

Parish and Partners Foreword

Dear All,

Welcome to the September edition of our Parish and Partners newsletter, the season has now definitely changed, and we have had some very welcome rain.

This is a very full edition of the newsletter and identifies the work that the Council is doing across the District. We have been continuing to implement the Council Plan which does focus on communities and the delivery of projects to address Climate Change, there are a number of examples within this edition that concentrates on this.

As you will know the Parish and Partners newsletter has been providing an update of the progress of local government reorganisation within Warwickshire. In late 2024, government announced that they were planning to abolish the remaining district & borough councils and county councils and to put in their place unitary councils. This was a move towards supporting the roll of the establishment of strategic authorities and greater devolution.

In July the Government, after 8 months of deliberation and consultation, made their decision on the future local government structures for Warwickshire. The result of this review was that a North Warwickshire and South Warwickshire Council would be established on 1 April 2028, following shadow Council elections in lieu of the district council elections in May 2027. In relation to elections the term of office for the first elections to be 5 years and the town and parish elections which are also scheduled for May 2027, also to be for a period of five years.

All of the principal councils have been working together in implementing this decision, however, on Monday 7 September, there was an unexpected announcement from Central Government. Five Councils including Suffolk County Council had launched a legal challenge to the Government's decisions, in areas including Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hampshire and Portsmouth.

The announcement firstly from the Secretary of State, later repeated in the day by the Minister for Local Government was that all work in relation to the July 2026 decisions for local government reorganisation should be paused, pending a "rapid review" to be undertaken by the Ministry.

At this point, we have very little certainty about how long this review will take, and or whether the Government could make a different decision to that which they made in July following this review.

We have been told that the elections for Stratford-on-Avon District Council should now go ahead in May 2027, previously the shadow elections would have been taken in their place. As far as the town and parish council elections which are also scheduled for May 2027, as soon as we have any clarity on what the term of these elections will be we will let you know.

As soon as the Council has any further updates on this issue, we will share them with you. This decision I know will be unsettling as it has been for the staff and members of the Council, unfortunately, this is for reasons outside of our control.

As I mentioned last time thank you again for your on-going support. If there are any topics that you would like us to cover within the Parish and Partners newsletter then please let us know.

Very best regards

David



Amendment

In the March issue of Parish & Partners, there was a list of items that will be funded following approval of this year's budget – please be advised that funding for Neighbourhood Development Plans is £300,000 (over 3 years) and not £100,000 as published.

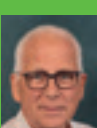
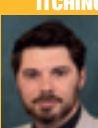
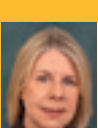
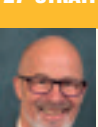
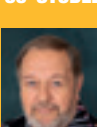
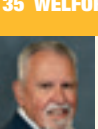
See the article on page 8 for more information.



Parish and Partners Briefing

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Following the recent by-elections here are the current District Councillors

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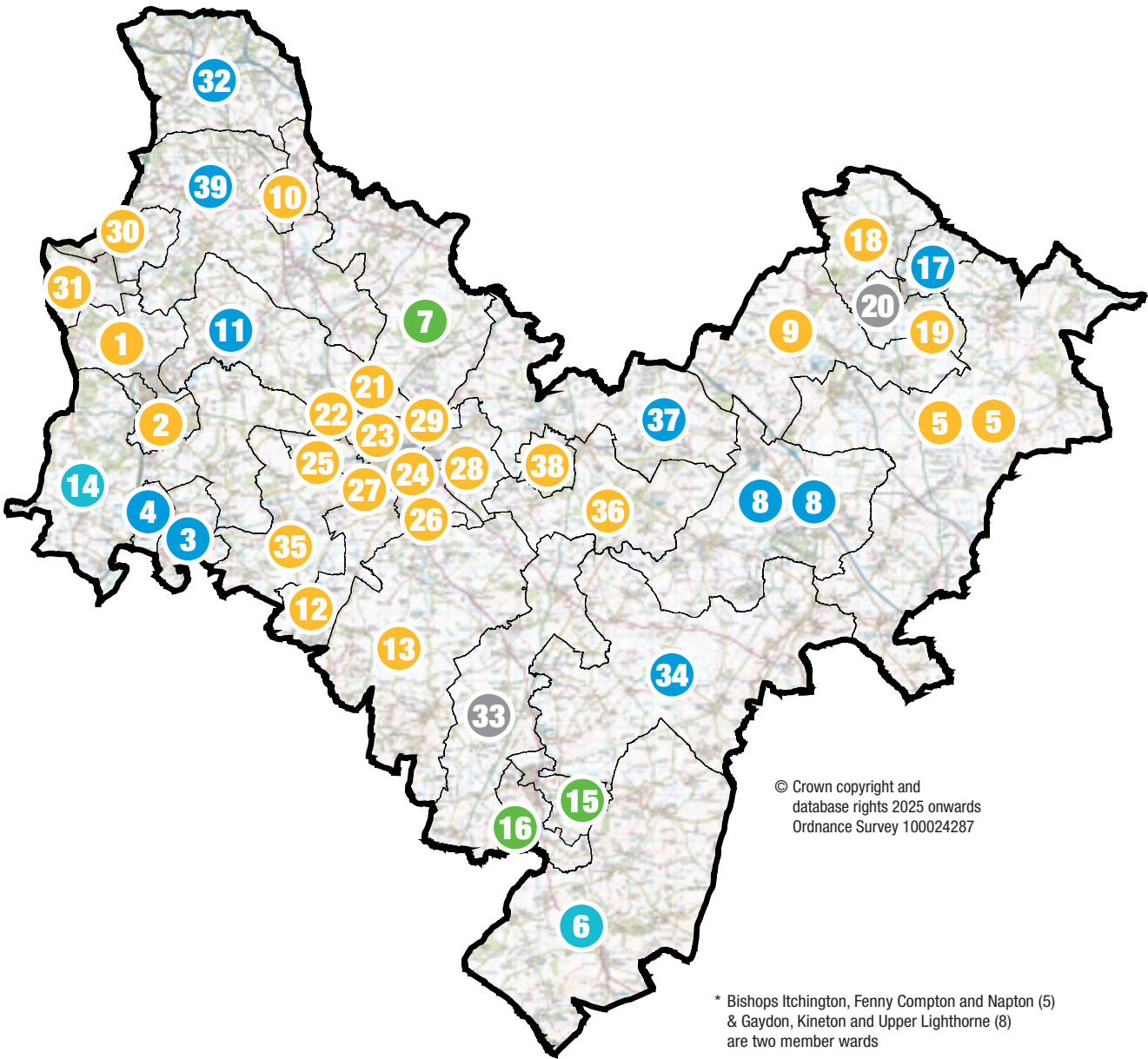
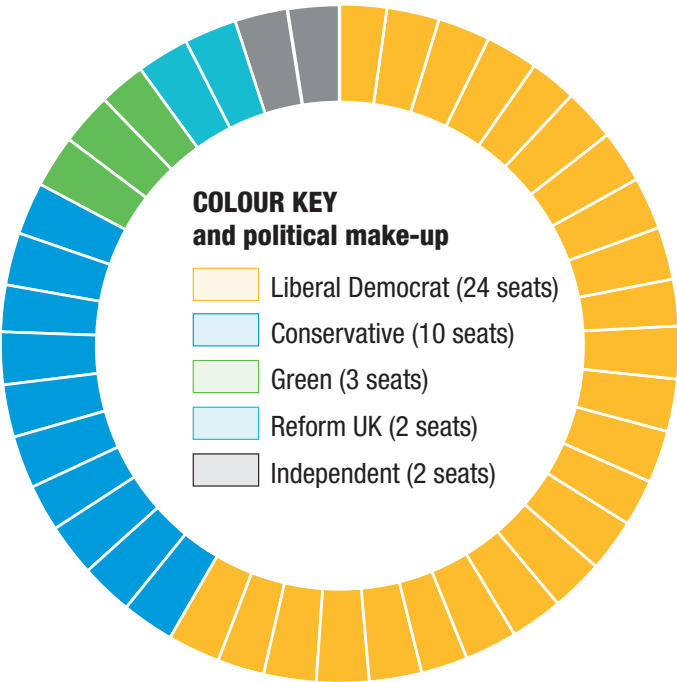


