents of the County Council Arden division. I will remain as District Councillor covering Wootton Wawen, Ullenhall, Bearley and Mappleborough Green which from now onwards will take priority over the other 6 parishes I cover as a County Councillor. I am stepping down due to the time commitments of being a County Councillor which do not allow me to spend as much time with my family as I want to.

Winter Fuel Allowance and Pension Credit

I'm worried about how I will manage without the Winter Fuel Payment. What can I do?

On July 29th the Government announced that the Winter Fuel Payment - of £200 for those aged 65-79, and £300 for those aged 80 or over - will be restricted to those people in receipt of Pension Credit - so what is Pension Credit and who can claim it? It is estimated that up to 880,000 households are entitled to Pension Credit but not currently receiving it.

Pension Credit
 Is a means tested benefit which is paid to help with the cost of living, it can also bring entitlement to additional financial support, including housing benefit, Council tax support, and winter fuel payment. Pension Credit can be backdated by up to 3 months (subject to meeting qualifying criteria).

The deadline to claim to be entitled to this year's winter fuel payment is 21st December 2024

To get help making a claim
 You can get further information and make a claim by calling the Pension Credit Hotline: 0800 99 1234

You can check if you are eligible for Pension Credit using the Pension Credit calculator here <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator>

If you believe you are entitled to Pension Credit you can claim online here <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim>

If you require further advice or help to make a claim you can call Citizens Advice on 0808 250 5715 or visit one of our drop-in sessions. For further details of our opening hours visit www.casouthwarwickshire.org.uk

citizens advice South Warwickshire

Claiming Pension credit, or indeed any benefits, that might also mean that pensioners will continue to receive the winter fuel allowance can be difficult to negotiate through due to the volume of questions on the forms. Stratford District Council have been sent the attached from South Warwickshire Citizens Advice to help pensioners access Pension Credit to help with the cost of living. To help try and reach as many eligible people as possible and for those without internet access, would you be able to display the attached poster on the local noticeboards in your area or include the information in any parish publication that is distributed locally? We have also been posting the information on our social media accounts, which you can also share:

- <https://x.com/StratfordDC>
- <https://www.facebook.com/StratfordDC>

Alternatively, please promote the helpline number and the assistance available from Citizens Advice by calling a landline number:

- You can get further information and make a claim by calling the Pension Credit Hotline: 0800 99 1234
- If you require further advice or help to make a claim you can call Citizens Advice on 0808 250 5715 or visit one of our drop-in sessions.

Drop-in sessions are held at the District Council offices, Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon from 10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday.

Report flooding For flood advice or to report a flood, please visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/flooding.

District News

Delay on replacement UBUS service - From September, Stratford-on-Avon District Council (SDC) and Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) joint UBUS service was due to be replaced by a new Demand Responsive Transport Service (DRT) solely from Warwickshire County Council. However, the new DRT service is now planned to be introduced on 4 November. This is to allow more time for WCC to procure the new service and manage the migration from the existing service. The District Council and WCC have worked with the existing providers to extend UBUS, so residents can continue to access the transport across the District until the new service is in place.

During this time, from 31 August, four buses instead of five will be operating the UBUS service until 1 November, although all other details including booking, operating times and areas covered will remain the same.

South Warwickshire Local Plan Housing Update - Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council are working together to prepare a [Local Plan for the South Warwickshire](#) area. At the [Joint Cabinet / Executive Committee](#) meeting that took place at the beginning of August, both Councils endorsed a study which set out that **1,679 dwellings per annum**



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should be delivered to meet the area's future housing needs in the next version of the emerging Local Plan. All Local Authorities are required by law to prepare a Local Plan for their respective areas, setting out which areas should be developed, and which areas should be protected for at least the next 15 years. The endorsed figure of 1,679 per annum will now be used as the basis for the next version of the emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan, known as the Preferred Options, which will be consulted upon with the public in the coming months.

It was also recognised at the meeting; the new Government had launched a public consultation on a series of major changes to the planning system which if implemented would substantially impact on the South Warwickshire Local Plan. This includes a new 'standard method' which would require very many more homes to be built across South Warwickshire to meet local needs than is currently contained within the HEDNA, which is **some 2,178 homes per year, almost a 30% increase on the endorsed figures**. Consequently, Members of the committee recognised there will be a need for flexibility to potentially accommodate the new 'standard method' in the preferred options version of the plan and that further versions of the plan, as it is taken forward to adoption, will need to reflect on the outcome of the Government's public consultation, which concludes on 24 September.

