

## Parish and Partners Foreword

Dear All,

**It is very nice that the days are getting longer and the weather slightly warmer. It feels as if it has been winter for a long time this year, especially given the amount of rain that we have had. On a number of times this winter we have had to participate in Strategic Co-ordinating Group meetings of the Warwickshire Local Resilience Forum, thankfully this year each time it feels that there will be a real problem the waters have peaked. There have been some learning points from this last year that we would like to engage and share with you all in the near future, mainly surrounding communication and sandbags.**

It really has been a very busy period at the Council since Christmas, the Council has approved its budget, hosted a Corporate Peer Challenge from the LGA and also approved the action plan for the Council Plan.

The budget was approved by Council on 26th February and included an increase in Council Tax of £5 for the District Council element, this equates to a percentage increase of 3.1%. Unfortunately, the Council for the seventh year has received a single year settlement from Government, given that we produce a 5-year medium term financial plan, it does make forecasting extremely difficult. The Council, however, is in a relatively strong financial position and actually for the coming year we do not foresee any major issues, this of course is not the same across the sector where a number of authorities including Birmingham City Council have issued s114 reports. There is much more on the budget included within this issue.

Contained within the budget are further resources to help address Climate Change including measures to reduce the Council's own CO2 emission. The budget also provides a fund to be used over the next four years to deliver the priorities within the Council Plan. This fund is also designed to help the Council implement 'change' and replaces the transformation fund which we have used to completely change our ways of working.

Every 5 years each 'principle' Council is required to undertake an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. The Local Government Association's (LGA's) peer challenges are sector-led, voluntary visits from a team of peers, designed to help local authorities assess how they are progressing, and provide feedback and recommendations for further development.

The implementation of these reviews started in 2013 following the abolition of the Audit Commission. The Council last had a full-scale review in 2017, with a follow up in 2019. The Council hosted a team of six elected members and officers from other local authorities for a period of 3 days from 4th to 6th March.

Following the Corporate Peer Challenge, the Council will receive a report on the findings which is expected to be finalised by 6 June 2024. When this report is published the Council will also publish an action plan as to how it will address the recommendations which have been made. I know that a number of you participated in the review, firstly thank you so much for your time, it is massively appreciated. I can assure you that we will keep you updated on the recommendation which I am told will touch up the relationship between the District Council and our town and parish councils.

As I reported last time, Council in December approved the Council Plan, this strategic document identifies the priorities for the Council up to December 2027. To ensure that these priorities are implemented a detailed action plan has now also been approved by The Cabinet at its meeting on 4th March, further details can be found on our website.

It is a very challenging plan, and we will be closely monitoring our performance, all of the actions approved by The Cabinet will now be incorporated into individual service plans. Again within this briefing there is more detail about what the priorities are for the Council over the next four years.

Finally, just a reminder that we have the election of the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner coming up, this election will take place on 2 May 2024. Thank you again to all of you who enable the use of village and community halls across the District to allow these elections to be held. This is the second year of Voter ID, and this year there are restrictions on the submission of postal votes at polling stations to come to terms with. Before the end of January 2025, there will need to be a general election held, if this is to be also held on 2 May 2024, an announcement will need to be made by Government by 26 March 2024.

David



## Council Tax level for Stratford-on-Avon District

**Stratford-on-Avon District Councillors set the district element of the Council Tax at a meeting of the Council at the end of February.**

The amount residents will be asked to pay for a Band D property is £164.12, an increase of £5. This is an increase of 3.1%, which for an average home represents just an additional 42p per month to the District Council next year.

This means that all the services provided by the District Council cost £3.16 a week for a Band D household. This contributes to meeting the cost of providing a wide range of services including recycling and waste collection, planning, street cleaning, housing, housing benefits, leisure services and children's play areas.

The Council Tax from Stratford-on-Avon District Council for residents for 2024/25 for each of the valuation bands is:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| A | £109.41 |
| B | £127.65 |
| C | £145.88 |
| D | £164.12 |
| E | £200.59 |
| F | £237.06 |
| G | £273.53 |
| H | £328.24 |

Although the District Council acts as the collecting agent for Council Tax, it **only receives 7.2% of the Council Tax paid by residents**. Warwickshire County Council receives the lion's share of 76.7%, the Police 12.8% and Towns/Parishes 3.3%.

