

Lighthorne Parish Council Meeting

District Councillors report

8th September 2020

Covid cases

The latest number of Covid-19 cases in the District as from 1st September is at a total of 553 with a current average of one case per day being confirmed. This compares with 531 reported cases on 7th August. The highest number of new cases on one day was on 25th August when three additional cases were confirmed.

Social Distancing

Now that the restaurants and retail facilities are gradually opening, the Council is urging the residents of the District to still maintain “social distancing” wherever possible.

Homeless and rough sleepers

Stratford District Council have managed to re-home all of the rough sleepers in the District during the pandemic bar one who would not be re-homed but preferred to sleep in his tent

Biffa

The council is still receiving letters of thanks for the service that Biffa have been giving during the Covid-19 crisis. They have continued and maintained the refuse collection despite the crews in some cases being short staffed due to the pandemic

New Cabinet Member

As tourism plays a major part in the economy of the district of Stratford, the Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Cllr Tony Jefferson has appointed Cllr Matt Jennings (Henley-in-Arden Ward Member) as Tourism and Economic Development Portfolio Holder on Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Cabinet.

This is a new post on The Cabinet effective immediately and is designed to help lead the Council's response to the economic impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Cllr Matt Jennings has been a District Councillor since May 2019 and is currently a member of the Audit and Standards Committee and Planning Committee A.

Cllr Jennings has lived in the District since 2017 and runs a small project management and IT business. In his spare time Cllr Jennings enjoys kickboxing and taekwondo.

Scam alert: COVID-19 Council Tax reduction email

Officials from Stratford-on-Avon District are warning residents, following reports of an email hitting inboxes claiming to be from GOV.UK, offering a Council Tax reduction.

The email is covered in the branding of the UK Government and is signed off by the 'Government Digital Service Team'. It invites recipients to click on a link to 'Claim your Council Tax Reduction Now' and when opened takes the resident to a website which has the same look-and-feel as the GOV.UK website and asks for personal details such as name, address and banking details.

This message and website are fraudulent. Anyone who enters their details are at great risk of losing money.

“The key is to stay alert – if something looks too good to be true, then chances are it's a scam. And if you're in any doubt then be sure to contact the District Council.”

How to avoid scams

- **Stop:** Take a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **Challenge:** Could it be fake? It's okay to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.
- **Protect:** Contact your bank immediately if you think you have fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

The District Council has no legal power to suspend the collection of Council Tax and must collect Council Tax, unless or until Central Government change this. We do completely understand the pressure many households now find themselves under but there are options available to help individual households.

Additional support may be available for families, already in receipt of council tax support and experiencing financial difficulties, depending on their individual circumstances.

Also most residents pay their Council Tax over 10 months but they are entitled to extend their Council Tax instalments from 10 to 12 months, reducing the monthly payments by paying over a longer period for no extra charge or by taking their two-month Council Tax 'holiday' now instead of in February and March next year.

If you do need assistance with your Council Tax payments please call the District Council on 01789 267575.

Stratford-on-Avon District Council has received funding of £660,000 from the Government, as part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak, to help those residents who receive Local Council Tax Support. This funding is targeted at benefit recipients classed as '*working-age*' who qualify for Local Council Tax Support.

Those residents who are in receipt of Local Council Tax Support, this year, have received a one-off discount of up to £150, which the District Council has apply directly onto their Council Tax Account, meaning the total amount of Council Tax they need to pay will automatically be reduced by up to £150 and adjustments have been made automatically to those accounts that qualify.

If you have any queries regarding this please contact the Benefit Team by email at: benefits.sdc@stratford-dc.gov.uk

To date (end of May): The District Council has paid a total of £526,636.42 to 3,546 cases.

As a reminder to the Parish Council

JOINT NEWS RELEASE FROM DISTRICT AND BOROUGH COUNCIL LEADERS

Residents and organisations across Warwickshire are to be asked how they would like the county to be run in the lead up to a massive Government shake-up of local politics.

The Government is publishing a White Paper in the biggest re-organisation of local government in almost 50 years.

The five – Stratford and Warwick District Councils and North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, and Rugby Borough Councils – have commissioned a study looking at options for the future of the area and will then put those choices to a cross section of residents, businesses and organisations.

The five councils – who are responsible for areas such as housing and planning, street cleaning, refuse collection, environmental health and leisure provision – are opposed to Warwickshire County Council opting for one unitary authority for the whole of the county without consultation with local residents, the business community or other councils.

In a joint statement, the five leaders have said that it is vital that local people have a say in how they wished the county to be run but stressed the need for change.

They said: “We live in a democracy and we are talking about the biggest shake-up in half a century so it would be totally wrong for any changes just to be pushed through without any feedback from residents, business and partner organisations.

“We all believe that local accountability and responsibility is vital – and never has that been more evident than during the current Coronavirus pandemic when local councils have been able to respond to very local needs from residents and businesses.

“We clearly believe in the need to maintain that local element but also understand that reform is not only inevitable but also necessary as we are working on a model set in the 1970s when the world was a vastly different place.

“However, that does not mean that all that is good in local government is simply wiped away in a power grab which – we believe – does not serve the area well. We may represent different political parties but we are totally united in this and have made our views known to our local MPs.

“Councils at all levels across Warwickshire only exist to serve the interests of local residents and to deliver high quality services at the best possible value.”

The councils are due to start their survey in September