

Bishops Itchington, Fenny Compton and Napton Ward Annual Report from your District Councillors – 2024/2025

Another busy year throughout the Ward and the District. We have included some highlights, which we hope will be of interest to you. Further detail and information about all may be found on the District Council's website: www.stratford.gov.uk



April 2024

New Open Space Planning Guidance Adopted

In April, Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Full Council formally adopted its revised Open Space Supplementary Planning Document. Under the new policy, all public open space, as part of new developments, will now be adopted by either the local Town/Parish Council or by the District Council. This was in response to the growing amount of public open space provided with new developments and concerns raised by residents about:

- Charges levied by the private management companies appointed by the developers to maintain the public open space which are not always made transparent at the time of purchase, can change every year and are unlimited.
- The quality of the maintenance work carried out. Also, where a Parish or Town Council decides not to take ownership of public open space, the District Council would generally take ownership of the land, with responsibility for ongoing maintenance.

The option of passing maintenance responsibilities onto private management companies will no longer be included in Section 106 agreements. More information may be found here: [Open Space SPD | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

May 2024

CCTV upgrade

SDC's Cabinet approves grant funding of £200,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to carry out vital work to upgrade CCTV infrastructure, software and equipment across the District. CCTV covers Stratford and the market towns such as Southam. From April 2023 to May 2024, SDC's CCTV team assisted Warwickshire Police in stopping over 91 suspected drink and drug drivers leading to arrest and prosecution.

Community Climate Change Fund Phase 1

The successful projects from Phase 1 are announced and we were delighted to see two projects in the ward – in Napton and Shotteswell – included.

June 2024

D-Day Landings Commemoration

On 6 June there were many acts of commemoration across the District to remember the eightieth anniversary of the D-Day Landings with hundreds of beacons lit across the UK and the Commonwealth.

In 1944, Allied forces mounted the largest amphibious invasion the world had ever witnessed; Operation Overlord, D-Day, saw over 5,000 ships and landing craft set down more than 150,000 troops on five Normandy beaches in an action that would bring about the liberation of north-west Europe from Nazi occupation.

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250th Anniversary of Oxford Canal

Nigel joined environmental broadcaster Tom Heap and about 50 local residents at Napton locks to celebrate the anniversary on 15 June. An exhibition of the history of the canal assembled by a local resident was shown. James Brindley's canal winds its way through a good part of our Ward.



July 2024

General Election

A general election was held on Thursday 4 July 2024.

Public Safety - Operation Talkative

SDC supported a new policing initiative called Operation Talkative to encourage reporting of knife carrying. If you have information or concerns about someone carrying a knife, please report it to police by going to www.warwickshire.police.uk/report or call 101 and quote Operation Talkative. More information is here: [Operation Talkative Knife Crime initiative launched | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#) Natalie and Nigel attended an event promoting the Community Safety Partnership at the Avon Dassett Show (right)



Trees for Farmers

Applications opened for the free trees for farmers initiative again.

August 2024

South Warwickshire Local Plan

SDC and WDC's Joint Cabinet Committee, endorsed a study from the Advisory Group which is chaired by Nigel, on the number of dwellings to be delivered to meet the area's future housing needs in the next version of the emerging Local Plan for South Warwickshire. (Later, at the end of 2024 the government increased the requirement under the 'standard method' to a new figure of 2188 homes per year for south Warwickshire.)

September 2024

Climate Assembly

SDC holds its first Climate Assembly event to promote community engagement with action for climate and nature across the District, including schools, to provide a springboard for more action and to showcase local best practice.

Customer Access Terminal at Southam Library

The terminal is reintroduced for residents in our part of the District to enable them to resolve queries with Customer Services without the need to travel to SDC's offices.

Community Safety

SDC supports and funds new virtual reality to help educate young people on the realities of carrying a knife. The project is being rolled out in schools across the District.

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October 2024

Delivering Local Needs/Local Choice Rural Housing

The Cabinet agreed to continue the existing approach to deliver homes for local people in rural areas with the Rural Housing Enabler working with partners to enable local communities to deliver Local Needs/Local Choice rural housing schemes.



Winter Fuel Payments

SDC's Leader, Cllr Susan Juned, wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer about the Government's decision on winter fuel payments

November 2024

Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

SDC's Cabinet approved the District Council's Armed Forces Covenant Pledge and Cllr Juned attended the WCC Covenant signing ceremony. District Councillor Dom Skinner (see here at Galanos House right) is the Council's Armed Forces Champion. Dom is an RAF Reserve Officer. More information about the pledge may be found here: [Armed Forces Covenant | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)



December 2024

HS2

Nigel attended a series of meetings about the closures and diversions around Priors Hardwick and where councillors and MPs discussed and debated the condition and suitability of local roads to accept the traffic diversions proposed by HS2 and contractors.



Devolution and Local Government Review

On 16 December 2024, the government published the 'English Devolution White Paper' identifying the Government's intended approach to the devolution of powers from Westminster to more local "Strategic Authorities."

The White Paper was clear that to achieve government objectives this will also require Local Government Review. This review would result in the abolition of the remaining two-tier local government (County and District) across the country and establishing unitary government in their place (plus parish and town councils in our area).

