



## County Cllr. Ian Shenton

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

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### County Councillors Report as at 5th December 2022

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On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> I tested positive for covid and spent a few days in bed that week. One week later (Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup>) my wife tested positive and as at today, Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup>, is still positive and feeling poorly and tired . On Thursday (24<sup>th</sup>) I finally tested negative but still carry a cough and sore throat. A key message here is that the vaccine probably ensured that my symptoms were mild but it was still unpleasant and nearly 3 weeks on I still have a cough and sore throat so get the vaccine and/or the booster as soon as you can.

#### 123+ Waste collection

The latest data shows that the 123+ waste collection system is working well and that residual waste has fallen by over 20% and that recycling rates have gone up from around 60% to 66%. Fly tipping has also fallen. These are provisional numbers but clearly illustrate that it is forcing change. At these sort of recycling rates, it will put SDC near the top of the league table of recycling authorities elevating it from around 12<sup>th</sup> position.

Don't forget if your bin is not emptied then use this link.

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/online-forms/missed-bin-report-form.cfm>

If you don't use or can't access the internet then call 01789 260123 or call me and I will get in touch with Streetscene for you.

#### Henley in Arden specific news

##### Small works

Ref	Date	Parish/Town	C or D	Issue	Location
8	27/07/2922	HIA	C	Speeding on Liveridge Hill - see e mail	Liveridge Hill, Henley
16	08/08/2022	HIA	C	Monkey run (Birdcage Walk) damage to surface, lectrical cable exposed - Dylan knows about this email sent to DW my PC on 8/8/2022	Birdcage walk
31	15/08/2022	HIA	C	Drains issue - water is over flowing due to blocked drains outside 185, 187, 189, 191High Street , Henley photos available reported by Shelagh Clitherow she.teach@btinternet.com>	
36	05/09/2022	HIA	C	Plastic bollards outside Co Op have been damaged	High St Co Op
57	02/12/2022	HIA	C	Debris from two accidents to be removed	A3400
58	02/12/2022	HIA	C	Broken sign by Danzey Green	Danzey Green

Cllr Bryn Turner also asked about a rolling program of footpath repairs which I have asked to be broken down into "chunks" as I cannot commit my budget for years in advance as it may be "tying" the hands of any future County Councillor. The last communication I have was my email dated 13/10/2022. Let me have a detailed proposal so I can progress this if it is still wanted.

**If there are any other items of work outstanding, please let me know.**



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### EV Chargers

A safety audit has now been commissioned by WCC and as soon as I have copy of it, I'll submit a summary plus the full report if it is not embargoed.

### Application to the Councillors Grant fund for purchasing recycle bins

Cllr Bryn Turner has made an application on behalf of the JPC for the above. I will update you on this at the meeting.

### Vehicle Debris caused by two incidents

I arranged for this to be removed and have sked for the tree debris also to be removed.

### General information

#### Budgets

As a District and County we won't know until the 21/12/2022 what the settlement is for this year (from central government) and what the indicative settlement is likely to be for next year but we do know that we are likely to be able raise Council tax by 3% generally, plus in the County Council's case, an additional 2% for adult social care without having a referendum. One thing is certain, that Councils finances are under pressure due to wage settlements and inflation. The schools capital program faces higher inflation issues as the construction industry has been facing increases in costs of certain materials of around 25% and whilst it is true that housebuilding is starting to see a slow down whether it will be enough to create the capacity between supply and demand of material and ultimately bring costs down in the medium term remains to be seen.

It should be remembered that there are 4 components to the Council charge and if we take the current year as a guide for HIA it looks like this for a band D property in Henley in Arden:

WCC	£1590.92
SDC	£ 154.12
PCC	£ 262.71
Parish	£ 82.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2090.56</b>

There is some way to go on this yet and nothing is definite about increases but if we assume that SDC increase by 3% the PCC and WCC by 4% and the Parish by 5% you might expect overall just under £70 increase over a year. As I say, much will depend on the Government settlement. WCC are in a better position than most upper tier authorities because we have made the savings early on and managed our budgets effectively despite inflation and the financial instability that we have experienced over the last year. It is unlikely, but not certain, that WCC will go for the full 5% increase (or 4.99% to be precise)