**This means the District Council only retains 7.2p of every £1 paid in Council Tax to provide its range of services.**



Cllr David Curtis, Portfolio Holder for Resources, said: *"Local Government finance has never been in a more perilous state. 13 years of Central Government cuts and under investment in public services and catastrophic economic policies together with the aftermath of Brexit and the wars in Europe and the Middle East make it exceptionally difficult to plan long-term. So a level of prudence is required.*

*"At the same time the funds we hold on behalf of residents are there to work for them, providing the services they urgently need and value. Taking into account the requirement to protect them from future volatility, we should not be leaving more than necessary in the bank, when residents are facing the pressures they do. We also need to maintain and improve our infrastructure and ensure we adopt sustainable and cost-effective solutions that fit us for the future.*

*"Our budget supports the most vulnerable in our community, it introduces measures to adapt to and to mitigate climate change and actively works to safeguard services against future financial pressures.*

*"This administration has therefore taken an approach which ensures sound financial management, whilst addressing the priorities on which we were elected last May. We made a clear commitment then to listen and respond to the views of people living and working in the District and I'm pleased to say that the outcome of our budget consultation shows that our proposals are widely supported.*

*"To give a few examples, Rural services were felt to be important, three-quarters of people agree with our proposal to invest a further £85K to maintain the UBUS service and £28K for Rural Crime Advisors.*

*"Services for residents in financial difficulty, through our proposal for £250K for cost-of-living crisis was also supported by most residents.*

*"We cannot be complacent if we are to meet our target to be carbon neutral by 2030. I'm especially pleased that therefore our administration has progressed quickly to implement real and meaningful actions and we are building on this by providing a further £500k for climate initiatives which include £100K for the Community Change Fund.*

*"Our waste fleet is the Council's largest contributor to harmful emissions, changing to HVO demonstrates our commitment to make this District cleaner, safer, healthier and greener place to live and work. There is a cost, but the cost in year one is roughly 6p per household, per week – a small price to pay to reduce the emissions by up to 90% and again broadly supported by our residents.*

*"To make the most of the resources we have, we simply cannot continue with business as usual, we need to look ahead and work now to invest and modernise. Our Council Plan and Change Programme will invest in the changes needed to safeguard against future pressures.*

*"This Lib Dem administration is prepared to lead our communities, listen to their priorities and to act in their interests."*



## Council Tax level for Stratford-on-Avon District - continued



Cllr Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"This budget has been built around the priorities of our new Council Plan. As we prepare for the future, we need to plan ahead with a fund to deliver projects over the next three years.*

*"The plan is to improve the delivery of council services, stimulate growth in the local economy, deliver better affordable homes, particularly for young people, vulnerable families facing evictions, those who are homeless and victims of domestic abuse. We also want to support the voluntary sector, Town and Parish Councils and community organisations."*

### Council Tax Resolution 2024/25

#### Total Band D Council Tax

|  | 2023/24   | 2024/25          | % of the Council Tax |
|--|-----------|------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Stratford-on-Avon District Council</b>  | £159.12   | <b>£164.12</b>   | 7.2%                 |
| Warwickshire County Council                | £1,653.57 | <b>£1,736.19</b> | 76.7%                |
| Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner | £276.71   | <b>£289.71</b>   | 12.8%                |
| <b>Sub-Total</b>                           | £2,089.40 | <b>£2,190.02</b> | 96.7%                |
| Town and Parish Councils (Average)         | £69.26    | <b>£73.83</b>    | 3.3%                 |
| <b>Total</b>                               | £2,158.66 | <b>£2,263.85</b> | 100.0%               |

**Stratford-on-Avon remains a low-taxing authority, 18th lowest out of 164 district councils across the country in 2023/24.**

Anyone who thinks they could be struggling to pay their Council Tax is encouraged to contact the District Council as soon as possible by calling 01789 260990 or email [revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk), where the team will be able to advise what help is available.

Also, look out for the District Council's new booklet being sent out with the council tax bills at the end of March.



