

Parish and Partners Foreword

A few issues to update you on in this edition of Parish and Partners.

Firstly, the position in relation to COVID still dominates both nationally and locally. At the time of writing the infection rates per 100,000 over 7 days has fallen to levels of just below 100, and whilst this is positive, these levels are still high. That said, there has been fantastic progress on the roll out of the vaccination programme, again at time of writing, we have been informed that 98.52% of all over 70s across South Warwickshire have had received at least their first dose. Everybody that I have spoken to says how well the vaccination process has been organised. I would like to join those who have praised the work of the NHS in rolling this out.

As you will be aware the government has confirmed that elections scheduled for 6 May 2021 will be going ahead. As the Returning Officer for the Council I have been working very closely with my team to ensure that these elections are conducted in a COVID-secure way, the health and safety of electors, staff and candidates is paramount. In this regard I would like to thank you, for your contributions to the review of polling venues that has been undertaken. We want to ensure that the venues used are as COVID-secure as possible; unfortunately this has meant that some the venues we have used in the past are not suitable. I am very pleased though, that working with Town and Parish Councils along with comments from Members, we have been able to identify suitable venues for this set of elections. For information, in Stratford-on-Avon District these elections will relate to the Police & Crime Commissioner, County Council, and a number of Neighbourhood Plan referendum.

Given the reductions in cases and the announcement from the Prime Minister on 22 February 2021, we will start to look forward to the easing of restrictions. We are well aware of the impact of COVID on our communities. Since March last year it is estimated that 285 of our residents have died as a result of COVID, this was marked by a minutes silence at our last Council meeting.

Our Council meeting held in February was extremely full; the Council approved new strategies in relation to Preventing Homelessness in Warwickshire and a revised Health and Wellbeing Strategy. In addition to these important items the Council approved the budget for 2021/22 and the vision to consider the merging of the Council with Warwick District Council.

In relation to the budget, as you will imagine, the financial position has been very challenging. Even after all of the additional support that we have received from central government, it is expected that the losses from COVID in the current year to the Council is around £2.5m (about 17% of our net budget). This loss is expected to increase to around £7.5m over the period of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. In addition the Council has been informed that the New Homes Bonus, will be coming to an end in the next two years. During the current year we received around £5m of support from this which was used to support our budget.

In order to mitigate the impact upon services provided to the public as far as possible, the Council has been working very closely with Warwick District Council in order to save costs. There are now five joint Heads of Service across the two authorities, we are jointly procuring the next generation

of the Refuse and Recycling Contract and we have agreed to undertake a joint South Warwickshire Local Plan.

Council though have now agreed to explore taking this relationship further and have jointly agreed the following vision **"To create a single statutory South Warwickshire Council covering all of the activities currently carried out by Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council by 1 April 2024."**

This vision will now be fully investigated and consulted upon, any consultation will fully involve our residents, businesses, local government partners at all levels and other stakeholders. We are just at the beginning of this exercise and there will have to be future consideration by both ourselves and Warwick before any formal submission is made to central government. I can assure you though that your views on this proposal will be taken fully into account.

As you can imagine this is a significant decision for the Council to consider, if achieved this would see the abolition of the current districts and the formation of a new authority. However, if this is achieved it is estimated that at least £4.6m a year could be saved across the two Councils which would help preserve valuable public services.

I will provide regular updates in this newsletter to keep you informed of progress,

Very Best Wishes



David



New Management Team structure for Stratford-on-Avon District



Switchboard: 01789 267575 Email: info@stratford-dc.gov.uk Website: www.stratford.gov.uk Twitter: @StratfordDC Facebook: StratfordDC



Council Tax level for Stratford District

At February's Council meeting, 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 £149.12, an increase of £5.

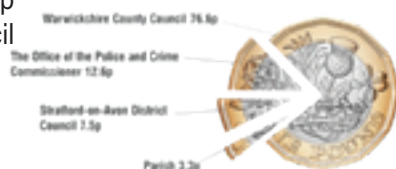
This means that all the services provided by the District Council cost £2.87 a week for a Band D household for a wide range of services including recycling and waste collection, planning, street cleaning, housing, housing benefits, leisure services and children's play areas.

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%.

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



Cllr Tony Jefferson, Leader of Stratford District Council says: *"The pandemic has had a devastating impact on our income as a Council and increased our costs as we dealt with it. Suffice to say that over the five years of our Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) the total effect is about £7.5 million. Despite this we have taken steps to ensure that we have produced a sustainable (MTFS). One of the key issues is that we 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.*

"We have raised our Council Tax by the maximum permitted, £5 on a Band D property. This brings the total Council Tax bill to £149.12 for a Band D property. This is 7.5% of the total council tax bill to residents.

"Although we have a long history of strong financial management, having been able to benefit from reserves, this year we are having to make difficult decisions with reductions in funding and rising costs. This year's budget is not a growth budget as in previous years. The budget for the coming year ensures we are well placed to prepare for the District's future as we work alongside our partners to respond to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic."

As part of the budget, the District Council also approved plans to work together with Warwick District Council.

Cllr Jefferson continues: *"A key strategic move we have made is the proposed creation of a South Warwickshire Council together with Warwick. There is considerable synergy between the two Councils and, over time, the savings in costs will be substantial. We also believe that there will be significant additional benefits to residents from integration."*

A report by Deloitte, commissioned by the two District Councils, concludes that such a merger would result in savings of £4.6million over five years.

Council Tax Resolution 2021 / 2022

Total Band D Council Tax

	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	% Increase / (decrease)	% of the Council Tax
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	£144.12	£149.12	3.47%	7.5%
Warwickshire County Council	£1,488.87	£1,533.51	3.00%	76.6%
Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner	£237.97	£252.96	6.30%	12.6%
Sub-total	£1,870.96	£1,935.59	3.45%	96.7%
Town and Parish Councils (average)	£62.44	£65.17	4.37%	3.3%
TOTAL	£1,933.40	£2,000.76	3.48%	100.0%

The District Council's Council Tax booklet, with information from the District Council, Warwickshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner, will be distributed with Council Tax bills in March. It also includes the refuse and recycling collection calendar, vaccine information and advice for carers.