www.linkedin.com/company/stratford-on-avon-district-council

The current political make up of the District Council

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has 41 Councillors in 39 District Wards who represent residents' views on local matters.

The political make-up follows the District elections on 4 May 2023, and subsequent by-elections.



Local Government Reorganisation update for Warwickshire

In July 2026, the Government confirmed that local government in Warwickshire would be reorganised into two new unitary councils from April 2028. Under the decision, the existing county, district and borough councils would be replaced by:

- **North Warwickshire Council** covering North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth and Rugby
- **South Warwickshire Council** covering Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick districts

The new councils would be responsible for all local government services, including waste collection, highways, planning, education, housing and social care.

Following the announcement, Warwickshire's six principal councils began working together on preparations for the transition, with elections to new shadow councils expected to take place in May 2027 ahead of the new authorities being established in April 2028.

However, the Government has now announced a review of its Local Government Reorganisation programme following updated legal advice. Warwickshire is one of 14 areas where reorganisation proposals have been paused while the Government considers whether the process remains legally robust and aligned with its wider policy objectives.

The Government has also confirmed that local elections scheduled for May 2027 will go ahead on existing council boundaries. This means District and Borough Council elections, which had previously been expected to be replaced by elections to shadow unitary councils, are now set to take place as normal unless further changes are announced.

David Buckland, Chief Executive of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"We note the Government's announcement and will consider the details carefully."*

"At this stage, we do not know the full implications for Local Government Reorganisation in Warwickshire. All six councils will continue to work together and engage with the Government as further information becomes available."

"We will provide updates for residents, staff and councillors when we have greater clarity and the District Council remains focused on delivering services for residents, communities and businesses across the District."

All six Warwickshire councils remain committed to working together constructively while the review is undertaken. At present, there is no indication of how long the review will take.



Bancroft Gardens retains prestigious Green Flag Award

Bancroft Gardens has retained its Green Flag Award for a second consecutive year, recognising it as one of the country's best-managed public parks and green spaces.

The award, administered by Keep Britain Tidy, is the international benchmark for quality parks and celebrates its 30th anniversary this year.

The recognition reflects the hard work of District Council staff and grounds maintenance contractor Krinkels UK in maintaining the gardens as a clean, safe and welcoming space for residents and visitors.

This year a record 2,391 parks and green spaces across the UK achieved Green Flag status, highlighting the significance of Bancroft Gardens' success.

Councillor Lorraine Grocott, Portfolio Holder for Environmental and Neighbourhood Services, said: *"We are delighted that Bancroft Gardens has once again been recognised with a Green Flag Award. Retaining this prestigious accolade reflects the continued dedication of our staff and the District Council's grounds maintenance contractor, Krinkels UK, whose hard work ensures that the gardens remain a clean, safe and welcoming space for everyone to enjoy."*

"Located in the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon, Bancroft Gardens is one of the District's most popular green spaces, attracting residents and visitors throughout the year. This award demonstrates our commitment to maintaining high-quality parks and open spaces that support wellbeing, biodiversity and community pride, and we are extremely proud to have achieved this national recognition for a second consecutive year."



Funding secured to tackle chewing gum litter

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has secured £2,250 from the Chewing Gum Task Force to help remove chewing gum staining from streets and reduce future littering.

The funding supported targeted cleaning work in Stratford-upon-Avon and Southam during August, carried out by the Council's street cleansing contractor, Biffa Waste Services, using specialist equipment.

As well as cleaning affected areas, the initiative aims to encourage responsible disposal through behaviour-change campaigns and signage.

Julie Lewis, Head of Environmental and Neighbourhood Services, said: *"We are pleased to have secured this funding from the Chewing Gum Task Force to help improve the cleanliness of our streets. Chewing gum staining is a costly and persistent issue, so this grant will enable us to carry out targeted cleansing in Stratford-upon-Avon and Southam while encouraging people to dispose of their chewing gum responsibly. Together, these measures will help create cleaner and more attractive public spaces for everyone."*

Research from the Chewing Gum Task Force shows that targeted cleaning and awareness campaigns can reduce gum littering by up to 86% in the first two months.



Council invests in new accommodation for vulnerable women

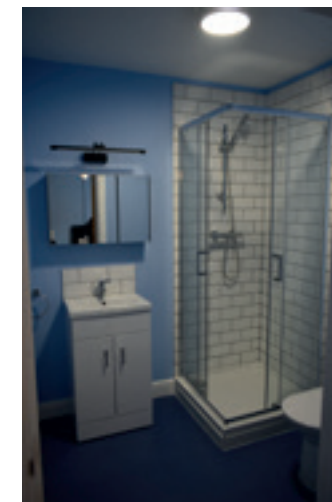
Stratford-on-Avon District Council has invested in a new women-only accommodation scheme to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The development provides self-contained accommodation with ensuite facilities and kitchenettes, creating a safe and supportive environment where residents can rebuild their independence.

