

## **Lighthorne Parish Council Meeting**

9<sup>th</sup> March

### **District Councillors report**

A Stratford District Full Council Meeting was held Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

Items discussed:

### **Stratford District Council working together with Warwick District Council.**

To create a single statutory South Warwickshire Council covering all the activities currently carried out by Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council by 1 April 2024. A report by Deliotte, commissioned by the two District Councils, concludes that such a merger would result in savings of £4.6million over five years. This was supported by the majority of the Councillors. However, it was unanimously agreed with all Councillors that the proposal to work with Warwick District Council must at all costs go out to public consultation.

### **Council Tax level for Stratford District.**

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on our income as a Council and increased our costs as we dealt with it. Over the five years of our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) the total effect is about £7.5 million. Despite this SDC have taken steps to ensure that they have produced a sustainable (MTFS). One of the key issues is that they 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.

The amount residents will be asked to pay for a band D property is £149.12, an increase of £5.

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%.

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

### **Garden Waste Subscription**

Stratford District Council has received over 20,000 subscription for the garden waste subscription service since applications opened in January. Applications opened on 11 January with an “early bird” offer of £35.00 for each green bin for a 12-month subscription starting on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The “early bird” offer ended on 28<sup>th</sup> February after which the annual charge of £40.00 each green bin will apply. Under current rules, SDC are not allowed to profit from the charge but any excess will be spent on improving the service. However, to achieve this, SDC will need to have nearly 33,000 subscribers. Therefore, SDC have some way to go as this is expected tail off. Other Councils already charge for this service. For example, Rugby Borough Council, Nuneaton Borough Council and Redditch Borough Council already charge £40.00 per year and Wychavon District Council charge £53.00 per year. Further afield, the Isle of Wight charge £60.00 while Harlow charge £96.00 per year for the green waste collection.

Stratford District Council is asking residents to pay more, not because it likes doing so but to protect services it currently provides and because it believes this is the responsible course of action to take in the long-term interests of the District. The Council from time to time has to make difficult decisions but if we do not act now, we could jeopardise our essential services. **The Green Waste charge of £40.00 per year equates to 0.77p per bin per week.**

### **Business Grants/ Lockdown payments**

Following the Government's announcement, Stratford District Council have received guidance to make a further payment to all those businesses who are continuing to remain closed under the new timeframe.

SDC will be making a further 6-week payment from 16<sup>th</sup> Feb to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

### **Funding for three new secondary schools**

3 of Warwickshire's Secondary Schools are celebrating after being successful in their bids as part of the Government's School Rebuilding Programme.

Kineton High, Southam College & Hartshill School will all undergo major rebuild & development. Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/1783/warwickshire-county-council-celebrates-securing-funding-for-three-new-secondary-schools>

### **Voting safely at this year's elections**

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 (WCC)** and the **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)**. There are also several Neighbourhood Planning Referenda (Alcester, Ilmington, Napton-on-the-Hill and Clifford Chambers) to be held.

While County Council and PCC elections are not until May, we are already making plans to help you stay safe while casting your vote.

There are several ways to have your say in the local elections in May – you can vote in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

We are thinking about these elections now so that, however you choose to cast your vote in May, you can do so safely. We are putting arrangements in place to help you stay safe at the polling station; you can expect many of the measures you have become used to in shops and banks over recent months, such as hand sanitiser, floor markings and face masks. But you also have the option to apply to vote by post or by proxy.

We are also asking electors to check their poll cards as their polling station may have been changed for these elections only.

Ailsa Irvine, Director of Electoral Administration and Guidance at the Electoral Commission said: “The choice on how to vote at May’s elections is yours – you can have your say in person, by post or by proxy.

If you are thinking about voting by post, you can apply now. This will make sure your application is processed early, and your postal vote can be sent to you more quickly. It is easy to apply and you can find out how by visiting the Electoral Commission website.

“You need to be registered to vote in order to have a say at the elections – the easiest way to register is online at [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)”

**For more information please visit: [www.stratford.gov.uk/elections/](http://www.stratford.gov.uk/elections/)**