Taxis working across borders face Council and Police checks - At the end of July, a joint operation was held with Warwickshire Police and the Licensing Departments from Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Warwick District Council and the City of Wolverhampton Council, to carry out checks on taxis in Stratford-upon-Avon. The focus was to ensure that all licensed vehicles were complying with safety regulations, and to maintain public safety. 30 vehicles were checked, with one vehicle being taken off the road for no brake lights, three were taken off the road by Warwickshire Police and reported for tyre offences. Another vehicle was suspended due to the condition of the interior, but the suspension was lifted once it was re-presented in a clean condition. The inspections are essential due to the increasing practice of drivers working outside the areas where they are licensed. Operations such as these are crucial for protecting public safety and maintaining the high standard that is expected of drivers and their licensed vehicles. They help to ensure that drivers comply with vehicle standards, insurance requirements and driver conditions.

Since this I have sat on two Licencing panels where we have revoked two licences due to the taxi drivers involved not meeting the acceptable driving standards of the council. We are determined to ensure everyone that gets into a taxi is safe.

Experiences Sought from Survivors of Domestic Abuse to Help Inform Local Services - Stratford-on-Avon District Council is supporting Warwickshire County Council in looking for experiences of survivors of Domestic Abuse to help inform local services and support. If you've experienced domestic abuse, or you know someone who has - please help Warwickshire to better understand why people find it hard to reach out for support. This can be done by:

Visiting <https://www.talk2someone.org.uk/>

Emailing VAWG@warwickshire.gov.uk

Support services for survivors of domestic abuse in Warwickshire can be found here <https://www.talk2someone.org.uk/support-services>

Other issues

- **20mph Scheme** – Within the last week I have been reassured that this scheme will be completed this year. The officer in charge of delivering the scheme will be meeting with Balfour Beatty later this week to confirm the date at which point I will pass this onto you.
- **Parking on green at St Mary's close** – The survey should be posted through residents doors (near to the location) and a copy placed on the Parish Council's website. Alternatively, you can contact myself and I will send you a copy of the survey. It is essential that before we try and take this further that residents put their views forward
- **Patient parking at Henley in Arden Medical centre** – After applying pressure on the Cabinet, I have now got agreement for one extra parking space for medical centre users and an additional disabled bay.
- **Wall in Wootton Wawen by the Church on South side of WW, south of the village centre A3400** – Repairs have now started and are well under way. The lights should be removed well before the end of October the planned finishing date for the work.
- **Crab Mill** – No further news on what is to happen with the land.
- **Mayswood Rod/A4189** – I noticed work being carried out on a field last Thursday (26/9/2024) adjoining that gave me cause for concern. I reported this to planning enforcement who are investigating.

County Council report

Councillor Grant Fund is open again for applications - Warwickshire County Council is inviting community and voluntary groups across the county to apply for the Councillor Grant Fund, which is now reopen for round two of funding. Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5583/warwickshire-county-council-s-councillor-grant-fund-is-open>



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[again-for-applications](#) Each of the 57 councillors in Warwickshire is allocated £8,000 annually to support small-scale projects within their divisions. These projects should align with key areas such as improving access to services, reducing loneliness and isolation, enhancing physical and mental health and wellbeing, or supporting the local environment to help the county achieve its goal of becoming Net Zero by 2050.

Devolution Agreement confirmed by the current Labour Government – Izzi Seccombe issued the following statement -
"The Warwickshire Devolution Agreement is a significant long-term milestone for the County. It provides a strong foundation from which to secure further powers and resources. It will help us further strengthen our economy, and our continued drive to improve the life prospects for all who live, work or do business in Warwickshire. This Deal is without doubt an endorsement of our County. In delivering on this deal, Warwickshire will continue to contribute strongly at a regional and national level."

Committee meetings are increasing again with me sitting on the Licencing Panel, on site meetings, training, adult social care committee, Audit & Standards committee, Regulatory committee in the last week alone.

Costs of Childrens social care, Adult Social Care , Home to School and SEND provision continue to escalate and are well over budget at present with plans to reduce this overspend. Reserves will need to be used to plug the hole unfortunately and they can only be spent once.