The project responds to growing demand for specialist accommodation. In 2025/26, the Council received 1,075 homelessness approaches, including 283 from single women.

Cllr Liz Coles, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Revenues and Customer Services, said: *"This investment demonstrates our commitment to tackling homelessness and ensuring that everyone in our District has access to safe and suitable accommodation."*

"We know that a significant proportion of people who come to us for help are women, and that there is a gap in provision for those who need a secure, self-contained space and we know that some women feel safer in women only spaces. This scheme provides exactly that, a safe, supportive environment where women can regain stability and independence. It is about giving people the foundation they need to rebuild their lives with dignity and confidence."



The new facility will bridge the gap between emergency accommodation and independent living, helping residents access support while maintaining their independence.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council provides advice and support to residents who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, contact the Council's Housing Advice and Homelessness Service:

- Telephone: 01789 260126 or 01789 267575
- Email: homeless@stratford-dc.gov.uk
- Visit: Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HX
- Out of hours emergency homelessness service: 01789 267575 (select Option 3)

Further information is available at: [Homelessness & Threatened With Homelessness | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)



PLANNING NEWS

New planning approach to support housing delivery

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has adopted an Interim Policy Position Statement to help guide planning decisions while work continues on the South Warwickshire Local Plan.

The approach responds to national planning requirements and a current shortage of housing land supply. It aims to support the delivery of new homes while ensuring development takes place in sustainable locations with the right infrastructure.

Councillor George Cowcher, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, said: *"This interim approach responds to the current planning context and is intended to provide greater clarity for residents, developers and local communities about how planning decisions will be made."*

"It reflects the District Council's commitment to ensuring that new development is located in places that are well connected to jobs, services and public transport, where people can access everyday facilities with the minimum need to travel."

"While we must respond positively to the need for new homes, we remain committed to securing development that is sustainable, well designed and supported by the infrastructure communities need."

The District Council will continue to prioritise high-quality development that respects local character and is supported by transport, education, healthcare and community facilities.

District Council strengthens planning enforcement approach

A new Local Enforcement Plan has been endorsed by the District Council, setting out a clearer and more transparent approach to investigating breaches of planning control.

The updated plan includes a strengthened prioritisation system, ensuring the most serious cases affecting heritage, the environment and local communities are dealt with more quickly.

- Urgent cases: site visit within 1 working day
- Level 1 cases: within 10 working days
- Level 2 cases: within 20 working days

The District Council will continue to seek solutions through negotiation where possible, while taking formal enforcement action when necessary.

Councillor George Cowcher, Deputy Leader at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"The new framework will help protect the District's environment, heritage, and communities, while making best use of resources. It also supports greater consistency in enforcement decisions and reduces the risk of challenge."*



PLANNING NEWS

Stratford District Council commits £300,000 to support Neighbourhood Development Plans

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Cabinet has approved the funding of £300,000 be made available for Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), removing the £100,000 annual limit.

The investment will help Town and Parish Councils either prepare new Neighbourhood Development Plans or update existing ones, ensuring communities continue to have a strong voice in decisions about local development.

There are currently 32 adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans across the District. As planning policies evolve and work continues on the emerging South Warwickshire Local Plan, many of these plans will require review to remain relevant and effective.

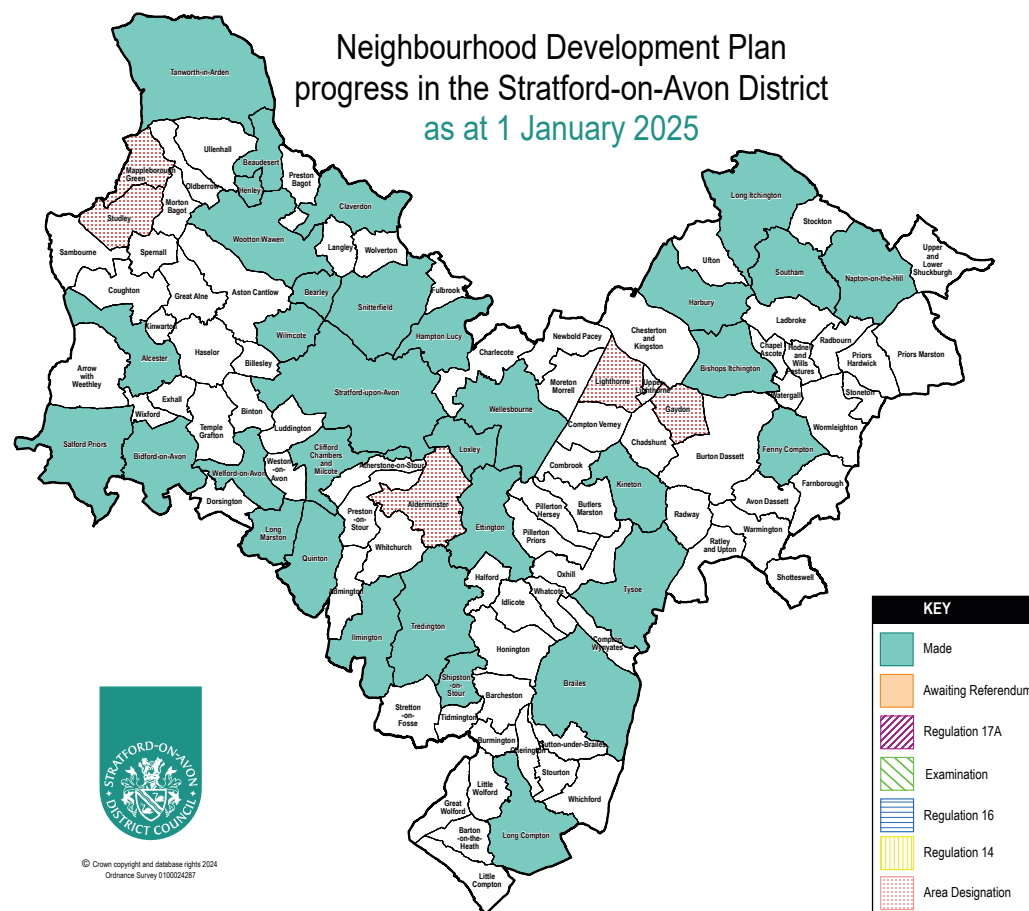
Neighbourhood Development Plans play an important role in giving residents the opportunity to influence how their communities grow and develop. They can help shape decisions on housing, infrastructure, environmental priorities, local design standards and other issues that affect everyday life. Once adopted, an NDP becomes part of the statutory development plan and is used to help determine planning applications.