Following Full Council approval, provision has been made within the 2024/25 budget to fund the following:

#### Rural communities and vulnerable residents

- £28,000 for Rural Crime Advisors, working with Community Safety Team, to improve response to rising rural crime.
- £85,000 to maintain support for the UBUS service, to protect the vital connection between isolated communities and public services.
- £5,500 for a new pilot scheme in Southam and Alcester for Customer Access Terminals in rural communities to enable face-to-face communication with the District Council.

#### Staying healthy and active

- £25,000 for a new Leisure Community Instructor to provide targeted support for people with long term health conditions.
- Reduction in hire fees for use of public playing pitches in Stratford-upon-Avon to incentivise more sporting activity.

#### Cost of Living Crisis support

- £250,000 to continue to protect residents from the ongoing cost of living crisis, providing grants for those most in need of support with energy bills.

#### Climate change emergency:

- £500,000 extra funding to enable the Council to achieve its carbon reduction targets.
- £250,000 to change the current refuse collection vehicles to the use of HVO (hydrotreated vegetable oil) fuel to reduce harmful emissions by nearly 100%.

#### Council Plan and Change Programme:

- £2.2million to implement the new Council Plan, benefitting residents within six areas of focus, including delivering better homes, boosting the local economy, increasing green spaces, encouraging alternative modes of transport, supporting Town and Parish Councils and their local communities and improving the overall effectiveness of the Council.



## Stratford-on-Avon District Council 5<sup>th</sup> in recycling league table

Residents in Stratford-on-Avon District are still some of the best recyclers in England, as the District Council reaches 5th in the top ten Councils for reuse, recycling and composting.

Figures released show that Stratford-on-Avon District Council is ranked 5th with a recycling rate of 60.0% for last year (2022/23).

Councillor Lorraine Grocott, Environmental and Neighbourhood Services Portfolio says: *"It's thanks to our residents that we've been able to achieve this brilliant result with their continued commitment and support for recycling."*

*"The service we provide of fortnightly co-mingled (mixed) recycling collections as part of the 123+ collection service with our contractor, Biffa Waste Services Limited, is designed to make recycling easy and our residents respond to that by ensuring they recycle as much as possible and by limiting the amount of other waste that is produced for landfill."*

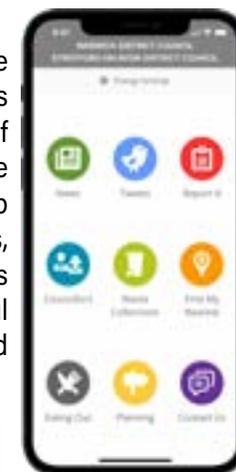
*"Investment in the Sherbourne Resource Park, a newly built, state-of-the-art Materials Recycling Facility, also ensures that there is a known controlled destination for dry recycling. It is important that residents continue to recycle, and they can now see that their efforts and diligence pays off!"*



| Rank | Authority                                 | Recycling rate for 2022/23 |
|------|---|----------------------------|
| 1    | South Oxfordshire District Council        | 61.6%                      |
| 2    | Three Rivers District Council             | 61.5%                      |
| 3    | Vale of White Horse District Council      | 60.9%                      |
| 4    | St Albans City and District Council       | 60.1%                      |
| 5    | <b>Stratford-on-Avon District Council</b> | <b>60.0%</b>               |
| 6    | East Devon District Council               | 59.5%                      |
| 7    | Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council    | 59.3%                      |
| 8    | Surrey Heath Borough Council              | 59.3%                      |
| 9    | Dorset Council                            | 59.1%                      |
| 10   | North Somerset Council                    | 58.9%                      |

There's plenty that can be recycled with the District Council's recycling service, if you would like a reminder of what can be recycled and the extra items that the District Council can take, please visit: [Our Recycling Collection | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

Residents can also download the District Council's app which is designed to allow access to a variety of council services whilst on the go – the mobile app enables residents to keep up to date with the latest council news, quickly report incidents, get reminders of bin collections and find useful information about their property and the surrounding area.



## New Council Plan Actions and Performance Management Framework for 2024-25 approved

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Cabinet has approved the new Council Plan Actions and Performance Management Framework.**

In December, the new Council Plan was approved, and it highlighted six key themes and 19 objectives. Following that, the specific actions required to implement the Council Plan vision have now been proposed and will be reviewed on an annual basis over the duration of the plan.