The Adult Social care committee was interesting because a contentious item regarding the Ellen Badger community Hospital in Shipston has implications for us as any beds placed there would mean a reduction in rehabilitation beds in Stratford (Nichol suite) or in Leamington as only 35 beds across the three sites can be funded. A six-week public consultation is coming out in December, and I would urge everyone to look at this and respond. I made my feelings known about the public consultation as the question is only do we want or need beds at Shipston, if so, the data should show that, in which case the solution is three centres otherwise its two. The public need to know the implications of both scenarios to make an informed decision. I worry, as I expressed, that the Integrated Care Board could be seen to be paying lip service to the consultation.

In addition, the future of Dentistry services was discussed, and representatives of the Integrated Care Board highlighted what they want to do to increase the number of Dentists who will take NHS patients.

In February 2024, the government published Faster, Simpler and Fairer: our plan to recover and reform NHS dentistry. This contains several initiatives to improve oral health and access to dental care. This includes plans designed to incentivise dental teams to provide NHS dental care and take on new patients and plans to increase the dental workforce to make it easier for practices to recruit new staff.

My main challenge was centred around funding of Dentist practices because they don't have to take any NHS patients and when you consider that, for instance, the NHS will pay £26.80 to the practice but they can get £85 (on average) for private patients you can see very quickly, as I pointed out, without a massive overhaul of funding the incentive for dentists to take NHS patients is not high. Most Dentist practices are concentrated in Coventry with the more affluent areas suffering.

In addition, case of oral cancer within Warwickshire are slightly above the West Midlands and National average as this table shows: Whilst there is a caveat that provision and cancer cases are not necessarily linked further work needs to be carried out.

3. Oral Cancer

Indicator	Period	England	West Midlands region	Birmingham	Coventry	Dudley	Herefordshire	Sandwell	Shropshire	Solihull	Staffordshire	Stoke-on-Trent	Telford and Wrekin	Walsall	Warwickshire	Wolverhampton	Worcestershire
Oral cancer registrations	2017 - 19	15.4	14.8	16.8	17.9	12.8	15.5	14.4	12.9	11.7	13.1	16.1	13.5	17.4	15.0	14.8	14.8
Mortality rate from oral cancer, all ages	2017 - 19	4.7	4.9	6.4	7.1	5.4	5.4	4.6	3.7	2.9	3.6	6.1	5.2	4.7	5.2	4.3	4.5

- The oral cancer diagnosis rate in Warwickshire (age-standardised rates for oral cancer 15.0 registrations per 100,000 population) is similar to other UTLAs in WMs
- It is lower than the national rate (15.4)
- Age-standardised mortality rate 5.2 per 100,000 population which is higher than both the WM (4.9) and national (4.7) figures.



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If you'd like to see a full report of any of the above, then just let me know and I'll send you copies of the reports via email

Police and Crime Commissioner Survey 2024 - Help to shape the Future of Policing in Warwickshire 📢

Warwickshire's Police & Crime Commissioner, Philip Seccombe, has launched a public survey seeking vital feedback on the key priorities that will shape the next Police and Crime Plan. Have your say: <https://warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/shape-the-future-of-policing-in-warwickshire-public-survey-now-open/>

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> .

In addition, over the last few months I have asked whether a Parish Council could pay for the gully cleaner and employ them to clear specified gullies and the answer is positive . The cost would be £1,000 per day plus an extra £500 per day if traffic management were required. Please let me know if you would like to take advantage of this and send me a list of the gullies that need to be jetted. I will then liaise with the team at County and ensure that the route needed to clear these would be feasible in the time allowed and whether traffic management would be required.

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> .

Tree planting funding

The application window for community groups to apply for funding to create new orchards and micro woods has been extended until the end of 2024.

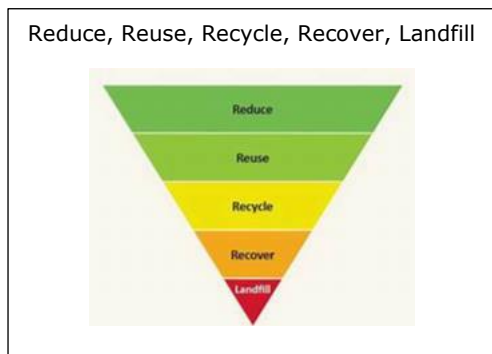
Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5509/community-groups-given-longer-to-apply-for-tree-planting-funding-in-warwickshire>

Other news and information

Climate Change- *Communities around Stratford are being challenged to increase the pace in "going green" as the local authority takes stock of progress in reducing carbon since it declared a climate emergency in 2019. Stratford District Council staged what it termed a "community-led climate change local engagement event" in September to showcase best practice across the area and as a springboard for more action.*

There are examples of heat pumps and solar panels serving privately owned property, and new developments incorporate the latest energy-saving techniques, but such buildings remain in a minority. So, the discussions also featured the need for improvements in the application of insulation and heating and more evidence of how schools and businesses are responding.