The new funding initiative comes in response to the withdrawal of the Government-backed Locality grant programme in 2025, which previously provided financial support for neighbourhood planning activities. Stratford District Council's commitment will ensure that communities can continue this important work without losing momentum.

Under the scheme, eligible Town and Parish Councils will be able to apply for financial assistance based on demonstrated project costs and planned expenditure. Applications will be carefully assessed to ensure public funds are used effectively and deliver value for money.

Councillor George Cowcher, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Planning said: *"Neighbourhood Development Plans are vital for communities to influence how they develop. The withdrawal of national funding has been compensated by Stratford District Council who will ensure that it is fairly distributed. It is essential that the District has robust and objective plans that will shape future development."*

Neighbourhood Development Plan progress in the Stratford-on-Avon District as at 1 January 2025



New housing register launches this autumn

Stratford-on-Avon District Council launches its new online housing register, Stratford-on-Avon Home Choice, on 15 September 2026.

The new system replaces Home Choice Plus and supports the Council's updated housing allocations scheme.

Councillor Liz Coles, Housing and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, said: *"Introducing Stratford-on-Avon Home Choice is an important step in modernising the way we manage applications for social housing across the District."*

"We want to make the transition as straightforward as possible for our residents and would encourage all existing applicants to look out for further information and submit a new application during the transition period so that, where applicable, they can retain their existing band start date or application date."

"We recognise that moving to a new system can raise questions, which is why support will be available throughout the process. Our priority is to ensure that those who need housing assistance continue to receive the help and advice they need."

Existing applicants will need to submit a new application between 15 September and 27 October 2026 to help preserve their current band start date where applicable.

Residents who need support completing an application will be able to access assistance throughout the transition.

Key dates

- 15 September: New system opens
- 27 October: First bidding cycle begins

For advice, contact the Housing Advice Team on 01789 260861 or email housingadviceteam@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

Energy support fund opens for vulnerable residents



Residents struggling with rising energy bills can now access financial support through the Stratford Energy Support Fund.

Administered by Act on Energy and funded by Stratford-on-Avon District Council, the scheme provides one-off grants of up to:

- £500 for eligible families
- £300 for eligible individuals and couples

Support is available towards gas, electricity, oil and LPG costs for households meeting income and vulnerability criteria.

Income criteria:

- Gross household income of up to £31,000 (not including PIP or DLA)
- No household savings

Vulnerabilities typically include:

- Long term diagnosed and treated health conditions e.g. COPD
- Households with unmanageable debt
- Pregnant or have young children under the age of five
- Disabled and in receipt of DLA or PIP
- In receipt of related benefits related (not universal) free school meals
- Other vulnerabilities disclosed by households not on the list but accepted at Act on Energy's discretion

Residents can find full eligibility details at www.actonenergy.org.uk/support/sesf or contact Act on Energy on 0800 988 2881.

Councillor Liz Coles, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Revenues and Customer Services, said: *"The Council is taking action now to reduce energy costs for vulnerable residents facing increasing pressure from cost of living rises. This energy grant scheme will play an important part of giving our community support where it is needed."*

Further funding schemes are available on the Act on Energy website: <https://www.actonenergy.org.uk/area/warwickshire>



Stratford-on-Avon District Council is England's top recycling area

Stratford-on-Avon District had the highest household recycling rate in England in 2024/2025 from figures published by Defra.

With a **63.9%** household recycling rate, Stratford-on-Avon District Council has jumped up two places in the league table after seeing a 2.9% increase from the previous year.

Rank	Authority	Recycling rate for 2024/25
1	Stratford-on-Avon District Council	63.9%
2	Milton Keynes Council	63.2%
3	South Oxfordshire District Council	61.3%
4	Three Rivers District Council	61.1%
5	East Riding District Council	61.0%
6	East Devon District Council	60.3%
7	Dorset Council	60.2%
8	North Somerset	60.2%
9	Stockport MBC	60.1%
10	St Albans City and District Council	60.0%

Julie Lewis, Head of Environmental and Neighbourhood Services, said: *"This is a huge success and it's a testament to our residents and their commitment to recycling. It is an amazing achievement, and we would like to thank our residents and our continued successful partnership with waste collection contractor, Biffa Waste Services Ltd, alongside the hard work of our council officers for this milestone. We did it!"*

"We would also like to thank Sherbourne Recycling, the state-of-the-art Materials Recovery Facility where all of the District's household recycling is processed. The facility is continually evolving and has the capability to adapt to new materials over time, helping to ensure our recycling services remain efficient and effective."

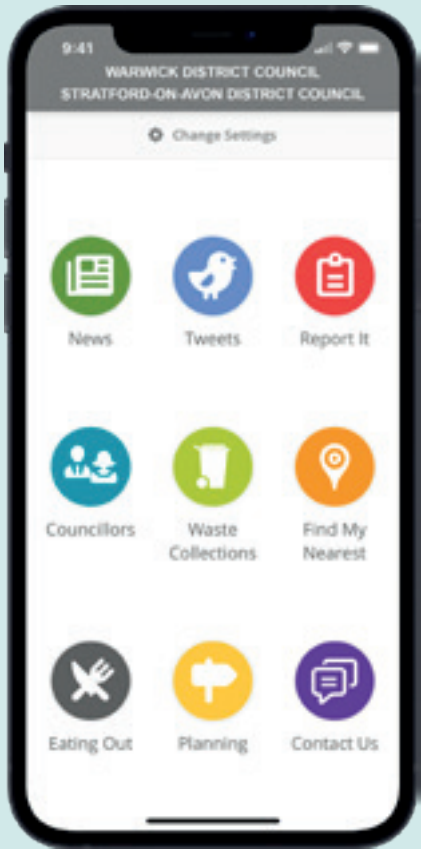
If you would like a reminder of what can be recycled and the extra items that the District Council can take, please visit: [Recycling Collection](#)

Residents can also search what items can be recycled by using our [Stratford-on-Avon District Council app](#). Or on our website: [A-Z of recycling and disposals | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)



Download our app 'Stratford District Council'

Find out which day you need to put your bin out, where and how to recycle different materials and report a missed collection to us all in one place!



New green projects delivered through SDC's Community Climate and Nature Fund

The Community Climate and Nature Fund is an initiative run by Stratford-on-Avon District Council that provides funding to local councils, community groups and charities to reduce carbon emissions and improve local biodiversity.