Elections Matter

For more information go to www.stratford.gov.uk/elections, call 01789 260208 or follow @sdcelects on Twitter

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 Elections and who will be the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Warwickshire area. There are also a number of Neighbourhood Planning Referendums.

Your Polling Station may have changed for these elections. Please check your poll card or call 01789 260208 or email elections@stratford-dc.gov.uk

Councillors for Warwickshire are elected every four years. They are responsible for making decisions on key county-wide services such as education, social services, highways, strategic planning, libraries, museums and the arts.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) are also elected every four years to make sure that local police meet the needs of the community. They are responsible for holding the Chief Constable and police force to account on the public's behalf. They oversee how crime is tackled in their area and aim to ensure the police are providing a good service.

The numbers on the map represent the County Electoral Divisions in the Stratford District named below.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Alcester | 8 Stour and the Vale |
| 2 Arden | 9 Stratford North |
| 3 Bidford & Welford | 10 Stratford South |
| 4 Feldon | 11 Stratford West |
| 5 Kineton & Red Horse | 12 Studley |
| 6 Shipston | 13 Wellesbourne |
| 7 Southam, Stockton & Napton | |

COVID-19

Arrangements will be in place to help ensure polling stations are safe places to vote. You can expect many of the measures you have become used to over recent months in shops and banks, such as social distancing, screens, hand sanitiser, and face coverings.

When visiting the polling station we ask that you:

- Wear a face covering unless you have a valid exemption.
- Bring your own pen or pencil.
- Follow signs and guidance from staff at the polling station to adhere to social distancing.

Voting in the Elections

To vote in the elections you must be aged 18 or over on the day of the election and must be registered to vote.

Electoral Registration

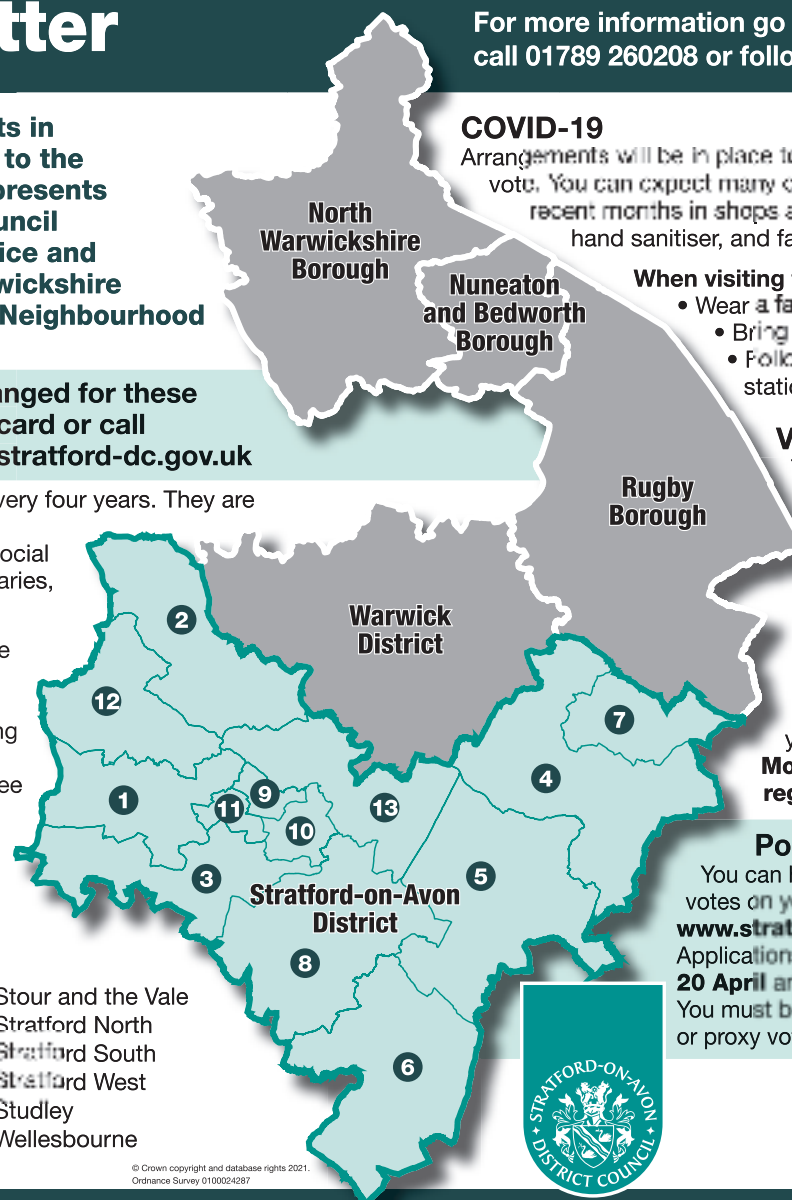
If you are not on the electoral register you will not be able to vote and this may also prevent you from being able to get credit. If you are not already on the electoral register and wish to vote in the elections this year, you need to apply and be registered by **Monday 19 April**. You can do this at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Postal and Proxy Votes

You can have a postal or proxy vote (where someone votes on your behalf) for these elections. You can apply at www.stratford.gov.uk/postal-or-proxy-voting. Applications for a postal vote close at **5pm on Tuesday 20 April** and **5pm on Tuesday 27 April** for a proxy vote. You must be on the electoral register to have a valid postal or proxy vote.

YOUR VOTE MATTERS

DON'T LOSE IT



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Ordnance Survey 0100024287



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

Have your say on a new political map for Stratford-on-Avon District Council

A new pattern of wards is being developed for Stratford-on-Avon District Council. The Local Government Boundary Commission has decided that the number of councillors in Stratford-on-Avon should be 41. This is a change from the current council which has 36 councillors.

The Commission wants to hear what residents and organisations think about their local area. A ten week consultation on the proposals will run until 03 May 2021.



Current wards in Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Credit: contains Ordnance Survey data
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The Commission is the independent body that draws these boundaries. It is reviewing Stratford-on-Avon District Council to make sure councillors represent about the same number of electors, and that ward arrangements help the council work effectively. It wants to be sure that its proposals reflect community ties and identities.