I have long been an advocate of pragmatic climate change measures that don't necessarily involve cost as there are other examples of the ways in which residents can help, for instance by continuing to separate waste and recycling as much as possible. The inverted pyramid highlights the waste hierarchy with the largest reduction in waste possible being to reduce consumption.



Whilst we continue to be one of the best local authorities at recycling and have one of the lowest tonnages of waste going to landfill, there is always more that we can do. It is still too easy to put waste in the grey bin rather than separating it into the blue bin. By thinking of the waste hierarchy and putting more recyclable material into the blue bin we use less of the Earth's valuable resources to create, for example, packaging.

Food waste caddies were given to every resident, not everyone uses them but using them can help you save money as well as preventing it going to landfill where it rots and creates methane which is over thirty times worse than CO2 for damaging the environment (and the ozone layer). They can save you money because you can see how much food you are throwing away. It has been fantastic to see just how many residents use the caddies but again, more can be



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done to reduce food waste. The food waste goes to an anaerobic digester in Coleshill where the methane is syphoned off and pumped back into the gas grid/network. The remaining soup/solids are turned into soil conditioners.

Green waste follows a similar pattern in that methane is drawn off and the solids left are turned into a soil conditioner.

Looking at the refuse trucks that we use, these are about to use HVO fuel (hydrotreated vegetable oil) as from November (possibly sooner) which produces less Co2 and is better for the environment but there is controversy over this due to the facts that some countries are deforesting to grow palm oil plants that are the source for HVO. In other words, destroying trees that we need for oxygen and which store Co2 at the expense of profit. This is a difficult argument and not for this article.

There has been much made of the lack of bees, butterflies, and moths and this is also where we, as residents, can do more by planting more flowers and shrubs that provide the habitat that they thrive in. We also need to plant more trees, lots more trees. Bees, butterflies, and moths are only a small part of the insect world, but surveys tend to highlight these as they are a good indicator of the general health of the insect world. The last few years have not been good partly because of prolonged periods of rain or cooler weather, insects need a period of warm weather to increase their numbers.

Schools have taken a keen interest in the above and children have become the best advocates of recycling being the gatekeepers of the bins ensuring that more waste is in the correct bin.

There are many other ways that we can help the climate without having to invest large sums of money by using buses, bikes or walking instead of the car, reducing the number of trips we make for small items, reusing packaging, turning the heating down a degree or two for some might be possible, turning the thermostat down in rooms that are not being used, buying more local and less packaged fruit and vegetables.

Bigger ticket items that help the environment but not everyone can afford due to the investment over an extended period such as insulating our homes to a better standard, installing heat pumps and electric cars. More subsidies are required to incentivise homeowners.

Local and national government needs to invest in infrastructure as the electricity grid needs to be upgraded to cope with the increased numbers of electric vehicle chargers that are required, they may also need to offer subsidies, possibly a scrappage subsidy, to encourage more vehicle owners to switch to electric vehicles.

I talk about pragmatic climate change initiatives such as those mentioned above, recycling, food waste, flowers etc and no mow May because they cost residents truly little and can save them money whilst at the same time creating a better world for everyone, especially future generations.

Statistics

Each month I distribute several articles and I thought that it might be useful if I supplied some data about the general UK economy and other statistics about Stratford and Warwickshire, from various sources, so here goes.

- In July, the claimant count (for benefits) in Stratford on Avon (SOA) was 1,715 a figure that has been steadily increasing from 1535 in May. Across Warwickshire the number of claimants is 25,110 (22,205 in May 2020)
- The UK unemployment rate for April to June was 4.2% and is below estimates and decreased in the latest quarter
- The employment rate in the same quarter was 74.5% (higher than estimates) leaving 22.2% as economically inactive (ahead of estimates)
- Annual earnings growth in between April and June was 4.5%
- There were nearly 100,000 working days due to labour disputes in the UK in June alone, although in December 2022 it was as high as 830,000
- The UK economy grew by 0.6% in Q2 (April to June)
- Business confidence continued to grow in August per the Purchasing Managers index
- New orders rose at the highest rate this year during August
- Interest rates have been cut to 5% but the decision according to the Bank of England was finely balanced as whilst inflation (CPI) fell back to the 2% target it is expected to rise again this year, to around 2.75% with it coming back down again in the new year.