Since it was set up in November 2023, £250,000 has been allocated to local initiatives by the scheme, across 53 projects.

The latest round ended in April 2026, and the full £150,000 was spent across 29 projects.

Organisation	Project description	Funding received
Alcester Town Council	Alcester connected for climate and nature project – events and initiatives to enhance local biodiversity	£10,000
Alcester Town Council	River Arrow & Alne Revival: community action on river restoration in Alcester	£750
Bearley Parish Council	Upgrade of 3 streetlights to LED	£1,234
Bidford Parish Council	To continue the operation of their Community Fridge and Café	£7,600
Compton Verney House Charity	Installation of a 104kW heat pump at Compton Verney Learning Centre	£8,000
Forest of Hearts	Nature and biodiversity initiative at the Garden of Arden	£5,990
Friends of Henley Station CIC	Installation of solar panels on the roof of the Station Bar	£10,000
Harbury Scout Group	Installation of solar panels on the roof of the Scout Hut	£5,985
Henley Memorial Hall	Installation of 3 air source heat pumps in the Memorial Hall	£6,000

Henley Parish Council	To deliver their "Henley Buzz and Bloom" biodiversity and bee initiative	£5,530
Hoppers Lane Wood Trust	To restore and plant on the 0.6ha Hoppers Lane Wood site	£4,033
Ilmington Parish Council	To deliver a pond restoration project	£3,900
Kineton Village Hall	Installation of 2 air source heat pumps in the Village Hall	£6,000
Langley Parish Council	To carry out a community engagement exercise to encourage more sustainable use of the village's septic tanks	£849
Lighthorne Parish Council	Installation of solar panels on their Pavilion	£5,000
Long Compton Flood Action Group	To clear vegetation and debris from the Nethercote Brook	£5,000
Oxhill Village Hall	Installation of solar panels and battery storage	£2,500
Phoenix Players	Installation of double glazed windows and insulation in their Rehearsal Studio	£367
Pillerton Priors Village Hall	Construction of a new overland interception ditch to protect the village hall from flooding	£5,004
Pillerton Priors Village Hall	Installation of two 2.9kWh batteries to complement their existing solar panels	£2,400
Snitterfield Playing Fields	Installation of 12 solar panels, battery storage and inverter on their new Pavilion	£7,369.44
Stockton FCCC	Interventions to improve drainage and climate resilience of their 9 football pitches	£8,210

New green projects delivered through SDC's Community Climate and Nature Fund

Stockton Village Hall	Installation of double-glazed windows and roof insulation	£5,041
Stratford Baptist Church	Installation of 64 solar panels and LED lighting on their main church building, as well as the Welcombe Hall	£6,000
Stratford Beekeepers' Association	To fund equipment and engagement events to defend against the impacts of the Yellow Legged Asian Hornet	£5,110
Tysoe Parish Council and Tysoe Wildlife Group	Interventions to preserve and enhance local swift and hedgehog populations	£3,971
Tysoe Tennis Club	Upgrade of the club's floodlighting to LED	£3,104
Tysoe Village Hall	Installation of two 8kWh batteries	£4,715
Welford on Avon Bowls Club	Installation of 60 solar panels on their club roof, as well as a battery storage unit	£10,000

The Community Climate and Nature Fund was reopened for a Fourth Round, with a budget of £200,000, with applications closed at the end of July.

Tony Perks, Deputy Chief Executive of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"The Community Climate and Nature Fund continues to make a real difference across the District, supporting practical projects that cut carbon emissions and protect our local environment."*

"It's fantastic to see such a wide range of organisations coming forward with innovative ideas, from renewable energy installations to wildlife conservation."

To find out more information and what projects have been delivered by the CCNF in the past, [please visit our website here](#). Alternatively, you can get in touch with us directly at climate.emergency@stratford-dc.gov.uk

ROUND THREE PROJECTS

Community Climate and Nature Fund

AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMPS INSTALLED AT HENLEY MEMORIAL HALL



“The CCNF grant was the essential catalyst for our transition to renewable energy, enabling us to move forward, along with match funding from The Friends of Henley Station CIC. Despite the complexities of upgrading an older building's electrics, securing a turn-key solution allowed us to complete this phase with minimal disruption. We have now eliminated gas from these rooms entirely, creating a superior environment for all our groups, while providing a clear pathway for decarbonising the rest of the hall to serve our community for generations to come.”

Ian Smedley
Trustee/Chairman of Henley Memorial Hall Committee

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Henley-In-Arden Memorial Trust replaced inefficient gas-fired heating in three side rooms with a modern Air Source Heat Pump system. Completed on April 10th, 2026, the project serves as a "phase one" for the building's decarbonization, aiming to eliminate fossil fuel reliance in high-use areas. Grant funds were used to supply and install ASHP units, decommission old gas equipment, and strip out redundant fixtures. £6,000 was secured from the CCNF for the project, which was managed by the Hall's committee, and also supported by match funding from The Friends of Henley Station, who provided an additional £4,500. This upgrade directly benefits the 750+ annual users by providing sustainable, year-round climate control powered by the existing 12kWp solar array.

IMPACTS

This project will deliver a quantified annual reduction of 1.1 tonnes of CO₂e and eliminate 6,007 kWh of natural gas consumption in the three side/rear rooms. Environmentally, it maximizes the benefit of the 12kWp solar array by shifting to electrified heating. The impact on the hall's users, including those participating in arts and sports, is immediate: participants now benefit from consistent temperatures and year-round climate control. Socially, replacing bulky gas heaters with wall-mounted units has reclaimed floor space and improved room aesthetics. While the main hall still utilises gas, this successful implementation reinforces their financial resilience through a projected 52% reduction in heating costs for these rooms allowing for greater reinvestment into the community.





New Website Launched to Support Community Climate Action Across South Warwickshire

Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council have launched a new website for the **South Warwickshire Local Climate Engagement Programme**, a joint initiative designed to support residents, community groups and organisations to take practical action on climate change.

The new website will act as a central hub for information, resources and support, helping local communities better understand climate change and identify ways to reduce carbon emissions, build resilience and protect the local environment. It brings together guidance on topics such as energy efficiency, sustainable travel, waste reduction, biodiversity, and funding opportunities for community-led projects.

The Local Climate Engagement Programme is a collaborative programme between Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council, reflecting a shared commitment to tackle the climate emergency through partnership working and local engagement.

The website also highlights local case studies, events and opportunities to get involved, showcasing positive action already taking place across Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick districts.