The Commission is interested in views on which communities should be part of the same ward. What facilities do people share, such as parks, leisure centres or schools and shopping areas? What issues do neighbouring communities face that they have in common, such as high numbers of visitors or heavy traffic? Have there been new housing or commercial developments that have changed the focus of communities? And are there roads, rivers, railways or other features that people believe form strong boundaries between neighbourhoods?

The Commission will use local views to help it draw up proposals for new ward boundaries. There will be a further round of consultation once the Commission has drawn up those proposals.

Launching the consultation Professor Colin Mellors, Chair of the Commission, said: *"We want people in Stratford-on-Avon to help us."*

"We are starting to draw up new wards for Stratford-on-Avon District Council. We want our proposals for new electoral arrangements to reflect communities. We also want them to be easy to understand and convenient for local people."

"Residents and local organisations can help us understand community ties and identities at this early stage of the process."

"It's easy to get involved. Go to our website. Or you can e-mail or write to us."

"Just tell us what you think and give us some details why you think that. It's really simple, so do get involved!"

The Commission has a dedicated section on its website where people can give their views: <https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/24993>.

People can also give their views by e-mail at reviews@lgbce.org.uk, and by post:

Review Officer (Stratford-on-Avon)
LGBCE
PO Box 133
Blyth
NE24 9FE

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body accountable to Parliament. It recommends fair electoral and boundary arrangements for local authorities in England. In doing so, it aims to

- Make sure that, within an authority, each councillor represents a similar number of electors
- Create boundaries that are appropriate, and reflect community ties and identities
- Deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances

Garden Waste Service update

Thank you for helping to promote the Clip & Collect Garden Waste Subscription Service. Since the subscriptions first opened at the beginning of January over 28,000 have subscribed in the first six weeks to take advantage of the early bird offer of £35 per bin.

Subscriptions are still open, but now cost £40 before the service starts on 1 April.

For further information about the garden waste subscription service or to subscribe visit www.stratford.gov.uk/gardenwaste

For those residents who don't want to subscribe to the service they can register to have their green bin removed at – www.stratford.gov.uk/online-forms/green-bin-removal-request

STRATFORD-ON-AVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Clip & Collect Garden Waste Service

How do I opt-in to have my green bin emptied?

- 1 Sign-up at www.stratford.gov.uk/gardenwaste or telephone 01789 260628.
- 2 Pay £40 per green bin for a 12 month subscription from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.
- 3 You will receive a permit to attach to the back of your green bin.
- 4 The service will start on 1 April 2021, for those who have subscribed. Your green bin will not be emptied if you have not signed up.

Food waste can still be collected on your recycling week even if you don't subscribe to the garden waste service. FREE food waste caddies are available on request.

For more information, please telephone 01789 260628 email streetscene@stratford-dc.gov.uk or visit www.stratford.gov.uk/gardenwaste



Recycling rates increase

Residents staying at home throughout Stratford District during the Coronavirus pandemic has also led to a big increase in recycling – enough to fill 30 double decker buses.

With more and more residents either working from home, reducing their journeys, self-isolating, and ordering online shopping, a boost in recycling has been the result across thousands of homes.

From March to December 2020 a massive 11,806.78 tonnes of waste have been recycled from around the district, compared to 10,383.24 tonnes during the same time period in 2019.

To put that into perspective, that extra 1,423.54 tonnes is the equivalent of around 190 loads that could have been taken by a refuse collection vehicle. When you turn the tonnes to volume, the extra is the size of around 30 double decker buses.

Cllr Ian Shenton, Operations Portfolio Holder, said: *"It is great to see that recycling has increased across the District and that people have been so receptive to the garden waste subscription service."*

"We understand that the rise comes down to more people being at home and the rise of online shopping, which has seen more people with packaging."

"Now is the time to capitalise on the rise in rates and continue this trend throughout 2021 and when our lives return to some form of 'normality' carry on recycling as much as possible to keep our rates going up and up."



The decennial census is here! Census day is Sunday 21 March

Households across Stratford-on-Avon District are being asked to take part in the nationwide survey of housing and the population. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

Information from the digital-first census will help decide how services are planned and funded in our area.

Census information is ...

- Used to develop local plans to better reflect future needs and to identify inequalities at a very local level.
- Used to inform service demand, to identify pockets of health deprivation and to support future care planning.
- Used to assess local housing needs and to measure housing affordability.
- Used for pupil forecasting models, to inform capital bids and to monitor the supply of qualified persons.
- Used for funding bids for road improvements, and informs planning and profiles around areas of transport change.
- Used to inform emergency services, libraries and waste collection and disposal.

Households will have now received a letter, with a unique access code in the post, allowing them to complete their questionnaire online. Paper questionnaires are available on request.

The census is focussing on engaging with everyone, including under-represented and hard to reach groups. Help is available for people who need support to take part online.

Operating in line with the Government's latest Covid-19 guidance, field officers will be deployed across the country to contact those who have not responded. They will offer help and advice to those who need it. They will also remind people that their census response is required by law.

Results will be available within 12-months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

We will be grateful in the coming weeks for the support given by our parishes, towns and partners in promoting the census and encouraging people to complete it.

For more information, visit census.gov.uk.

Your local contacts are:

- **Sally Bannister**
Census Community Engagement Manager for Stratford and Warwick Districts, Office for National Statistics,
Contact: 07452 940469
sally.bannister68@field.census.gov.uk
- **Simon Purfield**
Census Liaison Manager for Stratford District Council
simon.purfield@stratford-dc.gov.uk



Helping you get to your vaccination appointment

If you have no means to attend your vaccination appointment and no one who can take you, transport may be available from NHS responders or Warwickshire volunteers.

Being vaccinated is an essential reason to travel at the moment and you can ask a member of your household or support bubble to take you if you can't get to the appointment by yourself.

If you need further assistance please contact NHS Volunteer Responders or your local voluntary transport service using the contact details below.

To stay as safe as possible when sharing a vehicle please follow guidance by wearing a face covering, sitting as far apart as possible, opening windows for ventilation and wiping down surfaces.