The Council Plan Actions will be incorporated into individual Service Plans across the authority and ultimately be used as the key appraisal targets for individual members of staff across the organisation.

The Council Plan Actions, alongside the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are part of Stratford-on-Avon District Council's overall performance framework.

Updates to and the monitoring of the Council Plan Actions and KPIs will be reported to The Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

Cllr Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"The Council Plan governs the actions that we will take as a District Council until 2027. Therefore, the Action Plan is an extremely crucial step in delivering the projects and objectives we have outlined for our District."*



## VISION STATEMENT

**We are an ambitious, fair, inclusive, and responsible organisation which will put our communities at the heart of everything we do.**

The Council will be recognised as a leader for supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents, protecting our environment, delivering sustainability and innovation. By proactively working with our partners the Council will strive to deliver cohesive communities that are well built, in the right place and served by appropriate infrastructure. The Council will support existing business to thrive and seek to attract new businesses to create valued jobs and opportunities.

**In developing this plan we have set ourselves realistic aims and objectives within six areas of focus.**





## OUR AIMS AND AREAS OF FOCUS

| KEY                       |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| AREAS OF FOCUS            |   |
| Residents and Communities | Health and Wellbeing                        |
| Delivery of Service       | Affordable, Well Built and Maintained Homes |
| Climate Change            | Local Economy                               |

### WE WILL LIVE BY

Be a transparent Council, fostering the levels of trust and understanding of responsibilities between the Council and the Public



Making the best decisions in the public interest



Holding ourselves and others providing public services to account more effectively for the benefit of the communities served



### WE WILL DELIVER

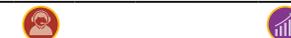
To improve access to Council services to those throughout the District



To improve the effectiveness of the Council through innovation, engaging with our peers to improve service delivery



To support the quality of our service by being a local employer of choice



Increase and protect green spaces which positively affect nature recovery



Be a Local Authority leader in the reduction of our own carbon footprint



Build the relationship and proactively foster partnership working with others to influence areas where the Council cannot deliver success alone



Support those most in need from inequality



Make the most of Stratford District's rich cultural heritage as a national and international tourist destination



### WE WILL INFLUENCE

To improve the range and quality of social infrastructure e.g. town centres, health and social care, education, housing and transport within the District



To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour through the Community Safety Partnership



To enable those living and working in the district to live more environmentally sustainable lifestyles



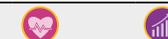
Facilitate more opportunities for residents to use alternative modes of transport



Ensure that development is meeting local needs, attractive, environmentally sustainable and fit for purpose



To increase the levels of valued employment and training



To support Parish Councils for the benefit of communities



To support opportunities for our residents to develop skills for the future



## Households save money on bills with energy efficiency investment

**As part of last year's Sustainable Warmth funding, which included the Home Upgrade Grant and Local Delivery Scheme, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and its delivery partners have successfully delivered 45 energy efficient measures for residents across Stratford-on-Avon District.**

These fully funded grants have successfully helped residents achieve warmer homes and lower energy bills, with the installation of energy efficiency measures such as insulation and solar panels. Across Stratford District, 30 properties received energy upgrades in 2023. This included the installation of 45 energy efficiency measures.

These were:

- |                             |    |
|-----------------------------|----|
| • Loft insulation           | 11 |
| • Cavity wall insulation    | 4  |
| • Heating controls          | 3  |
| • Solar Photovoltaic Panels | 25 |

A Stratford-on-Avon District resident commented on the effectiveness of the grants: *"I should like to express my appreciation for the efficient way that the process has been handled. My wife and I are delighted that solar panels have been installed and have noticed after even such a short time, that a noticeable amount has been saved on our electricity bill. Everyone involved was friendly and professional and the work was carried out much more quickly than we imagined it would be."*



There are currently several grants available depending on your personal circumstance. These include the Home Upgrade Grant phase 2 (HUG2), Energy Support Fund and Physical Intervention Fund. HUG2 provides energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating to low-income households living in the worst performing, off-gas grid homes in England. The scheme aims to improve the warmth and comfort of homes that do not have mains-gas heating, whilst also reducing energy bills, carbon emissions and levels of fuel poverty across the county.

