



Wootton Wawen Ward District Cllr. Ian Shenton

Proud to represent Bearley, Mappleborough Green, Ullenhall, Wootton Wawen

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District Councillor's report for Bearley Parish Council 8th September 2025

If you need to contact me, please email me as I aim to respond within 24 hours otherwise leave a message on my mobile phone. I am here to help you.

District Issues - There are very few meetings held during the months of July and August at District level as officers, staff and councillors are on annual leave. During July I attended just two meetings and in August I had one meeting so news is always a little thin at these times so my report for this month is limited but it does give me the chance to highlight some other news and initiatives.

Local Government Review (aka Unitary Councils) - An interesting report appeared in The Times last week where the group that advised the Government that savings could be made by removing a tier of local government i.e. combining district councils with county councils into one unitary council, have now revised their position on this and are now saying that in many cases (read all cases) there will be no savings and it is more likely that the cost to the taxpayer will be substantial.

I have said from the very start that the advice given to the Government was flawed and that it was unlikely that there would be any savings resulting from this process. In addition, democracy is reduced.

I am all for streamlining and forcing councils to be more efficient as many appear to be or are inefficient with staff only working in the office for one day a week or less (the rest of the time working from home) and receiving inflated salaries. Planning and planning enforcement can be tortuous for residents to navigate with little help or advice from the council itself and having to rely on employing expensive architects or solicitors to represent them for even the simplest application.

An article in the Local Government Chronicle said this about the resignation of Angela Rayner and Local Government Review: -

"Of course, she will be replaced and the bill will continue its passage through parliament, but her successor Steve Reed as community's secretary is unlikely to have the sheer political clout of Ms Rayner that may be needed to drive through what could be politically contentious LGR decisions in the coming years.

He won't be simultaneously holding the position of deputy prime minister, depriving him of the extra institutional clout Rayner had to try to drive the devolution agenda through other government departments, which will be where its true success or failure will be decided.

The Government have got this seriously wrong and need to rethink the whole LGR issue, which is unlikely. It is likely that the shadow elections will therefore go ahead and take place in May 2027 with the new unitary council(s) incepted (up and running) on 1st April 2028.

You are invited to share your views in our questionnaire which is available from 7 August to 14 September.

Councillors will use this information to help them to make their final decision. It is being run by Opinion Research Services (ORS) online at www.shapingourcouncils.co.uk and paper versions can be collected from district and borough council offices.

For Stratford-on-Avon District residents, copies will be available from Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6HX.

Background information -What is Local Government Reorganisation?

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is the process in which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured. The [English Devolution White Paper](#) also sets out that new, larger unitary authorities will replace district, borough and county councils.



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Planning news – This has implications for Stratford generally as developers could find it easier to build on green belt land going forward. **I expressed my view last December and at the last parish council meeting at Bearley, that the new NPPF calculations would have severe implications but they were dismissed at the time by SDC as unlikely to impact. How wrong could they be!** Any actions taken now by SDC will be against future applications not current permissions so any remedy suggested below will not happen overnight and will have no effect for months, leaving developers an opportunity to put forward speculative applications.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has expressed its disappointment following the outcome of a recent planning appeal which has granted outline permission for up to 130 homes on land adjacent to Chutneys, Bordon Hill, Stratford-upon-Avon. The appeal, brought by Gladman Developments Ltd, was allowed by the Planning Inspectorate despite the Council's strong opposition on grounds of landscape impact, heritage concerns, and conflict with local planning policies.

[The decision](#), issued on 3 September 2025, reflects the growing pressure on local authorities to approve housing developments owing to significant increases in housing numbers. In particular, the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced in December 2024 has significantly altered how housing land supply is calculated with Stratford-on-Avon District's number increasing by some 52%.

Councillor George Cowcher, Deputy Leader and Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder said: "We are extremely disappointed by this decision. It undermines our local planning policies and the wishes of our communities. The District Council has a strong record in housing supply and in the past 5 years we have consistently exceeded our housing building targets, despite this, the significant increases in centrally imposed housing targets have meant that we have been unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

"The Inspector's ruling shows how the Government is determined to push through housing applications, even when they conflict with environmental and cultural protections."