▪ NHS Volunteer Responders

To book transport call 0808 196 3646
For queries or to cancel an appointment
Call 0808 196 3382

Voluntary transport services in Warwickshire

If you live in Rugby, Warwick and Stratford areas contact: VASA 01789 262889 and press option 1, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm or email transport@vasa.org.uk

Have you booked your test yet?

Help to keep everyone in your community safe.

Tests for people without COVID-19 symptoms are now available at the **Other Place Theatre, Royal Shakespeare, Stratford-on-Avon CV37 6BH**

To book online visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk

Tests are available for all ages.



Community Testing

Community testing is available at six test sites across the county. The test centres are open Monday to Friday 8.30 to 7.30pm, and Saturday and Sunday, 10 to 4pm.

The test centres are situated in the following locations:

- **Bedworth** - The Saunders Club, Bedworth, CV12 8RJ
- **Leamington** - Adult and Community Learning Site, Pound Lane, Lillington, Leamington, CV32 7RT
- **Nuneaton** - United Reform Church, Nuneaton, CV11 5QH
- **Rugby Borough** - Indian Centre, 1 Edward Street, Rugby, CV21 2EZ
- **Stratford** - Rear of The Other Place Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, 22 Southern Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6BH
- **Water Orton** - Water Orton Community Hall, Water Orton, North Warwickshire, B46 1TL

Appointments for each test site can be booked by visiting: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/covidcommunitytesting>

Tests are easy to use and give results in around an hour. Those who test positive must immediately self-isolate to avoid passing the virus on to others. Each positive case identified can help prevent many additional people becoming infected over time.

Further information, advice and support for those self-isolating following a positive test can be found <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/information-coronavirus> or by calling 01926 410410.

More information on community testing can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/>



Warwickshire carers called forward to receive the Covid-19 vaccination

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 going to <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-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.

Nigel Minns, Strategic Director (Director of Adult Social Care) said: *"The Covid-19 vaccination offer is now moving at pace and as such, is now offering the vaccination to people who are in receipt of carers allowance and those who are registered with their GP as a carer. We want to ensure that the rollout of the vaccination offer to carers in Warwickshire is carried out as efficiently and effectively as possible and to ensure the phased approach is well managed. This is why at this stage we are only calling for anyone in receipt of a DWP Carers Allowance to come forward to book your vaccine. Please be assured that if you are a carer eligible for the vaccine you will also be notified in the coming weeks of arrangements for you to book your vaccine."*

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.

Sonja Woodhouse, CEO, Carers Trust Heart of England: *"Despite what has been a challenging time for households across the country, carers have continued to play a vital role in looking after the people they care about - whether collecting groceries and medicine for shielding family members or supporting someone with mental health problems during lockdown."*

She added: *"We welcome the news that registered carers are now eligible to receive their Covid-19 vaccine and we encourage local carers to have their vaccination to help protect the health and wellbeing of themselves and the people they care for."*

To register with Carers Trust (Heart of England) please go to www.carerstrusthove.org.uk/help_and_advice/carer-wellbeing/

If you are a young carer under 18 years you can also access for support with Warwickshire Young Carers. Please go to <https://www.warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk/> for more information.

To check if you are eligible for Carers Allowance please go to <https://www.gov.uk/carers-allowance/eligibility>

COVID-19 Community Champions

Do you want to support individuals in your community to be safe and well? Sign up for free training to gain valuable skills in active citizenship.

The COVID-19 community champion course will help you understand more about the impact of the pandemic and what you can do to help others in your community.

You will hear from professionals and community groups on a number of topics such as:

- the test and trace programme
- risk factors and measures to control the spread of the virus
- local support services
- supporting vulnerable people
- ideas about engagement activity
- stories from others who are active in their communities and
- the five Covid-19 Community Champions' values to Protect, Support, Help, Listen and Lead.

The course has five sessions which will help you to:

- Understand how to be more active and involved in helping communities and engaging effectively with the purpose and aims of the Warwickshire County Council Community Recovery Strategy
- Learn about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and what people can do to stay safe and protect others
- Ensure vulnerable people have access to information and support and help extend services to groups who may be hard to reach

At the end of the course, as well as receiving a certificate, you will become more aware of the effect of the pandemic and the role you can play to help others to get through it. You will also have more knowledge about becoming an active citizen in your community and the services that surround you, as well as the opportunity to connect with new people. You can join the network of trained COVID-19 community champions across Warwickshire.

Attendance requirements

To attend the course you must meet the following criteria:

- Live or work in Warwickshire
- Be over 18 years of age
- Have a passion for learning and helping others

Due to restrictions of the pandemic, the course will be delivered virtually in an online meeting room. To participate you will need internet access and to be able to follow joining instructions provided when you sign-up.

For more information call Mike Slemensek on 07557 814937 or email mikeslemensek@warwickshire.gov.uk.

let's do the
right thing
for Warwickshire

Become a Covid-19 Community Champion and help people do the right thing for Warwickshire.

Do you want to support individuals in your community to be safe and well?

Sign up for free training to gain valuable skills in active citizenship. Hurry - places are limited.

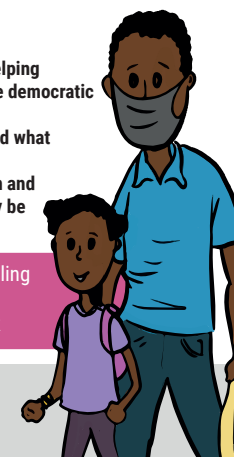
Is it for me?

Yes. If you are interested in learning more about being active as a responsible and supportive member of your community.

The course has three sessions which will help you to:

- Understand how to be more active and involved in helping communities and how to contribute effectively to the democratic processes
- Learn about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and what people can do to stay safe and protect others
- Ensure vulnerable people have access to information and support and help extend services to groups who may be hard to reach

Find out more or register your interest today by calling
Mike Slemensek on 07557 814937
or emailing mikeslemensek@warwickshire.gov.uk



Greenshoots (Climate Change) Funding

The Warwickshire County Council Green Shoots Community Climate Change Fund provides grant funding to community projects to mitigate against, and adapt to, the impact of climate change. It is aimed at community and voluntary organisations.

