

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 Tanworth in Arden Parish Council Meeting 16th 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 . 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	Issue	Latest update
7	31/07/22	TIA	Priority sign - Valley Rd (see email trail in Tanworth folder) 19/06/2023 - This year within 2 months i.e by September 2023	07/10/2024 to be completed soon
27	24/07/22	TIA	Causeway issues - photos available - parking, ASB. PSPO in operation plus cameras	25/1/2024 Meeting between Sam, Lynda and myslef, subsequentlt raised with David Buckland and Marcia 04/03/2024 Lynda has sent a chaser to SS 13/08/2024 Meeting of CIAG group whilst I am on holiday 18/8/2024 to 01/09/2024
46	10/10/22	TIA	Signage and white lining at Cut Throat Lane defective	07/01/2025 - Meeting being arranged with Paul Taylor and Graham Stanley .IJS suggests it should be at Budbroke, Warwick alos see LOG REF 297
84	19/01/23	TIA	double yellow lanes Malthouse Lane?	11/10/2024 GS states that the pavement and area beisde it is not big enough to take bollards due to the lack of width .Suggestion is that we use a thinner bollard (PC suggested) I have thrown this back to GS -= Cost + installation of standard bolaards is around £300 per bollard. The picture sent by PC shows 10 locations , assuming 10 bollards = £2700 but this only allows for one bollard at each of the locations, may want 2 or 3 in which case £5400 or £8100
119	22/06/23	TIA	Extension to existing footpath The Common - Replaces log ref 47	01/03/2024 PC councillors to survey Medical Cnetre and resident to find out who would actually use this. Also they will approach landowners about giving up some of their land for a footpath. 07/08/2024 GS supplied Ewen with maps showing extent of WCC Highway maintained at public expense
124	02/07/23	TIA	4 Biddles Hill, Poolhead Lane, Earlswood, B94 5EN. Sewer Connection	16/10/2024 As MP has got involved I am awaiting her notes on what is being done
194	07/11/23	TIA	Bellfield - request fro dropped kerbs	02./08/2024 transfer almost completed now 12/12/2024 will be discussed at the January 2025 meeting
196	24/11/23	TIA	24/11/2023Deer sign Forshaw Heath Lane	08/08/24 DW says that the sign is being designed 07/10/2024 Gs will chase with Candy / Apprived per DW
297	20/02/24	TIA	Traffic safety issues	04/102/204 meeting held with GS/Cllr Saunders and Mike(resident) . MS will update the PC at meeting 17/10/2024 28/10/2024 Note sent to GS for map of 20mph zone. GS/DW asked for their opinions 12/12/2024 Request for safety audit of two areas - PC copied in to note who must approve this first
352	21/05/24	TIA	Speed lines to be laid at Flower Knott junction after roadworks are completed after 7/6/2024	12/09/2024 not completed yet 05/11/2024 should be carried out soon per DW
353	03/06/24	TIA	Analyse the latest speed data - Foreshaw Heath Lane	O/s
373	25/06/24	TIA	Clwes Wood Lane ROW issue	04/07/2024 Note to RB asking for details of who the landowner is
430	05/11/24	TIA	Resident complaining about gullies in Blind Lane (where I live), Aspley Heath Lane, Rushbrook Lane, Alderhanger Lane, Pen Lane, Broad Lane and Tanworth Lane. Most of the road gullies in these lanes are full of silt and leaves and some have been lost totally under encroaching vegetation where there is no kerb.	05/11/2024 note sent to DW
438	20/11/24	TIA	Wharf Lane gullies blocked - only 4 houses are in SDC , rest in Warwick	WDC Councillor has reported this per DW
441	29/11/24	TIA	Funding for basket ball hoop as part of new playground	03/12/2024 note sent to GS

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As 2024 drew to a close, Councillor Izzi Seccombe, Leader of Warwickshire County Council, reflected on a year of progress, partnership, and dedication to the people of Warwickshire.

In her end-of-year message, Councillor Seccombe expressed her gratitude to residents, businesses, and community partners for their unwavering support in helping the council deliver on its priorities.

This year, our primary focus has been supporting Warwickshire residents amid the ongoing cost of living crisis. Over the past 12 months, Warwickshire's Local Welfare Scheme has allocated £6.9 million in funding to assist vulnerable residents and expanded its support to those facing crisis situations. Additionally, the scheme has provided grants totalling £183,790 to local food banks, charities, and community groups, enhancing projects related to food and energy assistance.

Embracing a collaborative approach, Warwickshire County Council has worked closely with local partners, businesses, and communities to turn its vision into reality, striving to make Warwickshire the best it can be. The council remains dedicated to fostering cooperation to deliver on the strategic priorities set out in the Council Plan.

