

## January 17<sup>th</sup> 2022 update

**We have survived Blue Monday! Traditionally the toughest day of the year for many. I have included WCC initiatives supporting Mental Health at this time of year**

### **Education funding to support mental health**



Warwickshire education settings are being invited by Warwickshire County Council to apply for funding to support the mental health and wellbeing of Warwickshire's children and young people.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/2686/warwickshire-education-settings-are-invited-to-apply-for-funding-to-support-mental-health>

### **Warm and well this winter**



During spells of cold weather, it's important to try and keep warm.

Here are some tips:

1. Keep moving if you can, get up and walk around every hour
2. Wear a few layers of clothing, rather than one big layer
3. Have warm drinks and meals

### **Keep yourself Warm and Well in Warwickshire**

Keep yourself warm and well in Warwickshire this winter by following our Winter Warmth Checklist at <https://api.warwickshire.gov.uk/documents/WCCC-630-883>

A free advice line is also available at 0800 988 2881.

## **Brew Monday**



The middle of January can be challenging for many people, with the cold winter weather prevailing, and the festive period over, some people may need extra support for their mental health and wellbeing.

Find out how Warwickshire County Council aims to help:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/2695/brew-monday-a-cuppa-and-catch-up-for-your-wellbeing>

## **INFECTION RATES REMAIN V HIGH**

The rate of infections across the district has decreased to 1469/100,000, the over 60's rate has decreased to 812/100,000 (818 last week) with 345 cases over the last seven days. Other districts rates in Warwickshire, for all ages, are Nuneaton & Bedworth 2385/100,000, North Warwickshire 2071/100,000, Warwick 1453/100,000 and Rugby 2009/100,000. Warwickshire overall has 1839/100,000. England 1695/100,000.

HOWEVER WE MUST NOT BE COMPLACENT – IRRESPECTIVE WHETHER WE HAVE 70 OR 1700 CASES per 100,000 we must all STILL be sensible and follow guidance etc,

There have been two further Covid related deaths since last week across Stratford District (total now 158 from the start of this second wave (28<sup>th</sup> August 2020) 37 occurring in care homes, 104 in hospital, 3 in a hospice and 13 at home and one in a communal establishment, out of a total of 1,920 all cause deaths in the district for this new second wave period.

The cumulative total of deaths across Warwickshire for Wave 2 increased by 9 since my last report to 820 with a total of 8,118 all cause deaths. The cumulative total of Covid-19 deaths in Stratford district is 326 since the start of the pandemic and in Warwickshire 1,421 (12,494 total deaths).

## **Local Plan**

Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils are working together to produce a new South Warwickshire Local Plan to cover the combined geographic area.

The Plan will set out the planning policies that the Councils will use to assess applications for development, as well as identifying sites to meet future needs to support housing, jobs, infrastructure and open space. It will also address the important issues of climate change, wellbeing, connectivity and biodiversity.

As a first stage in the Local Plan making process, a 'Scoping' and 'Call for Sites' consultation ran for 6 weeks in May and June 2021. A range of information relating to this consultation has today been published on the South Warwickshire Local Plan website.

**Please consider signing up to the newsletter.**

## **The Budget**

The Budget. As you will recall the stark financial position of SDC was the main driver behind considering a merger with WDC

On Monday 17 January Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Cabinet agreed the draft budget proposals for consultation for the next five years (2022/23 to 2026/27).

The draft budget will be used to consult with the public, local businesses and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee before final recommendations to be made to Council are considered at the meeting of The Cabinet on 7 February 2022.

The Budget proposal have been announced and come before Overview and Scrutiny in February. As Chair of OSC I would warmly welcome questions from the rural voices so important to our rural district. Please email me with any questions you would like me to raise at OSC.

The proposals will now go out for consultation.

**To view the proposals in more detail residents and businesses should visit: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/consultation-performance/proposed-budget-amendments.cfm> make comment there.**

The proposed council tax increase this year is £5 per household, the maximum allowed by the Government. This means a Band D property would increase in April this year from £149.12 to £154.12.

Although the collecting agent for Council Tax, **the District Council only receives 7.5% of Council Tax paid by residents.** Warwickshire County Council receives 76.6%, the Police 12.6% and Towns/Parishes 3.3%. This means the District Council only receives just under 8p of every £1 paid in Council Tax to provide services.

## **Budget background information**

The budget has been prepared with the expectation that service costs and income will recover to a position more comparable to times before the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council has, however, continued to budget for the possible ongoing effects or repercussions into 2022/23. This may include changed behaviour in domestic tourism that results in the reduction of car park income or reduced income receipts in planning, building control or land charges as the economy recovers during a time of increased inflation and interest rates.