Eligible households could receive free energy efficiency improvements or clean heating (such as air source heat pumps) for their homes, following a home assessment.

You could be eligible if you are a homeowner or a private rented tenant, and if you:

- Don't have gas central heating
- Have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D, E, F or G
- Have a combined annual household income under £31,000 (gross) - savings are not assessed

Properties within certain postcodes automatically meet the income eligibility criteria. Properties within these eligible postcodes that meet the other conditions are automatically eligible for the Home Upgrade Grant. You can find out if you live in an [eligible postcode here](#). Applications are being made through local charity Act on Energy, and all energy efficiency measures are carried out by [E.ON](#), a Trustmark registered contractor.

Dave Newitt, Head of Green Funding Solutions, at E.ON UK, said: *"Improving home energy efficiency helps households across the country to benefit from a more sustainable and comfortable home, reduce their energy bills and is essential to meeting the UK's net zero targets." We're pleased to be helping eligible households across Stratford District make their homes more energy efficient as we work with Stratford-on-Avon District Council to install energy improvements, such as insulation and solar panels."*

For more information about the scheme, including details on how to apply, you can visit the [Act on Energy website](#) or call 0800 988 2881 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Cllr Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council said: *"I would encourage anyone who might be eligible to get in touch, especially those in the qualifying postcode areas in Alcester East and West, to see what improvements can be made to your home to make it warm and affordable."*

For more information about what funding is available and general energy advice, [please click here](#).

## Free trees for farmers giveaway

**In January, Cllr Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council joined together with the Heart of England Forest for the 'Free trees for farmers' scheme, distributing tree packs.**

The saplings were available through the Warwickshire Rural Hub (a partnership funded by Stratford District Council, Warwick District Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council) to any farm located within the boundary of the three local authority areas.

The scheme offered trees to landowners and farmers in a bid to encourage more tree planting to help renew and restore existing woodland and vegetation, as well as replacing trees which have been affected by diseases.

Cllr Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council said: *"As part of our commitment to respond to the climate crisis, trees have an important role to play in keeping our air clean, helping to prevent flooding and providing valuable habitats for local wildlife."*

Various tree packs were available, which allowed farmers to find the perfect species mix for their land, including hedgerow packs, fruit tree packs, and woodland packs. Farmers were able to apply for anything from a single tree pack up to hundreds of trees.

Around 8,000 trees were distributed from Tubbs End Farm, Butlers Marston to 38 farmers from across the District.

The Free Trees for Farmers scheme is also being supported by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, as well as the Trees Call to Action Project.

The [Trees Call to Action Project](#) can also offer practical support for farmers looking to plant on a larger scale where they may need to undertake Environmental Impact Assessments, for example if they want to plant on a woodland scale using the Government's English Woodland Creation Offer grant.



## Can you suggest a location for electric vehicle charging points in Warwickshire?

Last year, Warwickshire County Council was allocated £3.3m from the first round of the government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Capital Fund.

Based on current estimates, this funding will allow for the delivery of up to 1,400 charging sockets at both on-street and in car park locations.

To deliver on this, residents are being asked to nominate possible locations which would benefit from an electric vehicle charging point.

Warwickshire County Council is working closely with both Warwick District Council and Stratford District Council to ensure that their separate responsibilities for the installation of EV infrastructure is fully aligned to ensure a comprehensive, accessible, and efficient network is installed across South Warwickshire. This requested input from residents will help with that collaborative approach.

Anyone can make a location suggestion by visiting: [Request a new electric charging point - Warwickshire County Council](#) or calling 01926 410 410.

The County Council is particularly interested in hearing about those areas where there is a high demand for electric vehicle charging, such as:

- Residential streets with no off-street parking
- Public car parks
- Rural locations.

Resident feedback will help the County Council to identify the areas where new charging points are most needed, and it will then work with partners to install them in these areas. We have had many suggestions already, but more will only strengthen this future rollout.



## Revised Statement of Community Involvement

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has updated its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The Statement of Community Involvement is a statutory document that all planning authorities are required to have in place. It explains how local communities, businesses and other interested parties can get involved in plan making and planning applications.

The revised Statement of Community involvement (2024) takes account of comments from the public received during the consultation on a draft document from September to November 2023.