Some of the key achievements in 2024 include:

- Launching an ambitious energy strategy to build a sustainable future for the county, focusing on energy reduction, generation, and measurement.
- Successfully contracting Oxford Innovation Advice to deliver a new Manufacturing Growth Programme, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, on behalf of six local authorities.
- Earning ISO 14001 certification for the 16th consecutive year, in recognition of the council's strong environmental management system (EMS).
- Introducing a new strategy to tackle hate crime in partnership with local organisations.
- Investing £61 million in the development of Oakley School, including new nursery, primary, and secondary school facilities with SEND provision.
- Launching the Future Destinations Hub, offering support to 16–24-year-olds entering education or employment.
- Distributing nearly £2.5 million in funding over two years to support start-ups and small businesses in Warwickshire.
- Expanding Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) at schools across the county, with plans to increase SRP places from 176 to over 500 by 2028.
- Being appointed by Arts Council England, alongside Coventry and Solihull, to lead a new regional music hub, ensuring high-quality music education for all children and young people.
- Welcoming Warwickshire's 690th High Sheriff, Rajvinder Kaur Gill, who will serve the county during the 2024/25 Shrieval year.
- Securing £373,000 in funding through the Libraries Improvement Fund, including investment in a new electric mobile library and expanded sensory support services.
- Installing 240 metres of coir rolls at Kingsbury Water Park to support ongoing conservation and habitat creation.
- Launching the Education Strategy 2024-2029 to shape the future of education in the county.
- Celebrating two Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service firefighters for their outstanding fundraising efforts, raising over £75,000 for the Fire Fighters Charity.

Reflecting on these accomplishments, Councillor Seccombe expressed her sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the council's success.

"Looking ahead to 2025, we are committed to building on this success, continuing to work with communities to address challenges and create opportunities for growth. Our focus remains on our key priorities, and we are already laying the groundwork for the upcoming budget discussions."

POLICE REPORT - Please see below projected dates for our community engagement events. We will be adding more dates and locations to the list as dates are confirmed with venues.

- **Tanworth Village Hall**
- Monday 10th February - 16:00 - 17:00
- Wednesday 5th March - 11:00 - 12:00
- Tuesday 1st April - 11:00 - 12:00
- Thursday 8th May - 16:00 - 17:00
- Tuesday 10th June - 11:00 - 12:00



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The nearest reports of incidents were as follows:

ALCESTER

- Burglary. Birmingham Road.
- Damage. Kinwarton Close. Windows smashed and bodywork damaged on car
- Vehicle Crime. Captains Hill. Grey Toyota Hilux 4x4 stolen without key.
- Road. A46 Roundabout near to MacDonalds. Report of car driving dangerously in the area

STUDLEY

- ASB. Bromsgrove Road. Report of youngsters throwing snowballs at passing cars.
- Suspicious Circumstances. Church Street. Two females in vehicle parked in the road.

- SPERNAL
  - Damage / Attempt theft. Spernal. Camera wire cut.
- EARLSWOOD
  - Suspicious Circumstances. Earlswood Common / The Lakes. Report of occupants of vehicle using balloons to

[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:

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



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

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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



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



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

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



Firefighter recruitment

As we start a new year, are you thinking about a new career? As a firefighter you'll do more than fight fires - beyond responding to emergencies, you'll be a vital part of a community, working proactively to prevent incidents.

Read Sam's Story: https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5871/new-year-new-career-meet-firefighter-sam-o-malley

Flooding in Warwickshire

With water levels remaining high across Warwickshire, emergency services and partners are calling on the public to take care when driving or walking near flood water.

Discover more: https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5868/warwickshire-residents-urged-to-take-care-amid-widespread-flooding



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Residents improving maths skills through multiply

Since launching in 2022, over 2,000 Warwickshire residents have been supported to improve their numeracy skills through Multiply.

Read more: https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5872/over-2000-residents-supported-to-improve-their-maths-skills-through-multiply-



ACL: Courses to fit your goals

Ready for a fresh start? Whether you're returning to learning or diving into something new, Warwickshire's Adult Community Learning Service offers courses to fit your goals. Discover a variety of subjects and supportive resources to help you thrive at http://warwickshire.gov.uk/acl

Green resolutions 2025: Save money, save the planet

If you are thinking about making new year resolutions for 2025, why not make them environmentally friendly, by using Warwickshire County Council's online pledge tool: https://www.sustainablewarwickshire.co.uk/homepage/40/warwickshires-green-pledges



Sustainable Warwickshire podcast – recycle and reuse

Reusing and recycling our waste is crucial for creating a sustainable future.

Listen to Ruth Dixon from the WCC waste team talking to Ivan Pointon from Kenilworth Lions, about the different ways in which waste is reused or recycled in the county: https://sustainablewarwickshire.podbean.com/e/reduce-reuse-and-recycle-managing-waste-in-warwickshire/