

Butlers Marston Parish Council 24th March 2021 County Councillor's Report

Budget 2021/22

On 8th February the Council set the budget for 2021/22. This time last year the Council set a budget which put us in a financially secure position, had good reserves and austerity was a word from the past. Now that seems a life-time away and the Warwickshire has changed. On 25th March 2020 the crisis had taken hold and we went into lockdown most of us expecting that the problem would be over in 4 – 5 months. The government has helpfully pumped significant amounts of money into Warwickshire to support the economy and into WCC in the form of Covid emergency funds. This support was both vital and welcome but despite the support of central government our overall income has dropped.

As a result, extra funding for Adult Social Care provision will be through a 3% precept on our Council Tax over two years. We have elected to take 1% in 21/22 and 2% in the following year. This will be on top of the 1.99% already budgeted for in last year's MTFS. So, for the year 21/22 we intend to increase the Council Tax by 2.99% in total which represents an increase of 86p per week on an average Band D property.

One word describes this Budget – Recovery. We are confident of our approach which will mean that Warwickshire's communities and economy will be able to recover more quickly. Here are some of the major items we are funding in the budget:-

1. £9.1m into our Children's Social Care Services;
2. £8.2 million to protect the Elderly and Vulnerable;
3. £3.8 million to continue support for children with disabilities;
4. £1.5 million into Home to School Transport;
5. £1.3 million to offset the lower interest return on our investments

We have a plan for an even better Warwickshire in the future. This includes:

1. Leading the COVID recovery across Warwickshire – Distributing millions of pounds across Warwickshire in grant funding to hundreds of local businesses.
2. Protecting Warwickshire's most vulnerable residents – Throughout the pandemic the Conservative-led County Council has protected and supported our most vulnerable residents.
3. Giving our children the best start in life – By working closely with Warwickshire's nurseries and schools.
4. Building safe, vibrant, local communities throughout Warwickshire – The last year has been tough for everyone but local communities have come together to support each other.
5. Millions more in funding for Warwickshire's vital infrastructure – We are investing in our essential services to ensure Warwickshire remains the best place to live and work.
6. Facing the challenge of climate change – Warwickshire Conservatives are committed to helping make our county a greener and more environmentally friendly place to live, work and raise a family.

After a lengthy debate the Conservative proposal for the next year was passed by a majority of 35. This proposed that the increase next year should be set at 2.99% for the Warwickshire County Council budget allocation

Parish Council Guidance

The pre-election period for the 2021 Council Elections in May. Council elections commence on 19th March 2021 and will end at the close of Poll on 6th May 2021. This period is known as being in Purdah.

During this period the County Council will continue to operate on a business as usual basis but will avoid matters which are potentially politically contentious. This means that the number of formal public meetings will be kept to a minimum necessary for the County Council to fulfil its functions. The County Council will meet on 16th March 2021 when a full council meeting will be held.

School Funding

Great News for Kineton High School

Three of Warwickshire's Secondary Schools are celebrating after being successful in their bids as part of the Government's School Rebuilding Programme.

Kineton High, Southam College and Hartshill School will all undergo major rebuild and development at their sites. An investment of around £60million has been secured for these three schools via this programme.

The work will be funded and project-managed by the Department of Education. Warwickshire County Council is facilitating the delivery of the rebuilds, which will enable expected progress at each school to be seen within the next 12 months.

Covid-19 Update 19th March 2021

The significant increases in testing for children with the return of schools has resulted in an increase in our infection rates, which is disappointing but not unexpected. This clearly demonstrates that we must all remain vigilant in spite of the huge success of the vaccine rollout. The positive news is that hospital numbers have decreased significantly so the vaccine is having a very welcome impact in terms of the seriousness of disease amongst cases.

The figures over the last seven days are up to 75/100,000 from 45 last week, but the over 60's rate is down to 34/100,000 (48 last week) (with 14 cases over the last seven days) – which when compared to other divisions in Warwickshire for all ages is Nuneaton & Bedworth 40/100,000, North Warwickshire 65/100,000, Warwick 12/100,000 and Rugby 15/100,000. So Stratford area now has the highest case rates across the county and according to the Director of Public Health for Warwickshire this is due to spikes in a school plus an outbreak at a large car dealership.

Whilst the schools are doing a great job to keep pupils in bubbles during the school day, a key issue which is difficult to manage is after school as pupils leave school and mingle with their friends etc. The messages coming from Public Health Warwickshire (PHW) is therefore for families and those in the workplace to get tested twice a week, even if you have been vaccinated.

Home testing kits for those without displaying symptoms are being distributed to schools for pupils, can be ordered online or by calling 119 and PHW hopes these will soon be available for collection for residents from the lateral flow testing centre in Stratford and Warwick. The home testing service is still available to everyone with COVID-19 symptoms, and can still be accessed through the [home testing online portal](#).

On a more positive note, the situation regarding SWFT Hospital Beds continues to improve and there are now 6 (17) confirmed cases of COVID-19 and there is 1 (4) patient in ICU (figures in brackets are from 13 March). Capacity levels have slightly increased with 81 unoccupied general and acute beds but the occupancy levels are now 79% with an increase of non-Covid patients for elective surgery etc.

Sadly, the cumulative deaths across Stratford District have increased again by three over the last week and now number 136 from the start of this second wave (28th August 2020) 37 occurring in care homes, 88 in hospital, one in a hospice and nine at home and one in a communal establishment, out of a total of 819 all cause deaths in the district for this new second wave period.