In 2019, Warwickshire County Council declared a climate change emergency and made a real commitment that considerations of climate change and carbon footprint reduction would underpin all future decision-making. The Council also committed to support communities across Warwickshire to play their part in mitigating their own impact on the environment, of which, the Green Shoots Fund will play a large role.

The Green Shoots Fund is designed to support community projects and initiatives that aim to achieve the following:

- Increase the adaptability and resilience of Warwickshire to the effects of climate change
- Reduce impacts on the environment, particularly regarding climate change
- Ensure funded projects benefit the wider Warwickshire community

Like any funding, there are certain general criteria which this fund seeks to support.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Mitigating or adapting to climate change and the environment
- Benefits to the local community and connections between other groups and projects
- Development of awareness in environmental issues and capacity building of local communities
- Legacy and long-term impacts
- Project risks and mitigation steps

Applications for funding are to be submitted during biannual funding rounds, with each round open for a period of ten weeks.

The first round of funding runs from 2 February 2021 to 17 May 2021.

For more information, please go to www.warwickshire.gov.uk/greenshootsfund

3 Tier event – Climate Change

This event took place on the 24 September 2020 and a follow up meeting was held in early December with the 15 volunteers that came forward.

There were several actions that came out of this meeting and these are being followed up in order to progress with this very important topic.

For more information please contact Amanda Wilson-Patterson on 07780 995817 or email amandawilsonpatterson@warwickshire.gov.uk



Youth Funding

£800,000 in funding will be available for community and voluntary sector groups that provide youth work services for 11-18 year olds in Warwickshire.

Youth work enables young people to believe in themselves and prepare for life. The purpose of youth work is to facilitate and support young people's growth by enabling them to have a voice, influence, and a place in their communities. It is an inclusive service that is available for all young people who wish to access it.

The Warwickshire County Council Youth Work Fund will help and support young people by increasing the youth work available across the county. The Council are looking to support projects and initiatives which tackle local and county issues such as anti-social behaviour, alcohol misuse, alcohol related hospital admissions, bladed weapon use, drug related offences and child exploitation.

The funding will be available from 2020 – 2022 to support organisations in local communities who provide support for young people in aged 11-18. Consideration will be given to targeted youth projects if they respond to a specific need identified in the local community.

Individual organisations can make bids for between £30,000 and £60,000. The successful projects will be expected to demonstrate and provide a comprehensive record of outcomes and improvements achieved within the local community and for young people. There is an expectation that those participating will also share and disseminate learning and experience.



There is also additional funding available for youth work projects to have access to training opportunities for staff and volunteers. The training on offer will include youth work training groups. The Council hopes that being able to access the training will enable and develop a higher quality of youth work that is consistent across the county.

For more information, to express an interest in the funding or training, or if you have any questions, please contact Helen Jones, Senior Youth Worker by emailing helenjones@warwickshire.gov.uk or calling 01926 428142.



Recycled Laptops

Warwickshire County Council has purchased 2,375 laptops which will be passed on to various groups of young people.

The laptops are fully equipped with Windows 10 Home edition, firewall and anti-virus and have full three-year warranties. A further purchase of MiFis with unlimited data has also been made to support learners whose households do not have internet connectivity.

The first release and delivery of devices, numbering around 1,050, have been distributed to young carers and Children Looked After (CLA) as well as to Special Schools to support pupils with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and Infant Schools. A second phase of provision of laptops and connectivity devices is currently being arranged.

The need was identified through a demand assessment survey carried out with schools earlier this term. Schools will receive the devices, own them and distribute them to the pupils they identified as requiring this support.

The laptops have been purchased to complement the Government allocation which schools can access for Years 3 to 11 directly from the DfE scheme which prioritises Secondary and Junior age pupils.

A leg-up for Stratford's aspiring entrepreneurs

A national business school has helped over 100 budding businesspeople from Stratford-on-Avon District learn the basics of starting their own companies and allow their entrepreneurial spirit to flourish.

Funded by Stratford-on-Avon District Council and its Venture House Business Centre, the week-long business programme held by The Rebel Business School* (formerly PopUp Business School) saw its trainees attend a specialist virtual training and development course.

The free sessions connected the District's aspiring business owners with training specialists from The Rebel Business School, who delivered a range of topics including website building, online marketing and building confidence.

In addition to the ongoing business support that exists through Venture House and its partners, Stratford District Council felt there was also a need to provide additional support to residents who may have been affected directly by the pandemic and who are seeking a new or alternative income stream.

Lower Quinton resident and recent course attendee Nina Heath, who has set up her own photo editing and retouching business, said: *"I've learnt so much about how to start a business in 2021. The whole week has given me such insight and confidence, especially in building my own website and social media presence, all from the convenience of my own home."*



The course was completely free and aimed at everyone with an interest in business, including a number of young entrepreneurs from the local colleges. There was no experience required and no need to have an oven-ready business plan. The sessions were highly motivating and passionately led by successful entrepreneurs and professionals.

Cllr Matt Jennings, Tourism and Economic Development Portfolio said: *"It is fantastic to see that, in these challenging times, so many residents have stepped out of their comfort zones to drive their ideas forward."*

"The Council is committed to supporting the local economy and I wish everyone who took part every success in the future. Small businesses are the bedrock of our economy and it's really important that we do what we can to support budding entrepreneurs."

For more information about the Council's support to business and entrepreneurs, go to www.venturehousestratford.co.uk or call Anna at Venture House on 07583 100488.



*Rebel Business School (formerly PopUp Business School)

Rebel Business School was founded in 2012 by Alan Donegan and Simon Paine and helps people from all walks of life to start their own businesses. Its mission is to change the way entrepreneurship is taught across the world.

It has educated over 7,000 people in seven different countries through free events and helped launch 967 businesses in 2019 alone. Its work has been backed by organisations including Google, Henley Business School and the Department for Work and Pensions. The Rebel Business School is the best business advice that money can't buy - all of its events are free.

For more information please visit:
<https://www.popupbusinessschool.co.uk/impact.html>

Nina Heath, attendee at the Rebel Business School, has just launched her new business.