The changes to the document include removing the temporary COVID-19 pandemic measures that were put in place along with other changes to make requirements clearer to developers and other organisations involved in the planning process.

The updated document continues to reflect the Council's priority to put people and communities at centre stage in the planning process.

You can read the Statement of Community Involvement here: [Statement of Community Involvement | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

Cllr George Cowcher, Portfolio Holder for Development said: *"It is important to have this statement updated to reflect the engagement of local communities, businesses and the District Council regarding planning practice."*



## Housing Investment Panel approve grant funding for affordable housing in Broom

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Housing Investment Panel has agreed to award capital grant funding to a local needs community-led housing scheme in Broom. At its meeting last month, the panel approved an award of £351,000.**

The 9 affordable homes will help meet the needs of residents in Bidford-on-Avon Parish.

The scheme is being built under the District Council's 'Local Need' initiative, which supports housing schemes that meet an identified local need. The scheme also includes 9 local market sale homes; however the grant funding is solely for the 9 affordable homes.

The scheme has been brought forward in partnership with the local community, the Rural Housing Enabler and partners. Occupancy of the homes will be restricted by a legal agreement to households with a qualifying local connection.

The scheme is being developed by Warwickshire Rural Housing Association (WRHA), working in partnership with Orbit Group. Residents will benefit from green energy measures such as air source heat pumps, photovoltaic solar panels and solar batteries.

Similar schemes for rural communities have been developed within Stratford-on-Avon District, and interested local communities are encouraged to contact the [Rural Housing Enabler](mailto:housing@wrccrural.org.uk) for further information: [housing@wrccrural.org.uk](mailto:housing@wrccrural.org.uk).



## Funding available

**Year 3 UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Year 2 Rural England Prosperity Fund are now open for applications.**

The grant schemes from Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) totalling £3,048,180 are now open for bids from projects around Stratford-on-Avon District.

Please keep an eye out for a special edition of Parish and Partners next week, detailing more about the grants and how to apply.

In the meantime, you can find out more information on the website here:

[UKSPF & REPF Year 3 Call | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#) and reserve your space in the information webinar here

Webinars: [Stratford UK Shared Prosperity and Rural Prosperity Funding Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#), where you can discover how to apply and ask questions to officers.



## Community Safety News

### Livestock Worrying

This year, the District Council's Rural Crime Advisors will continue to raise awareness with dog owners of the risk dogs can pose to livestock, particularly around lambing season.

This work involves visiting rural areas where dog attacks on livestock have already been reported, to discuss safe dog walking with members of the public and provide the National Sheep Association's Enjoy your dog walks information leaflet.

To put the concern of livestock worrying into context, the National Sheep Association's (NSA) [2023 Sheep Worrying Survey by dogs](#), found that, of the 305 farming respondents, 70% reported a sheep worrying incident, in almost 70% of these cases one dog killed or injured multiple sheep, 67% of respondents reported production losses in sheep and / or miscarriage in ewes because of sheep worrying.

To educate dog owners on the threat their dog can pose to livestock the NSA has produced a leaflet, which can be downloaded [here](#) and encourage use of this resource by anyone looking to educate others on the issue of sheep worrying - farmers, veterinary practices, avid walkers, fellow dog owners and more.



### Rural Crime Advisors win a Neighbourhood Policing Award

In January, at a presentation at Benn Hall, Rugby, the District Council's Rural Crime Advisors were presented with a Neighbourhood Policing Award for:

*"Working in partnership with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams whereby rural communities who present concerns around crime or antisocial behaviour are identified. Through this they have integrated themselves within established engagement events to target affected residents with crime prevention material. To embed this further they have established a network of community single points of contact who can extend the outreach of this vital crime reduction effort and reassure communities, heightening their faith within the local community safety partnership."*

Advisors Alison Packer and Rebecca Jenkins were recognised for their work in villages and communities that expressed concerns around crime and run specifically targeted engagements and events to work with local community representatives to provide bespoke advice and free crime prevention material to reduce crime and to increase feelings of safety. In doing this the advisors have worked with countless villages and built up a substantial network that they can work with to reduce crime where it occurs.