Residents and organisations are encouraged to visit the website to explore the resources available and learn how they can get involved in the Local Climate Engagement Programme: [Home - Local Climate Engagement Programme](#)



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

Community Grant Scheme awards first round of small grants to enhance local facilities

Last year, marking the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day, Stratford-on-Avon District Council launched its **Community Grant Scheme** to support valued community assets across the District.

The scheme was created both in memory of the generation who sacrificed so much during the Second World War and in celebration of the power of community in the 21st Century.

A total of £350,000 has been made available to fund a wide range of local projects, from new kitchens and bathrooms in community halls to improved outdoor spaces and play areas.

The first round of Small Grant applications, for projects seeking between £5,000 and £20,000, closed in January.

More than 20 applications were received from across the District, and three projects have now been approved, with awards totalling over £46,000:

- **1st Shottery Scouts** - £10,606 for new electrics and insulation at the Scout Hut.
- **Brailes Village Hall** - £20,000 for a new kitchen.
- **Southam Town Council** - £15,425.29 to improve acoustics at the Flying Fields Community Centre.

In total, the Community Grant Scheme has attracted almost 60 applications for both the small and large grants, with funding requests amounting to more than £2 million, demonstrating both the demand for support and the importance of shared community spaces across the District.

The scheme not only helps local groups deliver much-needed improvements but also directly supports the ambitions of the District-wide GO Plan* and the District Council's current Council Plan, which focus on reducing poverty, improving health and wellbeing, and creating opportunities for residents to achieve their potential.

These projects reflect the role local facilities play in supporting community cohesion, access to services, and inclusive opportunities for all.

Hannah Buckley, Head of Housing, Revenues and Customer Services, said: *"We are delighted to be able to support these organisations, each with a unique project to improve their facilities and enhance their offer to the local communities they serve."*

"The significant interest in this scheme highlights both the level of need and the importance of these shared spaces. It is a privilege to support these projects, particularly in remembrance and appreciation of the generation who did so much during a time when community cohesion and support were vital."

***The Growing Opportunities 2026-2029**, GO Plan, is a District-wide commitment to tackling poverty, improving wellbeing and creating greater opportunities for people of all ages, supported by the Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Partnership.



1st Shottery Scouts



Brailes Village Hall



Southam Town Council - before



and after

New community noticeboards funded across the District

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has supported the installation of new community noticeboards across the District, helping residents and visitors stay informed and connected.

In early 2025, Town and Parish Councils, community venues and local groups were invited to apply for funding to install new community noticeboards in their areas.

Following a successful application round, eight projects were approved in April, with over £6,500 awarded to support installations at the following locations:

- **Bishops Itchington** - by the play area and recreation ground
- **Clifford Chambers** - on the Village Green
- **Fenny Compton** - outside the village hall, opposite the shop, and at Compton Lock playground
- **Gaydon** - outside Gaydon Village Shop
- **Kinwarton** - at St Mary's Park
- **Pillerton Priors** - outside Pillerton Priors Village Hall
- **Shipston** - at Cornmill Meadows Local Wildlife Site
- **Southam** - outside Tithe Lodge



Bishops Itchington

The noticeboards are already playing an important role in village life, sharing a wide range of information for local communities. Content includes Parish Council notices, local business adverts, clubs and village events, volunteering opportunities, guided walks, maps, wildlife and hedgehog care advice, and information about local history and points of interest.



Fenny Compton



Shipston



Gaydon



Kinwarton



Pillerton Priors

Feedback from successful applicants has been overwhelmingly positive.

Cllr Gill Forman, Chair of Kinwarton Parish Council, said: *"We are delighted to receive a grant from Stratford District Council for a new noticeboard in the parish. The noticeboard has brightened up St Mary's Park and provides an invaluable means of communication and source of information for the parishioners."*

Araminta Chesters, Treasurer at Pillerton Priors Village Hall, said: *"The new village hall noticeboard is very eye-catching and has been very well received by the villagers. The village hall is tucked away behind hedging and, in the past, both Scouts and hall hirers from outside the village have asked for clearer signage. The noticeboard will also allow us to promote local events being held at the hall and across the Parish."*

Hilary Kelly, Chair of the Environment Working Group in Shipston, added: *"It has been lovely to have a noticeboard with our logo on, where we can communicate directly with people using our wildlife site. It enables us to share updates on improvements and gives visitors the opportunity to let us know what they have seen while visiting."*

Funding available for community food projects across Stratford-on-Avon District

Local organisations are being encouraged to apply for a new grant programme that aims to improve access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food across Stratford-on-Avon District.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has launched the Healthy and Sustainable Food For All - Community Food Projects Grant 2026, a £50,000 fund designed to support community-led initiatives that tackle food insecurity while bringing communities together.

The grant scheme will support projects that help residents access nutritious food, reduce food waste, encourage volunteering and strengthen local support networks. Funding is available to a wide range of not-for-profit organisations, including charities, Community Interest Companies (CICs), Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs), community groups, and town and parish councils.

Three funding opportunities are available:

- **Small Project Grants of between £500 and £1,500** to support local community food initiatives.
Deadline: 12pm Wednesday 21st October.
- **Large Project Grants of between £1,501 and £5,000** for projects that address food insecurity and improve access to healthy food.
Deadline: 12pm Wednesday 28th October.
- **Innovation Grants of between £1,501 and £10,000** to support creative approaches and partnerships that improve access to healthy and sustainable food.
Deadline: 12pm Wednesday 28th October.

All projects will be informed of the outcome of their applications by 30th November 2026.

The funding could support a range of activities, from community food projects and food-sharing initiatives to innovative schemes that help residents access affordable, nutritious food while reducing waste.

Hannah Buckley, Head of Service for Housing, Revenues and Customer Services at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"Everyone should have access to healthy, affordable and sustainable food, and we know that local community organisations play a vital role in making that happen. Through this new £50,000 grant fund, we want to support and empower groups that are already making a difference, while encouraging new ideas and partnerships that can help tackle food insecurity across the district."*

Parish councils that work closely with local community groups may wish to share details of the funding opportunity and consider whether there are local projects that could benefit.

For full details of the grant scheme, eligibility criteria and how to apply, visit: [Healthy and Sustainable Food For All Grant 2026 | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)



Stratford District Business Networking

Stratford-on-Avon District Council is bringing together local businesses from across Stratford District for a morning of networking, knowledge-sharing and inspiration.

Here's what to expect:

- ✓ Complimentary light brunch and refreshments
- ✓ Informal networking with local businesses
- ✓ Inspirational talks from guest business speakers and an industry expert
- ✓ Opportunities to make valuable connections
- ✓ Guided venue tour (you will be surprised at what Wootton Park has on offer!)