The District Council is now investigating urgent steps to address the deficit and regain control over local planning decisions. As well as continuing to progress the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) to ensure the Council has an up-to-date Local Plan, such steps could include:

- Exploring the use of empty homes across the district to contribute to housing supply.
- Evaluating policy changes to require developers to begin construction within 12-18 months of receiving planning permission, to discourage land banking and ensure timely delivery.

Cllr Cowcher continued: "We are doing everything within our control to protect our communities from a forest of speculative planning applications. We want to ensure that development happens in the right places, with the right infrastructure, and in line with our local vision. The Council remains committed to sustainable development and will continue to work with residents, parish councils, and stakeholders to shape the future of the district.

"Proper planning is not just about building homes; it's about building and strengthening communities by ensuring that new homes are provided alongside jobs, infrastructure and open spaces and this can only be achieved through a plan-led approach."

Rural England Prosperity Fund

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) is now open to support capital projects in Stratford-on-Avon District!

If you're a rural business looking to grow, diversify, or invest in your future, this could be the perfect opportunity. Funding is available for projects in farm diversification, visitor economy, food and drink, local arts, cultural heritage and creative sectors.

Applications close 11:59pm, Monday 15 September 2025 - don't miss out

Virtual Reality Knife Crime Programme- Stratford-on-Avon District Council is promoting an innovative virtual reality which continues to be delivered across the district. In partnership with Warwickshire County Council, the initiative is offered to schools, colleges and youth organisations and it has been running since last year.



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In Stratford-on-Avon District, the project has been offered to all high schools and delivered by the Council's Community Safety officer in over 7 schools and colleges. The success of the project is evidenced through positive feedback from those involved.

One student from a secondary school said: "This VR project will definitely change young people's way of thinking about carrying and prevent them from it."

The programme is available for delivery for free in all schools, youth organisations and clubs within Warwickshire. If you are based in Stratford-on-Avon District and would like to find out more, please email alyssa.davies@stratford-dc.gov.uk.

More health screening events added for Stratford-on-Avon District Council residents

- I have already taken advantage of this during May and I was one of those mentioned below who was referred to my GP for further prostate tests so please get your prostate, diabetes and cholesterol levels checked through this initiative.

Since May, Stratford-on-Avon District Council has been working together with the Graham Fulford Charitable Trust (GFCT) offering a series of health screening events for both men and women across the district. The events, for Stratford-on-Avon District residents, 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

So far, 636 tests have been carried out at the events in Stratford, Studley, Southam and Alcester. A total of 373 men have taken part in the prostate cancer screening programme, with 83 referred for further tests via their GP. The screenings for diabetes and cholesterol have also yielded important results, with 14% and 75% of participants respectively identified as having levels outside the normal range and advised to follow up with their GP.

The events are continuing to take place with venues being added in Shipston and Henley-in-Arden.

The next events are taking place at:

- Saturday 13 September at Stratford Leisure Centre
- Saturday 11 October at Shipston Scout Hut, New Street, Shipston-on-Stour, CV36 4EW
- Saturday 22 November at Henley-in-Arden Memorial Hall, Station Road, Henley in Arden, B95 5JP

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

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

For more information please visit <https://sdc.mypsatests.org.uk> or call 01926 419959 or email info@myhealthtests.org.uk

Information is also available on the District Council's website: [PSA Health Screening Events | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

Affordable Housing Standing Advice Note (SAN) - The SAN is designed to serve as a comprehensive information source for stakeholders involved in affordable housing provision. While not a policy document, the SAN brings together existing national and local policy and practice, offering clear guidance on a wide range of topics related to affordable housing.

The SAN aims to:

- Provide practical advice to applicants and developers on affordable housing requirements and best practices.



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- Help local communities and residents understand the role of affordable housing in development schemes.
- Signpost additional resources and information to support informed decision-making.

The SAN covers key areas including tenure preferences, delivery mechanisms, and future management of affordable housing. It also addresses specialised housing schemes overseen by Warwickshire County Council.

Recognising the evolving strategic landscape, the SAN is intended to be a 'living document' - one that can be updated regularly to reflect changes in policy and operational priorities.

The District Council's current Housing Strategy runs until 2026, and while a new strategy is yet to be developed, the SAN provides a timely and practical signal of the Council's ongoing commitment to affordable housing delivery.