Councillor Natalie Gist, Portfolio Holder for Law and Governance said: *"I am delighted that the hard work of our Rural Crime Advisors as part of our Community Safety Team has been recognised by Warwickshire Police. Along with our partners this administration is committed to supporting residents right across our rural District."*

The Neighbourhood Policing awards recognise outstanding local work carried out by Police Officers, staff and Partnership Initiatives to make communities safer.

If you would like to contact the Rural Crime Advisors, please go to [Rural Crime | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)



## Elections Matter

The elections taking place in Stratford-on-Avon District this year include the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire on Thursday 2 May 2024.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are elected representatives who oversee how crime is tackled in a police force area. Their aim is to cut crime and to ensure the police force is effective.

If you have not received a poll card by 8 April contact the District Council to check if you are registered. Go to [www.stratford.gov.uk/elections](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/elections) or call 01789 260208.

### Electoral Registration

Everyone is responsible for their own registration. If you are not on the electoral register you will not be able to vote and may not be able to get credit either. If you are already on the electoral register you do not have to re-register.

In order to vote this year you need to be registered by 16 April and can do this by going to [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

**YOUR VOTE MATTERS**

**DON'T LOSE IT**



**POLLING STATION**

If you misplace your Poll Card and need to find your Polling Station information please visit:  
[www.stratford.gov.uk/council-democracy/find-your-polling-station.cfm](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/council-democracy/find-your-polling-station.cfm)

### Going away?

If you are not going to be able to get to the polling station on 2 May you can have a postal vote or proxy vote (where someone votes on your behalf). Applications for a Postal Vote close at 5pm on 17 April and Applications for a Proxy Vote close at 5pm on 24 April. You must be on the electoral register to have a valid postal or proxy vote.

To apply for a Postal Vote please visit [www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](http://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote)

To apply for a Proxy Vote please visit [www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote](http://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote)



### Voting on 2 May

To be able to vote you must show a form of photo ID at the polling station such as your passport, driving licence, blue badge and certain bus passes. If you do not have any photo ID you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.

To apply for a Voter Authority Certificate please visit: [www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate](http://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate)

You can check accepted forms of Identification by visiting: [www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need](http://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need)

### Important information regarding postal vote handling

New provisions from the Elections Act 2022 relating to handling postal votes are due to take effect in time for the 2 May Election. Political Campaigners will no longer be able to handle postal votes, except where the postal vote is their own or a close family member or someone they provide care for. Postal workers or those that handle postal votes as part of their duties are also exempt.

If you choose to hand in postal votes at the Council building or Polling Station, you will be limited to handing in no more than five postal votes for other electors, plus your own for each election.

If handing in postal votes you will now be required to complete a 'return of postal voting documents' form and declaration. These rules apply to all postal votes not posted through Royal Mail.

Our best advice is to post postal votes through Royal Mail as soon as possible. Please do not use unstaffed letterboxes at the Council building as we will have to reject these in compliance with the new Legislation.

For more information go to [www.stratford.gov.uk/elections](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/elections) or call 01789 260208

For all your election news follow  [@sdcelects](https://twitter.com/sdcelects)



## Need HELP... with the survey for your Plan?

A personalised consultation service is available, totally independent from the Parish, Town or Neighbourhood Plan process in your area.

### Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Consultation & Insight Unit offers you:

- > Pick and Mix flexible approach
- > Survey design from draft questionnaire to final report
- > Low cost one-stop shop for all your market research needs
- > Data processing via an unconnected, unbiased third party
- > Anonymity assured
- > Work carried out to Market Research Society guidelines

Satisfied clients include Parish Councils from both within and outside Stratford-on-Avon District.

### Feedback received includes:

*"Just wanted to say a big thank you for doing a cracking job on our village survey"*

*"Again thanks to you and your staff for a professional job - and lots of patience!"*

Get professional assistance for your consultation

### Contact Simon Purfield on



01789 260118



[simon.purfield@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:simon.purfield@stratford-dc.gov.uk)



[www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)



## SAVE TIME

### 2 NEW SERVICES FOR ALL RESIDENTS

Did you know you can now claim Housing Benefit online. Go to [www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)

If you want to make a payment for Council Tax or Business Rates use our dedicated payment line  
**0345 600 6956**



