

County Councillor report Lighthorne Annual Parish Meeting 17th March 2022

Warwickshire County Council has seen a challenging year 2021-2022.

The Covid pandemic caused many challenges, but WCC managed to cope with the problems ranging from people who could not leave their home due to isolation and therefore not able to get food for day-to-day living. WCC were able to assist with delivering food parcels for anyone who came to their attention.

One of the main challenges for the Council has been the displacement of refugees. Warwickshire has a proud history of support for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and most recently, Ukraine.

Afghan refugees

Several Afghan refugees have been helped by WCC with an Employment Package part of the Fair Chance Employer Programme. Also, the Council oversaw The Afghan Resettlement Scheme, Afghan relocation Scheme and the Afghan Refugee Scheme. There was a total of 147 refugees who were accommodated at Walton Hall, Wellesbourne. WCC were able to assist with GP registration, school places, benefit claims, housing, and childcare.

Ukrainian refugees

Warwickshire County Council have set up the:

Support for communities during the Ukraine crisis.

The County Council will be involved with “vetting” the families/individuals who have offered accommodation to the refugees. Warwickshire County Council has also donated 16,500 surplus PPE supplies for use in Ukraine via the local Polish Centre.

Energy prices (WCC).

A key impact of the current situation is the pressure on gas, oil supplies and prices as countries apply sanctions and bans on Russian energy sources. Utility prices could increase by between two and five times.

Energy prices (residents)

The rising prices are likely to create significant hardship. WCC’s Local Welfare Scheme provides some support, in addition to which WCC have the Household Support Scheme utility promotion.

Council Tax

The County Council Tax increased by 3.75% This is to help fund many services such as:

£10.1m in our children's social care

£14.4m to protect our elderly and vulnerable adults.

£1.9m to continue to support children and young people with disabilities placements to ensure they can access appropriate support within their communities.

Adult Social Care remains the largest expenditure for WCC @ £200m per year.

Warwickshire County Council has continued in its support for our residents with schemes such as Activities for young children. A new "specialist" special school, "The Warwickshire Academy" opened for children and young adults with Special Educational Needs (SEND).

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

WCC's COVID-19 Mental Wellbeing and Resilience Fund has awarded £750k to support local community groups and businesses to develop sustainable and innovative solutions to help improve the mental wellbeing and resilience of Warwickshire.

Help for residents to meet household costs through the winter.

Central Government announced that a £500 million Household Support Fund grant was made available to local authorities in England, as the country continues its recovery from the pandemic.

The objective of the funding is to support those Warwickshire residents, who are struggling and need immediate financial support this winter with food, energy, and water bills. Warwickshire's allocation is £3.47million was to cover the period 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Warwickshire County Council one step closer to providing Priority Worker Help to Buy funding

Cabinet approved the plan to progress the development of the PWHTB scheme to facilitate home ownership for priority workers who may not otherwise be able to move onto or up the property ladder.

Chris Mills
County Councillor
Kineton and Red Horse