Visit: www.ninaheathphotowizard.com

Mobile: 07846 051446

Stratford District Council supporting the taxi trade

A Stratford taxi driver who has been in the trade for more than 25 years has thanked Stratford-on-Avon District Council for its support of cabbies like him whose livelihoods have been threatened by COVID-19.

Kevin Jones, 48, has been a Hackney carriage taxi driver in Stratford since 1994, and runs his own business 'Kev's Cabs' independently rather than for a firm.

But during the pandemic, Kevin has taken only 10 per cent of what he might usually make, with night-time work being virtually non-existent.

He said: *"It's been very hard recently, there's no getting away from it. I went out to work one Sunday and didn't have a single job."*

"You often have to sit in the taxi rank on Union Street for hours at a time without anyone getting in, and there's very few people hailing cabs either. Sometimes I take people to and from the supermarket, and I've recently taken people to Stratford Hospital to get their COVID-19 jab, but it's not enough with so much of the night-time economy gone."

"It was tough for licenced drivers before the pandemic with the rise of companies like Uber, but the pandemic has made everything worse."

To help with his finances, Kevin applied to the District Council for two grants – a Discretionary Rate Business Grant and an Additional Restrictions Grant – towards the end of last year.

His application for both grants was quickly approved and processed and Kevin was given just over £2,800 in total.

This is a lot more than is available to taxi drivers in many other local authorities – Stratford District Council is among the highest-paying local authorities when it comes to grants available for cabbies, according to Private Hire and Taxi Monthly Magazine.

Kevin felt lucky that he had a licence from Stratford and was therefore eligible for the grants.

He added: *"It's great to see the District Council support drivers in this way – the pandemic has devastated our businesses through no fault of our own, and we just need some extra support before the demand hopefully comes back."*

"So it's great to hear that Stratford District Council is supporting its drivers properly. We're an important way for people to get around so I'm happy the Council has seen that too."

"I'm hoping parts of the town centre will begin to open up again sooner rather than later so the demand for our services goes up naturally."

Cllr Anne Parry, Regulatory Portfolio Holder, said: *"Taxi drivers provide a vital service across our District, both for residents and visitors alike. It's only right, therefore, that we provide essential support for our drivers while demand has been dramatically cut because of the pandemic."*

"We're very pleased to hear that Kevin's grant has helped him, and we're proud to be among the local authorities awarding the most to their drivers."

"We look forward to when the District is in a position to reopen so that drivers can get their businesses moving again."



Kevin Jones with his cab outside Holy Trinity Church in Stratford



Rise in planning applications

Builders and construction workers in Stratford District have seen an 'unreal' increase in demand as householders have invested their money into improving their homes during the pandemic.

Planning applications received by the District Council for household improvements have reached a five-year high, which has resulted in a huge amount of work for local construction workers.

Many have been able to grow their firms thanks to the surge in demand, and some have even had to turn down work because they have been unable to fit it in.

It is thought the rise is down to householders having saved money during the pandemic by not going on holiday or nights out and wanting to spend it on make their homes better.

And householders have been reassured by local construction firms following COVID-safety regulations, such as mask-wearing, social distancing and regular use of hand sanitisers.

Marcus Barnett, who has run Bluehousebuilders for the past nine years, has never seen his company so busy.

He said: *"I now have five men on my books, with 16 sub-contractors I'm regularly in touch with for jobs."*

"It's the most people I've ever employed in my time running Bluehousebuilders, and it's all down to the boost in demand for things like with improvements such as new extensions and knocking through walls."

"One of my newer guys was made redundant from his previous job as a sound engineer after the pandemic meant he was unable to work. He's been with me for almost a year now and his carpentry has hugely improved in that time."

"When the whole country went into lockdown in March 2020, I feared for my livelihood. Since that lockdown was lifted, it's just been unreal."

"It's been hard work - the price of materials has gone right up and there are sometimes issues with supplies - but I never thought it would be this busy."

And architectural designer Wayne Smith, director of Stratford-based Design Visual Architecture, has also seen his workload significantly increase during the pandemic.

Wayne said: *"Before COVID-19, we used to get a spike in demand in the New Year because people wanted a fresh start, and in September when homeowners had a chance to think about improvements due to the summer holidays."*

"Now, that level of demand is constant. I've never had so much work - I'm actually having to turn some of it down because I just cannot fit it in. I'm mainly designing for new developments or extensions to existing homes, and it's showing no signs of slowing down just yet."

"The three-month lockdown last year was a shock to everyone, but to come out of it and have the work I've got now was a surprise to say the least."

Both Stratford District Council's planning department and Building Control have been working incredibly hard to process householders' applications and assess sites quickly so the extra work can take place.

Cllr Anne Parry, Regulatory Portfolio Holder, said: *"This surge in planning applications was perhaps an unexpected, yet positive side-effect of the pandemic here in Stratford District."*

"With so many people staying at home and not spending money on things like holidays and weekends away, we think more residents have decided to put their money into home improvements."



Bluehousebuilders – Front row from left: Scott Barnett, Marcus Barnett. Back row from left: Chris Brown, Ben Houghton, Sam Whittingham

"It's important we process these applications quickly so people like Marcus and Wayne can get the work, grow their businesses and slowly help Stratford District recover."

The Council's Building Control department, which conducts inspections of sites throughout a building project to ensure rules are being followed, has streamlined its working practices to cope with the rise in applications.

And Cllr Christopher Kettle, Community Portfolio Holder, added: *"The growth in householder applications has been a welcome surprise in what has been a challenging year for all."*

"Having invested in improving the Council's remote working capabilities, there has been no limitation on our planning team availability and access to planning applications and paperwork and this has meant the team, even though working remotely, has continued to process applications on a timely basis."

"The rise in applications is fantastic for the local construction industry, and we're doing everything in our power to make our decisions quickly and efficiently to help these projects move through the planning process without delay."



COVID safety advice

Supermarkets and food shops in Stratford District are improving their COVID-19 safety measures after standards appeared to have relaxed since the first lockdown.

Officers from Stratford District Council's Environmental Health department noticed COVID safety measures in shops were not being enforced as strictly as they were during the first lockdown in March 2020.