### Draft Sustainable Futures Policy

Help shape sustainable future for Warwickshire: Residents, businesses and community groups across Warwickshire are being invited to have their say on Warwickshire County Council's draft Sustainable Futures Strategy. The new draft Sustainable Futures Strategy establishes the direction and priorities of Warwickshire County Council to reduce carbon emissions, support biodiversity and promote economic growth across the County. It directly addresses the significant challenges of climate change, which poses a risk to Warwickshire communities and economy, and declining biodiversity, which impacts on both our wellbeing and economic prosperity. Warwickshire County Council have already started work towards its goals of reducing carbon emissions to net zero across the Council by 2030 and to support Warwickshire as a County to do the same by 2050 or earlier. But to achieve those goals, more needs to be done. It also needs to be done faster and in partnership with others, including residents, businesses, other public sector organisations, community and voluntary groups. The Council is therefore encouraging everyone with an interest in creating a sustainable Warwickshire now and for future generations, to read the Strategy and



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give their feedback through an online survey. They can leave their thoughts on the Strategy approach, the priority areas and planned actions as well as their views on how the goals should be delivered. The Strategy and survey can be found at: <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk>

### Energy payments for park homes and houses of multiple occupation

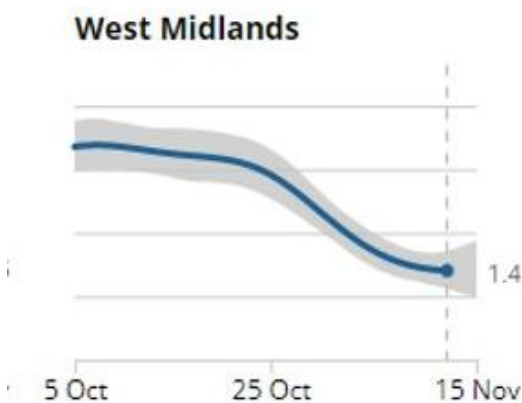
I have pressed BEIS, Grant Shapps and Nadhim Zahawi (who has replied) for some clarity over this issue. I have been informed that "Pass Through" regulations were approved on the 1<sup>st</sup> November that ensure that monies received by the Park Owner or Landlord of Houses of Multiple occupation etc, must pass through the proportion that relates to the tenant. This is where I have an issue and have sent a strongly worded challenge back because it would seem from my reading of the regulations that tenants of these properties may not get the full £400 promised earlier this year.

Unfortunately, whilst the Government department responsible seem to favour District Council's administering the scheme, they don't seem to realise that we don't know what type of residence is involved as we only know what bands dwellings are in. Whilst some park homes sites and houses of multiple occupation are self-contained and postcodes could be used the problem elsewhere is not so clear cut. The issue, in my opinion, is a difficult one administratively and a simple solution of one size fits all may not be possible.

### Asylum Seekers

You may be aware from the local press that HM Government is using a hotel in Stratford to house up to around 110 asylum seekers mainly families and children. If you want to help them, please get in touch with local charities, please don't go to the hotel as you will be turned away by the security tea due to vulnerability issues. It does appear that the Government now recognise that they should have consulted more widely with local authorities as so many are registering dismay with the lack of consultation plus some have taken the matter to the courts (unsuccessfully in the main). There is considerable pressure on healthcare and education because of the program but the agencies have responded well to the challenges.

### Covid update



Across South Warwickshire Trust (SWFT) no bed is being occupied in intensive care with Covid as the cause. Bed occupancy in South Warwickshire is around 90%, having fallen back around August but has steadily increased since September.

Covid rates are levelling off although whether the rates now being published show the full picture is debatable as many residents will not know whether they have Covid as symptoms may be mild and/or testing kits are not freely available now.

Residents are being invited to come forward now for the next phase of the Covid vaccine programme. The oldest and most vulnerable will be the first to receive the booster. Please encourage residents, friends, and neighbours to take up the booster.



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### **Cost of Living Support Package for Warwickshire residents:**

The County Council's Cabinet has agreed a package of measures to relieve the financial burden on residents who may be struggling with rising living costs. Due to a range of factors including increasing inflation and the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people around the country are finding it difficult to keep on top of their household bills such as food and energy. The Government recently introduced a support package, and Warwickshire County Council has announced additional local measures to provide further help to residents and local businesses.