## Council Tax Help

**Are you, or someone in your household, living with:**

- a degenerative brain disorder such as Alzheimer's
- a learning disability
- other kinds of dementia
- a severe stroke
- severe or chronic mental illness

**and are entitled to one of the following benefits:**

- Employment Support Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- increased Disability Pension
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Income Support that includes a disability premium
- the care component of high or middle rate Disability Living Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit

**then you may be entitled to a Council Tax discount**

**and save money off your Council Tax bill**

For more information please contact Revenues on

01789 260990

[revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@stratford-dc.gov.uk)



[www.stratford.gov.uk](http://www.stratford.gov.uk)



[info@stratford-dc.gov.uk](mailto:info@stratford-dc.gov.uk)



[www.facebook.com/StratfordDC](https://www.facebook.com/StratfordDC)



[twitter.com/StratfordDC](https://twitter.com/StratfordDC)



[www.linkedin.com/company/stratford-on-avon-district-council](https://www.linkedin.com/company/stratford-on-avon-district-council)

## Warwickshire Connected

Get connected with what is happening in your local area.

Warwickshire Connected is a **free community messaging system** brought to you by Warwickshire Police.

You can sign up to receive real time email updates about the things that matter to you most, including:

- 📡 News from your local policing teams
- 📡 Updates and appeals on local incidents
- 📡 Useful crime prevention advice
- 📡 Information about policing events happening in your area



To sign-up visit: [www.warwickshireconnected.com](http://www.warwickshireconnected.com) or scan the QR code.



## UBUS



Bringing U closer together.

To register or for more information please

📞 01789 264491

✉ UBUS@stratford-dc.gov.uk

If you live in an area with limited public transport or you struggle to use public transport because of mobility or health issues then **UBUS** could be for you.

**UBUS** is a dial-a-ride service for people of all ages in the Stratford-on-Avon District, operating between 9:30am and 7:00pm, Monday to Friday.

supported by



## Improved online access to Stratford-on-Avon District Council meetings

The District Council has now expanded online access to its meetings.

Although all public Council meetings are live-streamed, previously only Full Council, The Cabinet and Planning meetings have been available to view remotely, either live or as a recording on the District Council's website.

However, this has now been expanded to include all Council meetings which are now being retained for future viewing:

- Audit and Standards Committee
- Climate Change Panel
- Employment Committee
- Housing Investment Panel
- Licensing Committee
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Regulatory Committee

Cllr Natalie Gist, Law and Governance Portfolio says: *"For some time, many of the key decision meetings of the Council have been available to view remotely, both as they happen or as a recording. This does save residents from our area having to travel to Stratford-upon-Avon to view proceedings where they want to follow a specific issue. As the new administration of the Council, we noted inconsistencies in that not all meetings could be viewed after they had taken place, but we have rectified this now and made all Council meetings available - streaming live and then uploaded to the District Council's YouTube channel!"*

Stratford-on-Avon Council meetings can be viewed at:

- [Council Meeting Webcasts | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)
- [Stratford-on-Avon District Council YouTube Channel](#)

The Joint Cabinet/Executive Committee for the South Warwickshire Local Plan is also live-streamed, but retained on a separate joint YouTube Channel: [South Warwickshire Local Plan YouTube Channel](#)

## Stratford District Council meetings

District Council meetings can be accessed and viewed using the link from the front page of the agendas.

| Date               | Time    | Meeting   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| Friday 12 April    | 10.00am | Overview and Scrutiny Committee                     |
| Monday 15 April    | 10.00am | The Cabinet   |
| Wednesday 24 April | 6.00pm  | Planning  |
| Monday 22 April    | 2.00pm  | Council   |
| Tuesday 23 April   | 4.00pm  | Public Participation Meeting - Climate Change Panel |
| Wednesday 15 May   | 11.00am | Annual Council                                      |
| Wednesday 22 May   | 6.00pm  | Planning  |
| Friday 31 May      | 10.00am | Overview and Scrutiny Committee                     |
| Monday 3 June      | 10.00am | The Cabinet   |
| Wednesday 5 June   | 6.00pm  | Planning  |
| Wednesday 19 June  | 6.00pm  | Planning  |
| Friday 28 June     | 10.00am | Overview and Scrutiny Committee                     |