The organisations have teamed up with the other districts and borough councils in the county, Warwickshire County Council, Public Health England and Warwickshire Police, to explain to shops in what they need to do to improve and to keep people safe.

Letters have been written to all shops in the district, as well as the wider county, to highlight the dangers of the new COVID-19 variant and the importance of reviewing their hygiene practices.

The joint team is currently visiting all shops and supermarkets in the District to check if new safety measures described in the letter are being implemented.

These include enforcing social distancing, having good ventilation, ensuring staff wear face coverings, and increasing the frequency of cleaning the store.

If not, further actions may be taken, including warnings, fines, and even an appearance in court.

Many are already making the necessary improvements to their stores, while some have yet to do so.

Cllr Anne Parry, Regulatory Portfolio Holder, said: *"We all need to go to the supermarket or our local shops from time to time, which is why it is so important they are doing everything they can to keep their customers safe."*

"It was clear to us and our partners that many supermarkets and food shops in Stratford District were not employing the same level of safety measures that we saw in the first lockdown."

"Key safety measures like only having one person from a household shopping, one-in-one-out policies, vigilance around mask wearing, and adherence to social distancing, seem to have lapsed since the first lockdown."

"With the new variant of COVID-19 being more transmissible than the original variant, it's even more crucial that safety measures are being enforced."

"We're glad to see that many shops have already made changes - but we need to make sure every shop is safe for customers to visit."

Once all shops have been visited by the joint team, the data gained will be analysed and a decision will be made on whether more needs to be done to keep shoppers and store staff safe.

Cllr Parry also said the public had a role to play too, and felt it was important they continue to follow the rules each store has recommended and the existing government guidelines.

She added: *"Staff in those supermarkets may come into contact with hundreds of people a day, and it only takes one person to pass on an infection."*

"With the vaccine rollout going so well across the District, it's more important than ever to maintain our resolve and not get complacent by keeping the momentum up to protect our key workers as well as ourselves by abiding by these restrictions."

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



Helping you keep active

Leisure centres in Stratford-on-Avon District are continuing to do as much as they can to keep people active despite the lockdown forcing them to close.

The five leisure centres in the District – in Stratford, Southam, Studley, Shipston and The Greig Leisure centre in Alcester – have all had to shut down because of the national lockdown enforced at the start of the year.

But the centres, run by leisure operator Everyone Active on behalf of the District Council, are encouraging people to stay active through online classes and workouts, and are spreading positivity through regular posts on social media.

Alex Fuoco-Lang, contracts manager at Everyone Active, remained positive about the future, and hoped an application for government funding to support its centres while closed would be successful.

He said: *"It hasn't been easy for us but we've been doing all we can to ensure our members are still getting the exercise they need, and to keep our leisure centres well-maintained so they're in top condition when we reopen."*

"During the first lockdown last year, we were able to deliver high-quality online classes and workouts by working directly with online fitness firms who could deliver the classes to our members on our behalf."

"We're continuing this online fitness content in this lockdown too, so members can still access advanced exercise routines while at home."

"We've also been sharing all sorts of positive stories and live workouts through our social media feeds to allow non-members to stay active too."

"Keeping healthy and active, especially when so many of us are stuck inside, is incredibly important. In an ideal world we'd encourage people to come to one of our centres, but this is the next best thing now they're closed."

Alex was confident things would pick up when leisure centres were able to reopen, and thanked the council for their help.

"The key thing for us when we do reopen is the social distancing policies that will likely remain in place. If there's an easing of social distancing restrictions, it means we can utilise the whole of our facilities to the full, such as using eight badminton courts in a sports hall rather than just four."

"Even when we reopen, we will still give people the option to participate in online classes and it is likely customers will still need to book specific times for their swimming and gym slots."

"Throughout all of this, the District Council have been incredibly supportive and accommodating. Officers have been invaluable in helping us apply for government funding and have provided significant support to help keep us going."

"We can't wait to get back to normal, but in the meantime, we'd encourage members and non-members alike to have a go at our online classes and workouts and to stay as active as they can."

Cllr Ian Shenton, Operations Portfolio Holder, added: *"Our leisure centres play a crucial role in the health and wellbeing of our district's residents, and we are doing all we can to support them through the lockdown."*

"We have worked closely with Alex and Everyone Active to help them apply for government funding, and we have helped them make sure our centres are fully maintained throughout the lockdown so they will be ready to reopen as soon as possible."

"In the meantime, we would encourage people in the district to have a look at their centre's online classes and give them a go."

Anyone wishing to view online classes should visit Everyone Active's website at www.everyoneactive.com and search for their preferred leisure centre, or search for their leisure centre on Facebook.



You'll feel better for it



Useful advice if you are thinking of changing your ISP in 2021

Consumers in the UK face a confusing choice of different broadband providers and networks, which is getting worse as a growing number of new entrants enter the market. In fact, trying to find a new ISP can sometimes feel like walking through a minefield.

If you are looking for a new ISP but find the myriad of options available to you a little bit confusing, the ISP Review's new '[UK Best Broadband ISPs for Homes - 2021](#)' guide may be able to help by offering a simplified overview of the top options.

The guide puts together the editor's pick of top ISP options in terms of quality and affordability. The ISPs featured in the guide are picked based on a mixture of criteria, including reader feedback, Ofcom quality / complaint scores, third party awards and reviews from multiple sites, to name but a few.

As well as categorising ISPs by price and quality, a third category – Commendations – also highlights alternative network ISPs that also deserve praise – based on the above criteria.

Consumer champions Which? have also recently published their '[Best and worst broadband providers 2021](#)' report.

They note that while the best broadband companies offer a great service at a great price, provide a fast connection that you can rely on, and are on hand to help in the rare instance that something goes wrong, many broadband providers still don't deliver on those fronts.

While you have to pay to download the whole report, it is worth noting that this survey is based on the real-life experiences of thousands of customers across the UK and may prove to be money well spent if you are thinking of changing broadband provider and would like further information on choosing your next ISP.