Warwickshire County Council support includes:

- Allocation of the Government-funded Household Support Fund via the Local Welfare Scheme, which provides £3.47m support for the most vulnerable residents
- Creation of an online Cost of Living Hub, a website offering practical and financial advice from County, District and Borough Councils and other partners
- Accelerating the laptop lending programme, as part of digital inclusion work
- Establishing and extending partnerships with supermarkets and mobile apps that sell unwanted supermarket stock
- Promotion of existing spaces, such as libraries and museums, as warm spaces
- Increasing the scope of the countywide partnership working to improve access to financial support for people in need.
- Expanding criteria for the Warwickshire Recovery and Investment Fund to allow for investments in business activities that reduce energy use • A communications campaign to promote available support
- Up to £1 million of additional County Council funding has been proposed, which would go towards additional initiatives, such as the creation of a network of warm spaces, extension and support for community supermarkets and food banks, and providing more activities in libraries.
- These measures are in addition to the support already available. More information can be found on the Warwickshire Cost of Living pages - <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/costofliving>

### **Cost-of-Living Grant Fund**

A Cost of Living Grant Fund 2022 which will be launched at the Warwickshire Cost of Living Summit on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November. The aim of the £180,000 support fund is for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations and Town and Parish Councils to establish projects addressing cost of living pressures. These organisations can apply for funding of up to £1,000.

Successful applications will focus on one or more of the following cost-of-living pressures:

- Food and other household essentials
- Improving community assets and their sustainability
- Improving access to services
- Improving financial capability (e.g., maximising income and reducing debt)
- Improving mental wellbeing
- Tackling social inequalities

The fund opens for applications on Monday 28 November 9am. Interested groups can apply via the [Cost of Living Grant Fund website](#).

**To ensure the funding can be allocated as quickly as possible the deadline for applications is 5pm on Sunday 18 December 2022. Applications will then be evaluated, and successful bids will be allocated funds from 9 January 2023.**





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### Statistics about the district

#### State of the District:

Every year there is an update report on how the District has fared over the past year.

There are several factors in the report that SDC cannot influence, for example housing prices and fuel prices. The data is as of the 31st March 2022.

#### Headlines:

- The population stands at 134,700, an increase of 2300 (+8%) with 48.5% female and 51.5% male.
- The majority of the population is in the 18-64 age category
  
- The median house price is now £340,000, the highest in Warwickshire and has a house price to income ratio of 10.17. There are 62,200 properties in Stratford District.
- Over 80% of people are in employment, either full or part time with 86% as employees and 14% as self-employed. Manufacturing jobs account for the largest proportion of employment at 17.32% and is a higher proportion than the West Midlands (10.9%) and for GB (7.9%)
- The average weekly wage is £533.4 for women and £794.10 for men
- 49.1% of residents over the age of 16 have an NVQ level 4 or higher qualification making Stratford the 5th highest qualified district in the West Midlands. However, 4.2% of adults have no qualifications at all.
- The median age in the District was 48.2 years with England standing at 40 years making Stratford the 55th oldest District in the country
- Crime. The total number of crimes recorded in the year to June 2022 was 7,343, equating to 56 crimes per 1000 people. Although a rise on last year, the rate is still the lowest in the West Midlands.
- Economy. The Gross Value Added (£GVA) shows that the Districts economy relies on two major areas of manufacturing (34.59%) and real estate (15.54%). This imbalance makes the economy less resilient to major societal changes.
- Health. Mortality rates for cardiovascular and cancer are much lower than the West Midlands or Great Britain. Those people diagnosed with dementia stands at 52.5% meaning that 47.5% of people with dementia were undiagnosed. This is under the Warwickshire rate of 54.5% and significantly lower than the GB rate of 62.1%
- Poverty & fuel poverty. The historic increases in fuel costs has left many people in an unsustainable situation. Many energy companies went bankrupt (e.g. Bulb Energy). Measures have been put in place to help mitigate the impact:
  - Houses in tax bands A-D have a £150 one off discount
  - All households will receive a £400 discount on their fuel bills
  - Households on means tested benefits will receive a payment of £650 paid in two instalments.
  - Those on disability benefit will receive a one-off payment of £150
  - Pensioners will receive an extra on-off payment of £300 + other grants are available. 13.3% of households in Stratford were identified as being in fuel poverty compared with 14.3% in Warwickshire and 13.2% in England.

**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 very best to help.**