Inflation is running above the Government's target and will prove to be a major pressure on both contracted service and employee budgets. Whilst the budget contains an inflation allowance of 4% for contracts in 2022/23, if it doesn't peak as predicted and return to more desirable level in a relatively short timeframe, this will generate additional budgetary pressure across the duration of Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Provision has been made within the 2022/23 budget to fund:

- £1m - Climate Change
- £1.8m - Implementing joint working with Warwick District Council
- £1.6m - Recycling transitional arrangements following the recycling facility fire and until the new materials recycling facility opens in 2023.

Seven additional Revenue Growth items have been included and financed within the strategy totalling £372k. There are also six capital growth items, five relating to immediate ICT issues totalling £470k and one for Venture house, £20k. These have been financed from the Earmarked Reserve, Revenue Funding of Capital Expenditure.

In addition, £317.5k has been released from Earmarked Reserves to cover costs associated with Planning Policy and financing the Core Strategy.

### **Government Funding**

Government funding has been confirmed for one year only and is broadly in line with 2021/22 figures. Beyond 2022/23 the future level funding is unknown. This is reflected in a significantly reduced budget for Government support.

A full Spending Review is anticipated during 2022/23; therefore the implications on funding for 2023/24 and beyond are unknown.

### **Increased Revenue and Reduced Costs**

A Council Tax increase of £5 per household, the maximum allowed by the Government, will be proposed - meaning a Band D property would increase in April this year from £149.12 to £154.12.

The garden waste service has proved popular. The additional income this has generated has been included within the budget helping in part to offset additional costs for the recycling transitional arrangements until the new Materials Recycling Facility in Coventry is fully operational.

A Joint Management Team with Warwick District Council (WDC) has been implemented and the savings have been incorporated within the budget. Joint working arrangements with WDC are currently estimated to return savings in the order of £1.275m over the next five years.

### **Financial Impact**

Over the duration of the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy, the General Reserve level decreases from £9.38m to £2.55m with net income and expenditure reducing by year five to a more manageable £60k deficit.

## **Digital Strategy**

The Digital Strategy was approved at the last full Council.

Part of the challenge will be to harmonise the two quite different

approaches to IT purchasing between SDC and WDC. Then the various

systems will be harmonised. The biggest challenge will be the estimated 16-20% of residents who are unable to access our services digitally and that is ongoing.

## **Garden Waste**

Due to staff shortages and an increase in Dry recycling over Christmas the decision was made to ensure the Blue Bin collection and miss one green bin collection. This was not communicated effectively and I have had a number of messages from residents around this and fed it back. Driver shortages due to Covid continue to be an issue.

## **Parking and Footfall Numbers**

The number of vehicles in our car parks during the four day Victorian

Christmas was 17,458 whilst in 2019 it was a three day market with

12,211 vehicles, an increase of 42% in vehicle numbers. Most visitors

were on the traditional three days of Friday to Sunday with 14,516

visiting during that time an increase of 2,305 vehicles, or nearly 19%

on a like-for-like basis.

## **Crime Prevention**

**County Lines sadly remains an ongoing and concerning issue within our rural district. Targeting vulnerable youngsters. Therefore** Pre-emptive work is ongoing around county lines.

- o 10,000 leaflets have been delivered to homes in Stratford on

- o County Lines and spotting the signs.

- o Working with local detached youth outreach to understand the

- o experiences of young people and County Lines.

## **Boosters**

Promotion of COVID-19 booster vaccinations amongst the street community taking place.

As the chilly nights persist our concerns continue to turn to those on the streets and how in addition to the initiatives in place we as individuals can help.

o Two new businesses agreed to host Meaningful Change contactless donation devices (Lush & Tzatziki). Four places now hosting them.

## **Volunteering Work**

We are helping the Stratford Local Network Group with organising a regular vacancy newsletter. If you or anyone you know is interested in doing voluntary work, I will be forwarding this to Parish Councils in the New Year.

## **Planning**

**Planning remains the main concerns of residents within Ettington ward.**

o A recruitment campaign for the five planning vacancies has been launched. It will be extended into January, which follows a number of internal promotions, so hopefully we will have a great response from good candidates in the New Year.

o Adrian Harding, the interim Head of Development, seems to be settling in well.

Stay Safe and Well

Kindest Regards

Penny-Anne O'Donnell

Ward Member Ettington