If you're looking to grow your network, raise your profile and connect with the local business community, we'd love to see you there.

- 📅 Tuesday 29 September 2026, 10:00am – 12 noon
- 📍 Wootton Park
- 🆓 Free to attend

Secure your place today - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stratford-district-business-networking-tickets>



Solar power success at Studley Leisure Centre

Visitors to Studley Leisure Centre can now enjoy a greener, more sustainable facility following the completion of a major solar energy project. Stratford-on-Avon District Council has successfully installed 112 high-efficiency solar panels on the centre's roof, helping to generate clean, renewable electricity on site and reduce reliance on traditional energy sources.

The project marks another important step in the Council's ongoing efforts to tackle climate change and improve the sustainability of community facilities across the District. By generating its own renewable energy, the leisure centre will not only reduce its carbon footprint but also help protect against rising energy costs in the years ahead.

The installation at Studley follows the successful introduction of solar panels at Stratford Leisure Centre and Shipston Leisure Centre, with plans already in place to extend the programme to Southam Leisure Centre in 2027. Together, these projects represent a significant investment in renewable energy infrastructure that will benefit local communities for years to come.

Councillor Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"The completion of this project is another important step in our commitment to creating a more sustainable future for Stratford-on-Avon District. Generating renewable energy on site will help to reduce carbon emissions while supporting the long-term resilience of our leisure facilities. This investment demonstrates our continued commitment to practical action that benefits both residents and the environment."*

The scheme was delivered through a partnership between the District Council, leisure operator Everyone Active and specialist contractor Leisure Energy Limited.

Peggy Lee, Group Sustainability Manager at Everyone Active, said: *"We are delighted to see the project completed and generating renewable energy for the leisure centre. The installation will make a positive contribution towards reducing the centre's carbon footprint and supports both the Council's climate ambitions and Everyone Active's commitment to achieving net zero. We are proud to have worked in partnership on another successful renewable energy project."*

Melissa Marsden of Leisure Energy Limited said: *"It has been a pleasure to deliver this solar installation at Studley Leisure Centre. The system has been designed to maximise energy generation and provide reliable performance for many years to come. Projects such as this show how existing public buildings can benefit from renewable energy technology while reducing operating costs and environmental impact."*

As the District Council continues its programme of renewable energy improvements, the completion of the Studley project is another visible example of how local investment is helping to build a cleaner, more sustainable future for communities across the District.



Stratford Leisure Centre Community Open Day attracts more than 800 visitors

More than 800 people visited Stratford Leisure Centre on Saturday 5 September for a successful Community Open Day celebrating the completion of the centre's £175,000 gym refurbishment.

The event featured a range of free activities for all ages, including fitness classes, family swimming, badminton, pickleball, table tennis, Hyrox sessions, soft play, Active Antz, Ninja Tag and a roller disco.

Visitors also had the opportunity to meet Team GB sprinter and television personality Harry Aikines-Aryeetey.

The open day raised more than £500 for Everyone Active's charity partner, The Ben Kinsella Trust, through voluntary donations made when booking activities.

The event showcased the leisure centre's newly refurbished gym, which now features state-of-the-art Life Fitness equipment for cardio, resistance and functional training. The investment follows a series of recent improvements at the centre, including upgrades to the sauna and steam room, health suite, cycle studio and the addition of a new soft play facility.

Richard Bell, Area Contract Manager for Everyone Active, said: *"It was a proud moment for us to welcome the community to our new-look facility while offering a range of classes and activities following the investment. We hope this will continue to be an inclusive space where people of all ages and abilities can work toward their health and fitness goals."*

Councillor Lorraine Grocott, Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Environmental and Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder, said: *"It was fantastic to see so many residents and families come along to Stratford Leisure Centre's Community Open Day and experience everything the leisure centre has to offer."*

"The recent investment in the gym, alongside other improvements across the centre, reflects our commitment to providing modern, accessible facilities that encourage people of all ages and abilities to be active and improve their wellbeing."





Stratford-on-Avon District Council's 2026 health screening events across the District

For a second year, Stratford-on-Avon District Council has joined together with the Graham Fulford Charitable Trust (GFCT) to offer a series of health screening events for both men and women across the District.

The events enable men and women to have a number of health tests from a simple blood test, allowing them to, where necessary, seek further advice or action via their GP.

The tests on offer cost £14 each, subsidised by the District Council and are:

- For men over 40 - PSA (Prostate Screening)
- For men and women aged 18 and over - diabetes and cholesterol

The next events are taking place at:

- **Saturday 19 September** at Studley Village Hall, High Street, B80 7HJ
- **Saturday 17 October** at Stratford Leisure Centre, Bridgeway, CV37 6YX
- **Saturday 7 November** at Henley-in-Arden Memorial Hall, Station Road, B95 5JP

The events run from 10am until 2pm at each of the locations and residents are able to book at a discounted rate of £14 for each test.

Spaces are limited and need to be booked in advanced at: <https://sdc.mypsatestests.org.uk>

The first event in the District Council's 2026 health screening programme took place on Saturday 21 March at Stratford Town Trust Community Hub (Venture House), coinciding with National Screening Day (NSD), with all 140 appointments booked.

Other events have already taken place in Lighthorne Heath, Southam, Wellesbourne, Shipston and Alcester.



SAVE TIME DO IT ONLINE

Did you know you can now claim Housing Benefit online. Go to 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



COMMUNITY SAFETY NEWS



**WARWICKSHIRE
POLICE**

Helping rural residents stay safe: Free home security visits and allotment crime prevention advice

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Rural Crime Advisors (RCAs) are continuing their work to support rural communities by offering free residential crime prevention visits to residents across the District.

The initiative is designed to provide practical, tailored advice to help residents improve the security of their homes and property. The service is available to those living in rural areas across the District, excluding the towns of Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick and Leamington Spa.

Free home security assessments

During a visit, which typically lasts between one and two hours, a RCA will assess key areas of a property and provide personalised recommendations to help reduce the risk of crime.

The assessment may include:

- Perimeter security, including fencing, gates and hedging
- Gardens and outbuildings such as sheds and lock-ups
- Doors, windows and other access points
- Advice on protecting tools, valuables and equipment through security marking
- Guidance on addressing any specific vulnerabilities or concerns

If you are interested in having a crime prevention visit at your home, please contact the Rural Crime Advisors:

Rebecca Jenkins rebecca.jenkins@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Alison Packer alison.packer@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Protecting allotments and garden sheds

As summer comes to an end, the RCAs are also encouraging allotment holders and gardeners to take a fresh look at the security of their plots and sheds.