The cumulative total of deaths across Warwickshire for Wave 2 has now increased to 634 from 620 last week within a total of 3405 all cause deaths. The cumulative total of Covid-19 deaths in Stratford district is 304 since the start of the pandemic and in Warwickshire 1234.

The locally led Lateral Flow Testing facility for people WITHOUT coronavirus symptoms in Stratford area has now carried out 20,727 tests with 79 positive results.

County Elections 6th May 2021

I am sad to say that after 22 years' service at both County and District Councils, I will not be standing for re-election. As you are aware I am still undergoing chemotherapy treatment for the foreseeable future and not enjoying the best of health.

I have much enjoyed working with your Parish Council and send my best wishes for the future to all residents. I will not be joining you at your meeting for which I apologise but should you have any queries or issues that I can help you with please do not hesitate to contact me by email and I will reply as soon as I am able.

Cllr Chris Williams

Member for Kineton and Red Horse Division

chriswilliams@warwickshire.gov.uk

21.03.21.

District Councillors report

Covid-19

Over the last two weeks the rates in Stratford have increased and then appear to have levelled off again. The cases by age shows that the increase relates to those aged under 60. Indeed, we have had several cases in schools including in Henley and Stratford.

The current 7-day rate per 100,000 is 68.4, which is the second highest in the County behind Rugby at 92.7.

Funding for three new secondary schools

3 of Warwickshire's Secondary Schools are celebrating after being successful in their bids as part of the Government's School Rebuilding Programme.

Kineton High, Southam College & Hartshill School will all undergo major rebuild & development. Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/1783/warwickshire-county-council-celebrates-securing-funding-for-three-new-secondary-schools>

Voting safely at this year's elections

On Thursday 6 May 2021 residents in Stratford-on-Avon District will go to the polls to have their say on who represents them at **Warwickshire County Council (WCC)** and the **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)**.

While County Council and PCC elections are not until May, we are already making plans to help you stay safe while casting your vote.

There are several ways to have your say in the local elections in May – you can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote. We are thinking about these elections now so that, however you choose to cast your vote in May, you can do so safely. We are putting arrangements in place to help you stay safe at the polling station; you can expect many of the measures you have become used to in shops and banks over recent months, such as hand sanitiser, floor markings and face masks. But you also have the option to apply to vote by post or by proxy.

Butlers Marston and Combroke will also be voting at the Polling Station in Kineton for this election.

The choice on how to vote at May's elections is yours – you can have your say in person, by post or by proxy.

If you are thinking about voting by post, you can apply now. This will make sure your application is processed early, and your postal vote can be sent to you more quickly. It is easy to apply and you can find out how by visiting the Electoral Commission website.

"You need to be registered to vote in order to have a say at the elections – the easiest way to register is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote"

For more information please visit: www.stratford.gov.uk/elections/

Council Tax level for Stratford District.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on our income as a Council and increased our costs as we dealt with it. Over the five years of our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) the total effect is about £7.5 million. Despite this SDC have taken steps to ensure that they have produced a sustainable (MTFS). One of the key issues is that they have only received a government funding settlement for a single year for the third year running. This makes it difficult to plan with any certainty.

The amount residents will be asked to pay for a band D property is £149.12, an increase of £5.

All the services provided by the District Council cost £2.87 a week for a Band D household for 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 2021/22 for each of the valuation bands is:

A	£99.41
B	£115.98
C	£132.55
D	£149.12
E	£182.26
F	£215.40
G	£248.53
H	£298.24

Although the collecting agent for Council Tax, the District Council **only receives 7.5% of Council Tax paid by residents** – Warwickshire County Council receives 76.6%, the Police 12.6% and Towns/Parishes 3.3%.

The District Council only retains 7.5p of every £1 paid in Council Tax to provide services.

Broadband

From David Platts Head of IT

Stratford District Council has been applying pressure on Government and DCMS regarding the provision of Broadband Connectivity for Rural areas.

The Government have issued this consultation document.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-broadband-for-very-hard-to-reach-premises>

There is a survey for groups / business / residents / individuals to complete stating their own particular issues.

https://dcms.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bEMHlvftH6oiYjc

I have submitted one for SDC stating our ongoing position, but it would be really helpful if you could share with parish / town councils + community groups or individual business or homes who might want to state their own case.

If you have any groups who would like some assistance completing the survey – its only about 6 questions – I would be happy to help them – please let them have my email address.

david.platts@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Warwickshire Carers

The NHS in Coventry and Warwickshire is calling for carers in receipt of Carers Allowance to book their coronavirus vaccination.

These eligible people can book their vaccination via the national booking website. You can do this by visiting [NHS – Book or manage your coronavirus vaccination](#) or by calling 119 free of charge, anytime between 7am and 11pm – seven days a week.

People who are registered as carers with their GP will be called for a vaccination by their local GP led vaccination centre. This is a phased approach to the vaccination process. It must be stressed that if you are caring for someone and do not receive a Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) payment currently, please be patient, your GP or the NHS will be in contact with you in due course

Anyone who does provide a caring responsibility for a friend, neighbour or family members is being reminded that they can register their caring status with the Carers Trust (Heart of England) or with their GP.

If you are a young carer under 18 years you can also access for support with [Warwickshire Young Carers](#).