For more information and to view the [Affordable Housing Standing Advice Note](#), please visit: [Advice for Housing Developers | Stratford-on-Avon District Council](#)

Taxi driver licensed by Stratford-on-Avon District Council suspended for a period of 12 weeks - by the Council's Licensing Panel on 23rd July 2025, for failing to report three driving convictions to the local authority.

The driver, a 65-year-old from Stratford-upon-Avon, had failed to inform the licensing authority of these convictions, which totalled nine penalty points on his licence. The existence of these penalty points was only revealed as part of his application to renew his Dual Driver's licence. The points had been incurred between the period of April 2023 to March 2025.

The Council's Policy and Conditions for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers state that 'the proprietor of a licensed vehicle should notify the Council in writing of any conviction or caution recorded against him or of any penalty points incurred within 7 days of such a conviction being imposed.'

The driver was also requested to provide a DVLA share code to the licensing department every 3 months for the duration of the next 18 months, so that his driving licence can be checked for penalty points that may have accrued.

The decision can be appealed to the Magistrate's Court, and any such appeal must be brought within 21 days from the date on which the notice of the decision is served. However, the driver has chosen not to appeal, and the suspension has commenced.

Food Waste – Just a reminder



Line your food caddy your own way!

All our food waste gets processed at Severn Trent Green Power's Coleshill Anaerobic Digestion Plant. At this facility, they remove all types of food liners - plastic or biodegradable, before processing the food waste. So, you can use ANY bag to line your caddy!

Funding Opportunities

Community Climate Change and Nature Fund Round Three is open for applications! - In April this year, Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Cabinet approved a further £150,000 to be allocated from the Climate Change Reserve to the Community Climate and Nature Fund (CCNF), for the next round of funding.

The fund will provide opportunities for the following groups to apply for grant funding:

- Town and parish councils
- Properly constituted community and charity groups
- Sports clubs

To apply, organisations must be operating within the Stratford-on-Avon District area.



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The fund is now open for applications!

Following feedback from the last two rounds, there will be no deadline for applications. Instead, the fund will remain open for a year, meaning applicants can submit their applications at any point until April 2026.

If you have any queries, please get in contact with us via email: climate.emergency@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Don't lose your vote - residents in Stratford-on-Avon District urged to check voter registration details.

ALCESTER POLICE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

Warwickshire
Connected



Don't be embarrassed If you did fall victim to a fraud or scam, do not feel ashamed, or think that you were to blame in any way. Victims of scams are just like victims of any crime – they have been targeted by criminals and bear no culpability for the crime.

Don't become a victim to Distraction Burglary, Fraud and Scams, protect yourself, your safe space and your personal details.

STOP, THINK AND VERIFY.

ALWAYS REMEMBER.....

- NEVER give out your personal details or financial details over the phone, online or in person.
- NEVER press any keys on a phone keypad if you are prompted to do so by an unknown caller who pretends to impersonate a Banker, Police Officer, Royal Mail Worker etc.
- NEVER feel pressured to engage in a conversation with someone who is suspicious on the phone or on your doorstep.
- NEVER let anyone into your home, don't answer the door if you do not recognise them.
- NEVER open emails which contain links to prizes or competitions.
- NEVER respond to emails which suggest that you owe money on outstanding bills from companies you have never heard of.
- NEVER respond to texts which are asking for help from a family member who is in need of money. This is a scam.
- ALWAYS THINK BEFORE YOU ACT.

If you are a daily carer for a vulnerable person remember you can do simple things as listed below to protect them:

- Remind them not to open the door to anyone they don't recognise.
- Place No cold caller card/ No door knockers card on their window or door.
- Write down any important numbers for them clearly in big writing, numbers to ring to get help.
- Remind them not to share their details to an unknown person on the phone.
- If they have a phone, block any suspicious numbers.

Below are important numbers of organisations you can contact to get further help and support.

ActionFraud
National Fraud & Cyber Crime Reporting Centre
0300 123 2040
101 to report incident 08 08 16



999 emergency
89 111

VS VICTIM SUPPORT



02476 231 999



01926 412052

Remember you can always ask for advice from your local Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Alcester.snt@warwickshire.police.uk (Alcester North)
AlcesterSouth.SNT@warwickshire.police.uk (Alcester)