

OXHILL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD ON FRIDAY 30TH MAY 2025
IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30PM

Present: Cllr Stuart, Cllr Rivers Fletcher and Cllr Robertson

Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and four villagers

Welcome and Apologies

Cllr Stuart welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from County Cllr Chris Mills and District Cllr Malcolm Littlewood.

To receive a report from the Parish Council

Cllr Stuart read the following report.

This year has been another busy year for the Parish Council. Speeding remains a concern in the village and is still very much on the Parish Councils radar in the safe hands of Councillor Rivers- Fletcher. The issues with the sewer across the Manor fields and consequent pollution of the fields has been a major factor this year. Councillor Robertson has worked with the landowner, his agent and Severn Trent, attending meetings, writing letters and liaising on various matters. Work to rectify the issues have been carried out by Severn Trent and the village saw tankers working from the pumping station to the treatment plant during wet periods. Only heavy rain in the future will test whether further work is needed to solve the problem.

Other areas of work have included continuing to support the footpath group keeping the local footpaths open and easy to access, with a replacement bridge to Nolands Road and more sawdust being spread in muddy areas along the footpath by the Church. Thank you to Councillor Chris Mills for providing the finances and supporting the project to replace the footbridge and to Councillor Conolly for his persistence in getting this project over the finishing line. Reported damaged or missing road signs, potholes and subsidence on the parish's roads alongside other issues have also featured.

The Parish Council has supported the local community again this year providing donations to Oxhill Village Hall for the carpark refurbishment, Shipston First responders, Shipston Nursing Home and the Community Choir.

The Parish Council has continued to provide the Community Website and has been able to re-direct several history queries to people who can help, and assisting with finding lost relatives. The website provides a platform for local information, alongside the Oxhill News which is co-ordinated by the brilliant editorial team.

The Parish Council provided defibrillator training for the village and was able to accommodate the majority of those interested across the two sessions, totalling approximately 40 people who are now confident to use the defibrillator if needed. Alongside this, the Parish Council continues to fund the defibrillator making sure that it passes its health and safety checks and that is in good working order.

I would like to thank my fellow Parish Councillors this year who have given their time to the Community and provide a strong team. Also, those who have decided to move on, I would like to welcome the new members to the team and hope that they enjoy their time on the Parish Council.

I would also like to thank our dedicated Parish Clerk who does a fantastic job keeping us all in check and finding information about some of the strange and wonderful topics that arise for time to time. I would also like to thank our District Councillor and our Ward member for their continued support and for keeping us up to date with news from Stratford District and beyond.

Presentation of unaudited accounts for year ending 31st March 2025

The accounts were presented. Income was £12,155.00 and expenditure £7922.60. This leaves an end of year balance of £34,894.00. Part of the reserves is being held in a high savings account. It was agreed by a previous Parish Council that money be held to one side to purchase a village asset if it becomes available. The reserves would pay for the purchase with monetary support from the village and future maintenance.

To receive a report from the County and District Councillors

County Council report

The following report was received from Cllr Chris Mills.

2024/25 has been a challenging year for the majority of Councils across the UK with a few going into bankruptcy, but this is not the case for Warwickshire County Council. With good financial management we have been able to increase our investments in key areas to protect our vulnerable people in Warwickshire. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy includes significant investment over the next five years in key areas such as support for vulnerable adults and elderly citizens.

Adult Social Care supports over 8,000 Warwickshire residents with over 5,700 of them supported to remain in their own homes. Warwickshire County Council will continue to support our most vulnerable residents across the County.

We have also invested in Child's Social Care Services including home-to-school transport particularly for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). 70% of the Warwickshire County Council's budget is allocated to Social Care, the remaining 30% is earmarked for Warwickshire County Council's other services, which include maintaining our highways.

2024 has been another successful year for the Children & Families Service. Warwickshire was successful in its application to the Department of Education to join Wave 2 of the Families First for Children Path Finder Programme. This has resulted in Warwickshire County Council to be at the forefront of this once-in-a-lifetime reform to Children's Social Care. Our main focus over the following year will be to continue the increase of the number of children receiving Early Help Support.

Warwickshire County Council will continue to support our most vulnerable residents across the County. To enable us to help protect our vulnerable residents has come at a cost to our residents resulting in an increase to the council tax. The council tax increase was capped at the Governments national limit of 4.99% from April 2025. This resulted in an extra £1.67 per week on Band D property. Anyone struggling to pay their Council Tax is encouraged to contact their local District or Borough Council to explore potential discounts or exemptions.