Allotments are valuable community spaces where people invest significant time, effort and money. Unfortunately, their often isolated locations can make them attractive targets for opportunistic thieves and vandals.

Common incidents include:

- Theft of tools, machinery and produce
- Damage to sheds, gates and fencing
- Vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- Arson attacks on sheds and structures

The good news is that simple security improvements can make a significant difference. Residents are encouraged to create several layers of security by:

- Using strong locks and lockable gates
- Keeping valuable tools out of sight
- Marking property with identifiable security markings
- Maintaining clear sightlines and reducing hiding places
- Working together with neighbouring plot holders to report suspicious activity
- Regularly checking sheds and outbuildings, particularly during quieter periods



Choosing trusted security products

When purchasing security equipment, residents may find it useful to look for products accredited by recognised schemes such as:

Sold Secure <https://www.soldsecure.com>

Secured by Design <https://www.securedbydesign.com>

Sold Secure independently tests security products against different levels of attack resistance, while Secured by Design is the official police security initiative promoting products and standards proven to help deter crime.



Working together to prevent crime

Crime prevention is most effective when communities work together. By improving security, staying vigilant and reporting suspicious behaviour, residents can help protect not only their own property but also the wider rural community.

Residents are also reminded to report any suspected criminal activity to the police. Together, we can help keep our rural communities safe, secure and thriving.



COMMUNITY SAFETY NEWS



Rural Crime Advisors complete heritage crime training

Stratford District Council's Rural Crime Advisors working across South Warwickshire have been recognised for completing specialist training to help protect the county's historic environment and raise awareness of heritage crime.

Alison Packer and Rebecca Jenkins were presented with certificates by Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe after successfully completing Historic England's Heritage Crime Awareness Course.



Jointly funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire and the District Council, the Rural Crime Advisors work closely with Warwickshire Police, local communities and partner organisations to support crime prevention, raise awareness and provide practical advice across rural areas.

Members of Warwickshire Police's Rural Crime Team have also completed the training, strengthening local knowledge and understanding of heritage crime across the county.

Heritage crime includes offences such as theft, vandalism, criminal damage and unauthorised metal detecting that can damage historic buildings, monuments, archaeological sites and heritage landscapes. Protecting these important assets is a key part of Warwickshire's Rural, Wildlife and Heritage Crime Partnership Strategy.

Cllr Natalie Gist, Law and Governance Portfolio Holder at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: *"Alison and Rebecca's work is greatly appreciated in our rural communities and I thank them for their continued commitment. Working with partners such as Warwickshire Police's Rural Crime Team, we can help prevent rural and heritage crime and protect residents."*

Philip Seccombe added: *"Warwickshire's historic buildings, monuments and landscapes form an important part of our county's identity. Protecting them requires strong partnerships, informed local people and organisations with the knowledge and skills to recognise risks and take action. I am delighted to recognise Alison and Rebecca's achievement, which demonstrates our commitment to protecting Warwickshire's countryside, wildlife and heritage for future generations."*

The training will help local partners identify risks, provide advice and support communities in protecting historic sites and assets. It also reflects the strong partnership approach that brings together police, local authorities, heritage organisations, landowners and local communities to help prevent crime and safeguard Warwickshire's historic environment.



Warwickshire Family Information Service (FIS)

Contact the Family Information Service (FIS) for a wide range of information relating to children and young people aged 0 - 25 including, but not limited to:

- Childcare
- Money and benefits
- Housing
- SEND
- Health and wellbeing

View FIS information online at: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis> and SEND Local Offer pages at: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send> for information and signposting to services to support the whole family. If you'd like to contact the FIS team, please call 0800 408 1558 (freephone) or email fis@warwickshire.gov.uk and a member of the team will be able to assist with your query.

To keep up to date on events, services, news, information, and support for your family:

Follow FIS on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/WarwickshireFIS>

Subscribe to the FIS newsletter <https://mailchi.mp/warwickshire/familyinfoservice>

The FIS team also offer a 1-hour discovery webinar for parents, carers, and professionals. The webinar includes the role of FIS, takes you through a guided tour of the FIS and SEND Local Offer webpages and includes information on the holiday activities and food (HAF) programme. To view future webinar dates and to book a place please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/warwickshire-county-council-31960567793>.

WARWICKSHIRE FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE

Contact us for a wide range of information relating to children and young people aged 0-25, including: childcare, money, debt and benefits, housing, SEND, health and wellbeing, and so much more.



Scan me

warwickshire.gov.uk/fis

FREEPHONE: 0800 408 1558

Email: fis@warwickshire.gov.uk



Stay up to date with the latest news to help your family at:

warwickshire.gov.uk/parentupdates

 @WarwickshireFIS



Stratford District Council meetings

All minutes, agendas and meeting dates can be viewed on the [Council's website](#), and all livestreams and recordings are available on the [Council's YouTube channel](#).

Date	Time	Meeting
Wednesday 7 October	6.00pm	Planning
Monday 5 October	10.00am	The Cabinet
Wednesday 7 October	6.00pm	Planning
Monday 12 October	2.00pm	Council
Wednesday 21 October	6.00pm	Planning
Wednesday 28 October	10.00am	Overview and Scrutiny
Monday 2 November	10.00am	The Cabinet
Tuesday 3 November	4.00pm	Climate Change Panel
Wednesday 4 November	6.00pm	Planning
Wednesday 18 November	6.00pm	Planning
Wednesday 2 December	10.00am	Overview and Scrutiny
Wednesday 2 December	6.00pm	Planning
Monday 7 December	10.00am	The Cabinet
Wednesday 9 December	10.00am	Overview and Scrutiny
Thursday 10 December	6.00pm	Joint Cabinet Committee
Monday 14 December	2.00pm	Council
Wednesday 16 December	6.00pm	Planning



Want to receive regular news and updates from your District Council directly to your email inbox?

Then sign up now to The Online View - Stratford District Newsletter: <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/communications/email-newsletter.cfm>

The end of an era... thank you Teresa!

Our Parish Champion, Councillor Stuart Keighley, was delighted to attend and speak at the recent Sambourne Parish Assembly.

The evening also provided an opportunity to recognise a significant milestone, as Teresa retired from her role as Parish Clerk after 21 years of dedicated service. Having been at the heart of the community for over two decades, Teresa has made an invaluable contribution to Parish life.

Congratulations Teresa and enjoy a well-deserved retirement!



Teresa pictured with Parish Council Chair Cllr Adam Quinney