Other interesting statistics

- The average house price of January 2024 was £361,000, similar to January 2023. Stratford continues to have the highest house prices in the West Midlands.
- SOA has 2.8 supermarkets per 10,000 people against a UK average of 2.7 although Cotswold has 3.9, Worcester and Cherwell with 3.4 and N. Warwickshire with 3.2
- SOA has 1.41 large chain supermarkets per 10,000 which places us 53rd out of 372 authorities in England
- SOA population is estimated at around 144,000 compared to 122,000 in 2014



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- Approximately 25% of the SOA population is aged 65 or greater, this increases to just over 33% aged 60 or greater
- Between 2021 and 2022 SOIA , at 1.94% increase in population was the 9th highest out of 164 nonmetropolitan district local authorities and was the 2nd highest behind Coventry in the West Midlands.

Turning to a recent report on Councils across England , Wales and Scotland it has found that funding challenges are getting worse with the funding gap prediction for 2025/26 (the difference between the amounts collected in council tax etc and the costs of providing services) is £3.4bn in England alone. We are lucky because at both District and County officers are constantly working to get the best value for money. However, whilst neither are insolvent (as in Birmingham’s case) the need to keep a tight rein on expenditure is key as Adult social care costs, home to school cost, SEND and children’s services are all experiencing significant increases in demand and cost

Other County Council News

Supporting young carers on Youth Mental Health Day

Warwickshire County Council is taking the opportunity to remind young carers of the importance of keeping their mental health in check.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5571/warwickshire-county-council-supports-young-carers-on-youth-mental-health-day>



Early years education funding - Warwickshire is exceeding national and regional averages for early years education take up. Are you accessing this important funding for your child? Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5580/don-t-miss-out-on-early-years-education-funding-for-your-child>

Warwickshire Youth Council grant fund

Warwickshire's Youth Council is pleased to announce the launch of its Youth Council Project Grant Fund, aimed at supporting the county’s community and voluntary organisations that provide essential services for young people aged 11-17.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5595/warwickshire-youth-council-launch-grant-fund-to-support-local-youth-projects>



Apply for secondary school places

Parents and carers of children who have just started in Year 6 are being asked to apply for their child’s secondary school place by the deadline of 31 October 2024. Read more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5570/warwickshire-year-6-children-are-invited-to-apply-for-their-secondary-school-place>



Become a Warwickshire Food Champion volunteer

If you are passionate about helping others, why not get involved in a volunteering opportunity to become Food Champions across Warwickshire?

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5589/new-opportunity-to-become-a-warwickshire-food-champion-volunteer>

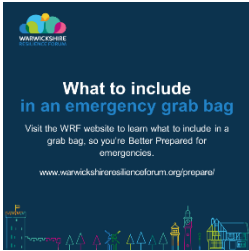


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A new Smoke Free website has launched to help anyone in Coventry and Warwickshire quit smoking.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5591/new-smoke-free-website-launches-to-help-people-in-coventry-and-warwickshire-quit-smoking>



Preparedness Month 2024: Medicines and grab bag items

If you had to leave home for a few days in an emergency, would you know what to bring with you? Think about medicines, copies of prescriptions and home insurance documents.

Learn what to include in a grab bag at: <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/prepare/>



Preparedness month 2024 – WRF Website

The Warwickshire Resilience Forum website has lots of information on how to become #BetterPrepared for a range of key risks in the county. Spend a few minutes becoming #BetterPrepared today, at <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/>

#PreparednessMonth



Nature Recovery Strategy

Did you know England is widely considered to be one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world following historic and ongoing declines? The natural world needs all our help to recover.

Complete the survey today: <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/bi/nature-recovery/>



Counter Terrorism – Vigilance

Out and about today?

Stay alert and be aware of your surroundings. If you see anything that doesn't feel right report online in confidence at <http://gov.uk/ACT>

In an emergency always call 999.



RSV vaccination in pregnancy

If you're 28 weeks pregnant you are eligible to have the respiratory syncytial virus #RSV vaccination to protect your unborn baby. Babies are vulnerable as they have small airways and limited immunity against #RSV. Please speak to your maternity service or GP surgery.

RSV vaccination for older people

From 1 September, people aged between 75 and 79, will be contacted by their GP surgery to book a slot for their respiratory syncytial virus #RSV vaccination.

Please wait to be contacted. Older people are vulnerable to the disease, which can lead to hospitalisation.