Investment

The Coventry and Warwickshire area attracted a total of 54 foreign investment projects. These projects resulted in the creation and safeguarding of 2,717 jobs which goes to show that Warwickshire is a good place to invest in.

Unitary Authority

Following the Government's publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16 December 2024 regarding the implementation of a Unitary Authority, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution wrote to the leaders of the six councils in Warwickshire to invite them to develop a joint submission proposing local government reorganisation in the county. This invitation set out guidance for the development of any proposals and the criteria against which proposals will be assessed, along with a timeline for this work to be completed. An interim plan was required by 21 March 2025, with full proposals submitted to Government by 28 November 2025. Should the proposals for Unitary Authority be accepted, it will eventually result in the dismissal of all District and Borough Councils, bringing all Councils under one umbrella. There is a lot to do and therefore, a decision for a Unitary Authority may not be until 2027/28. ***There is no Public Consultation.***

Summary

Warwickshire County Council is in a relatively good financial situation which enables us to make sure Social Care a priority for our most vulnerable residents in Warwickshire.

What is Devolution?

In England, devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government. It is important because it ensures that decisions are made closer to local people, communities and businesses.

Through the white paper the Government aims to establish [devolution deals](#) for all areas in England.

In March 2024 Warwickshire County Council become one of only four councils to secure a Level 2 Devolution Deal (the Deal). The Deal included the transfer of three key sets of functions and funds:

- responsibility of allocating Adult Skills Fund delivering 19+ further education and skills provision from August 2026 onwards;
- planning and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from April 2025 onwards; and
- devolution of Homes England compulsory land assembly/purchase powers to be concurrently held with and exercisable by Homes England.

What is LGR?

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is the process in which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured. The Government has set out plans to move away from the current two-tier system of district and county councils in England. This is relevant to Warwickshire County Council and the five District and Borough councils in the county (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Stratford District Council, and Warwick District Council).

The Government has indicated that for most areas this will mean creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more, but there may be exceptions to ensure new structures make sense for an area, including for devolution, and decisions will be on a case-by-case basis.

What are the various layers or tiers of local government?

In Warwickshire, democratic representation and responsibilities for delivering services are split across a range of councils. These are sometimes referred to as tiers of local government.

1. Parish and town councils

The first tier is that of parish and town councils. These councils may maintain local amenities such as recreational areas, footpaths and cemeteries, organise events or operate public conveniences. Parts of Warwickshire, but not all, are covered by this tier.

2. District/ borough councils

The second tier is that of district/borough councils. These organisations deliver services such as housing, environmental health, planning, waste collection, licensing and elections.

Warwickshire has five district/borough councils, which collectively cover the whole county. They are Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Rugby Borough Council, Stratford District Council, and Warwick District Council.

3. County councils

The third tier is that of county councils. These organisations deliver services such as adults and children's services, highways and transport, waste disposal, libraries, public health, fire and rescue and trading standards. Warwickshire County Council covers all of Warwickshire.

4. Combined or strategic authorities

The fourth tier is that of combined authorities. A combined – or strategic – authority is a legal body that enables a group of two or more councils to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries.

They cover issues that require strategic oversight of the entire region and have responsibilities, and funding, to deliver economic development, strategic planning and transport, adult education, local growth plans and other functions.

In mayoral strategic authorities, mayors will have significant powers over housing and planning, including the ability to develop and propose the spatial development strategy for their areas, working alongside other members of the strategic authority.

Warwickshire County Council is currently a non-constituent member of the West Midlands Combined

District Council Report

The following report was received from Cllr Malcolm Littlewood.

The last 12 months has seen some very significant changes in terms of service delivery and local government.

Stratford on Avon District Council is responsible for the following services.

- Social Housing
- Planning Applications
- Council Tax Collection on behalf of Warwickshire County Council
- Waste Collection
- Environmental Health
- Leisure Facilities
- Parks & Open Spaces
- Local Economic Development.

SDC owns a very small number of dwellings which are mainly used to reduce the cost of placing homeless families into B&B accommodation, but the Council works closely with the Housing Associations in order to place families into permanent rented accommodation as quickly as possible. Note that SDC does not have any statutory powers to force Housing Associations to house anybody but does work in close cooperation and provides lists of families on a waiting list through Home Choice Plus.

In addition to Planning & Building Control, SDC's planning policies require a developer to include a mix of homes of varying sizes. Where developers decline to provide Social Housing mix on their sites SDC secures funding for Social Housing from developers through Section (S)106 contributions.

SDC is responsible for waste collection but not waste management which is the responsibility of the County Council. SDC do however own a share in a recycling company based in Coventry.