Mobile operators agree deal to improve UK's rural coverage

A number of publications, including [Computer Weekly](#) have recently reported that three of the UK's leading mobile operators have agreed a deal to build and share infrastructure to boost 4G coverage and improve mobile connectivity in hard-to-reach places.

In the first stage of the UK government's [Shared Rural Network \(SRN\) programme](#), which aims to support the deployment of 5G and extend 4G mobile coverage to hitherto badly served rural areas, O2, Three and Vodafone are joining forces to build and share 222 new mobile masts to boost rural coverage across the country.

The £1.3bn SRN programme was first proposed in October 2019 and has been made possible through a partnership of the UK's four major telecoms operators – EE, O2, Three and Vodafone who will work to close almost all partial "not spots" – areas where there is only coverage from at least one but not all operators.

Their initial investment of £532m will then be supplemented by more than £500m of government funding to eliminate total not spots – hard to reach areas where there is currently no coverage from any operator.

The exact location of the masts – most of which will be built in rural areas – are not being disclosed until planning permission has been approved. Construction will start this year and is set to be completed by 2024 in line with the agreement reached with the Government and Ofcom.

The three mobile operators will now engage with local stakeholders and other key parties to ensure what the UK government calls a "timely and efficient" roll-out that delivers 4G connectivity in rural communities, offering customers in very remote areas increased choice and fuller value from their contracts where they live, work or travel.



Time is running out to apply for settled status

The deadline to apply for Settled Status - the new immigration status which will allow EU, EEA and Swiss nationals to remain in the UK - is 30 June 2021.

Failing to apply will mean you and your family won't be able to live and work in the UK.

Am I eligible?

The Settled Status scheme is open to UK residents from EU/EEA countries and Switzerland.

You may also be eligible if you come from another country if your current residence status is derived from an EU citizen. Please verify your eligibility at settled.org.uk

Settled Status requires a continuous five years residence in the UK. If you have lived in the UK for less than five years or had breaks of over 6 months, you may only get pre-settled status.

Pre-settled status will be valid until you reach a period of 5 years of continuous residence when you will be able to apply for Settled Status.

What do I need to successfully apply?

- A valid ID document (a passport or an ID card)
- Proof of residence (council or utility bills – water, gas, electricity, TV licence and mainline and mobile phone, which have your name and address on them).

Support apply for Settled Status is available through Settled - a charity that aims to help EU citizens in the UK in applying to Settled Status. Visit <https://settled.org.uk>

Apply at <https://www.gov.uk/eusettledstatus>

Support available for the vulnerable shielding in Warwickshire

Around 1.7 million additional people in England are now being advised to shield from coronavirus until the 31st March, increasing the number of clinically extremely vulnerable individuals already on the shielding list.

The updated figure was announced following use of a new assessment model to identify people who may be at an increased risk of becoming seriously unwell from coronavirus. All new people added to the list will soon receive a letter from the NHS explaining why they are being advised to shield.

Clinically extremely vulnerable members of the public are strongly recommended to stay at home at all times, with the exceptions of exercise or to attend essential health appointments, and to only work from home where possible.

For more information on the shielding support available in Warwickshire please contact Warwickshire County Council on 0800 408 1447 or visit <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/coronavirusvulnerable>



SAVE TIME

2 NEW SERVICES FOR ALL RESIDENTS

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



Stratford-on-Avon District Council meetings

District Council meetings can be accessed and viewed using the link from the front page of the agendas - <https://democracy.stratford.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Date	Time	Meeting
Monday 12 April	3.30pm	The Cabinet
Wednesday 14 April	6.00pm	Planning
Monday 19 April	2.00pm	Council
Wednesday 21 April	4.00pm	Climate Change Panel
Wednesday 28 April	10.00am	Overview and Scrutiny
Wednesday 28 April	6.00pm	Planning
Monday 10 May	3.30pm	The Cabinet
Wednesday 12 May	6.00pm	Planning
Monday 17 May	4.00pm	Climate Change Panel
Wednesday 19 May	11.00am	Annual Council
Wednesday 26 May	6.00pm	Planning
Monday 7 June	3.30pm	The Cabinet
Wednesday 9 June	6.00pm	Planning
Wednesday 23 June	6.00pm	Planning

Webcast of Meetings

The Council, Cabinet and Planning Committee meetings are recorded and loaded onto the District Council's YouTube channel the following day for viewing - <https://www.youtube.com/user/StratfordDC>

You will still be able to access this from our website - <https://www.stratford.gov.uk/council-democracy/council-meeting-webcasts.cfm>

Need HELP... with the survey for your Plan?

A personalised consultation service is available, totally independent from the Parish, Town or Neighbourhood Plan process in your area.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Consultation & Insight Unit offers you:

- > Pick and Mix flexible approach
- > Survey design from draft questionnaire to final report
- > Low cost one-stop shop for all your market research needs
- > Data processing via an unconnected, unbiased third party
- > Anonymity assured
- > Work carried out to Market Research Society guidelines

Satisfied clients include Parish Councils from both within and outside Stratford-on-Avon District.



Feedback received includes:

"Just wanted to say a big thank you for doing a cracking job on our village survey"

"Again thanks to you and your staff for a professional job - and lots of patience!"

Get professional assistance for your consultation

Contact Simon Purfield on



01789 260118



simon.purfield@stratford-dc.gov.uk



www.stratford.gov.uk



Do you need help with a pest problem in your home or business?

Stratford-on-Avon District Council offers a reliable pest control service with highly qualified, friendly and professional officers.

Our Pest Control service offers:

- One-off treatments for domestic and commercial properties for a wide range of pests.
- Speedy response times
- Competitive prices
- Advice visits
- Environmentally friendly
- Ongoing contracts for businesses and farms – These can be tailored to your needs.



During the cooler months, rats and mice will be looking for somewhere nice and warm to nest. To prevent these pests from entering your property it is a good idea to assess your property, sealing up any cracks or holes.

Try to keep clutter to a minimum and garden cut back to prevent shelter for pests.

Store food correctly and dispose of it in an appropriate bin with a secure lid.

To book a treatment please contact Environmental Health on 01789 267575 email envhealth@stratford-dc.gov.uk or visit www.stratford.gov.uk/environment/pest-control.cfm



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