January 2025

South Warwickshire Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation

The public consultation for the South Warwickshire Local Plan opened on 10 January. We replied to the consultation and provided our response to all parish councils within the ward. If you would like

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to see a copy of our response, please do let us know. Further information about the South Warwickshire Local Plan may be found here: www.southwarwickshire.org.uk

Launch of the Parish Forum

On Thursday 30 January the District Council launched the Parish Forum, chaired by Natalie who is the Portfolio Holder for Law & Governance. The meeting was held on Teams and sixty six Town and Parish Chairs and Clerks attended from across the District to discuss Devolution and Local Government Review, the newly created Parish Liaison Officer role at the District Council and the South Warwickshire Local Plan. The next meeting is on Thursday 26 June.

Community Climate Change Fund – Phase 2 opens

Following the success of Phase 1 of the Community Climate Change Fund, where we were delighted to see two successful projects in our ward from Napton Parish Council and Shotteswell Village Hall. The new energy saving lights at Napton sports ground (right) are reported to made good financial savings as well. Phase 2 was launched with £55,863 available for green projects.



February 2025

Council Tax

Stratford-on-Avon District Councillors set the District element of the Council Tax. The amount residents will be asked to pay for a Band D property is £169.12, 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 £3.25 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. Stratford-on-Avon remains a low-taxing authority, 18th lowest out of 164 district councils across the country in 2024/25.

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, where the team will be able to advise what help is available.

Budget

Following Full Council approval on 24 February, provision was made within the 2025/26 budget to fund a number of items. This includes the following:

- £30,000 for Women's Aid Domestic Violence project support, training, community awareness and work with partners to ensure the availability of their services within the district.
- £50,000 Trees for Parish Councils scheme.
- £50,000 for a Business Conference, to stimulate the local economy, increase networking opportunities, showcase local talent, innovation and promote education and training for local businesses.
- £80,000 to fund a screening programme in partnership with the Graham Fulford Charitable Trust (GFCT) which is focuses on prostate cancer awareness and early detection. *The dates for the screening are on the back page of your Council Tax booklet and we encourage residents to book onto a session.*
- £100,000 to support Cycle Schemes aimed at promoting sustainable transportation.

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- £250,000 to fund various projects with the aim of enhancing and improving community facilities, services, and overall infrastructure, thereby fostering a stronger and more vibrant local community.
- £520,000 for the Climate Change Fund ensuring the Council can continue its commitments to climate change for next year.
- £600,000 to be used to directly target cost-of-living hardship through selected partners.
- £2.5m for affordable and temporary housing to help reduce temporary accommodation costs.

The District Council may also introduce a second home premium from April 2026 and will be conducting a public consultation during 2025.

Parish Champions

The District Council decided to split the Parish Champion role, previously held by a single District Councillor across the District, into two posts. There will be coverage on a geographical, east and west, basis. Our parish champion for the east is Louis Adam who is the Councillor for Long Itchington and Southam North Ward. (Right, Louis in Bishops Itchington)



Ukrainian Medical Charity

On 24 February, Stratford-on-Avon District Council was presented with a certificate of merit from the Order of St Pantalaimon in Ukraine in thanks for the ongoing support given to help Ukrainian Medical Charity with the war in Ukraine. Since September 2022, the District Council offices in Stratford-upon-Avon have been used as a donation point to help Ukrainian Medical Charity (previously known as Medical Aid Ukraine). The donations received are sorted and then sent to hospitals most in need in Ukraine.

Donations for Ukrainian Medical Charity can be made at the Council offices from 9am to 5pm weekdays. Or if you are not likely to be going to Stratford, you can ask your friendly District Councillor to take it with them when they go! Medicines need to be in date; however, packaging can be missing or damaged and bandages can be out of date.

March 2025

South Warwickshire Local Plan

The consultation for the South Warwickshire Local Plan closed on 7 March 2025. A total of 19,367 representations via the portal from 4,682 respondents. A further 1,402 submissions were received via email or letter, with a total of 6,084 responses received.

Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils would like to thank residents, Parish Councils, landowners, businesses, developers and agents for taking the time to respond to the consultation. The team will be reviewing the responses in detail to help inform the next stage of the South Warwickshire Local Plan. The team held several 'drop in' sessions including one at Southam Library (right) where Nigel was on hand to assist.

A consultation summary statement will also be prepared later on in the year which will provide more information.



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Devolution and Local Government Review

On Monday 17 March Full Council agreed to support the District Council's interim plan for local government reorganisation in Warwickshire. Two possible options are being considered, as part of the interim plan:

- **A single unitary council for Warwickshire**
- **Two unitary Councils** (one for North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, and Rugby Boroughs; another for Warwick and Stratford Districts).

Cllr Susan Juned, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District said: "The Government has made it clear it wishes to see the end of two-tier working in Local Government. This will see the end of district and borough councils and county councils. In their place will be new unitary councils. This interim plan has been agreed by all five District and Borough Councils in Warwickshire as a starting place for the direction we want to take. There is a clear preference for a north and south unitary option, but we have to build the data and vision for the case we will put in our final submission in November." More work will be done to identify which structure will feature in the proposal submitted by 28 November 2025.

Thank you to all residents for their help, support and kindness over the past year. Please feel free to contact us at any time if we may be of assistance to you.

Best wishes

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