This handles all of the District's recycled waste and receives a return on the joint investment with several other authorities through the sale of the processed material.

Local Government Reform and Devolution

Under this Government's Local Government Reform described in the English Devolution White Paper (December 2024), the five District and Borough Councils will be merged with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) by the target date of 2028/29. This should create a single "Unitary Authority" which will assume the above responsibilities along with those of WCC. The consequences for SDC are that this tier of Local Government will be abolished, and a new Unitary Authority will replace both the County Council as well as District and Borough Councils, and it is possible that it will be necessary to join more than one Local Authority with parts of Warwickshire; Worcestershire for example is one option, as a new Unitary Authority. The Government has required all authorities to propose a mutually agreed plan which may come into being by 2028/29. Much has to be worked through, and nothing is either set or fully explored at this stage. If agreement across the six Warwickshire authorities cannot be achieved, the White Paper suggests that a plan will be imposed. A working Group has been set up at SDC to explore the options, and I am a member of that group. I will try to keep you all informed as far as I am able.

SWLP

A recent review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has created a need for the current Planning Core Strategy to be reviewed and replaced before 2031. Consultations have been carried out and responses being assessed with a view to report findings this summer. This has required a rework and update of the current Core Strategy. The new document is called the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP).

The South Warwickshire Local Plan is now at Regulation 18 and in consultation. The consultation period ended on the 7th March. Responses are being evaluated.

The SWLP Spatial Plan

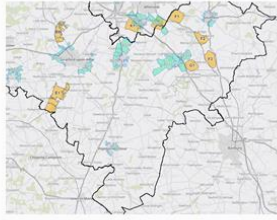
Local Strategic Growth (SG) Locations.

Locality:

- SG13 Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath
- SG14 East of Gaydon
- SG15 North of Wellesbourne
- SG16 South of Wellesbourne
- SG17 Shipston on Stour

Potential New Settlements:

- E1 Long Marston Airfield
- G1 Land West of Kingscote



SWLP

Acceptable or Inappropriate Development?

- Climate Change & Pollution.** Is this a sustainable site remote from services and retail in open countryside along rural roads? Is the site located remote from employment centres and would increase traffic volumes along that route contrary to Climate Change Net Zero Policies.
- Flood Risk.** Is the location regularly flooded regardless of the out of date current designation. Development means additional hard standing and roofing will increase the rate of Surface Water Run Off (SWRO) which in turn will increase the downstream risk of flooding.
- Biodiversity, Flora, Fauna and Geodiversity.** Is this proposed development in Open Countryside and would it impact severely nature and the wild life of the site and beyond it due to increased vehicular and human activity?
- Landscape.** Is the site in open countryside. Would any excessive domestic development cause harm to the landscape and the character of the area? Would the development initiate coalescence of communities and reduce the feeling of wellbeing for those who already reside in the location?
- Cultural Heritage and assets.** Will the proposed development result in adverse effects on heritage sites and assets?
- Natural Resources.** Will the proposed development result in adverse impacts of natural resources limiting access to sand and gravel deposits for example?
- Waste.** Mixed development will increase the volume of waste. Can services cope?
- Housing.** How housing stock is needed. What is the local need and is this being prioritised?
- Impact on human health and wellbeing.** Is Healthcare going to be overwhelmed by the proposals?
- Accessibility.** Is accessibility to shops is very restricted? How far would it be to walk to retail services?
- Education.** What local capacity in local schools is there? How far will pupils and students need to travel for primary and secondary education?
- Economy.** How far will people need to travel for work? Road capacity? Pollution?

Write your comments in an email and send to: www.swlp@stratford-dc.gov.uk
Complete the survey at: <https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/>

Your Parish may, or may not be earmarked for development or have potential developments earmarked close to you. The issue as I see it is that the proposals to substantially increase the residential populations will impact on already struggling public services and the general infrastructure of South Warwickshire. The Government's new instruction on calculating Housing Need has increased the annual house building target in the district by 104%, i.e. doubling it.

Open Forum

A villager spoke about the South Warwickshire Local Plan and green living/sustainability which are not mentioned. The Chair replied that the Parish Council produced an Action Plan a few years ago and some actions have been carried out. There is a big weekend coming up on 15th and 16th June. The wildflower areas in the churchyard are supported. Tysoe started a Womble Scheme which improves the community and environment. They carry out a litter pick and have a footpath group.

It would be nice to get the footpath group restarted in Oxhill as more people walk now. A lot of work was done previously by a small group of people who looked after the local footpaths. Some paths on the definitive map are missing and it is not clear where other footpaths are.

There being no other business the meeting finished at 8pm.