

Lighthorne Parish Council 9th March 2021
County Councillor's Report

Budget 2021/22

On 8th February the Council set the budget for 2021/22. This time last year the Council set a budget which put us in a financially secure position, had good reserves and austerity was a word from the past. Now that seems a life-time away and the Warwickshire has changed. On 25th March 2020 the crisis had taken hold and we went into lockdown most of us expecting that the problem would be over in 4 – 5 months. The government has helpfully pumped significant amounts of money into Warwickshire to support the economy and into WCC in the form of Covid emergency funds. This support was both vital and welcome but despite the support of central government our overall income has dropped.

As a result, extra funding for Adult Social Care provision will be through a 3% precept on our Council Tax over two years. We have elected to take 1% in 21/22 and 2% in the following year. This will be on top of the 1.99% already budgeted for in last year's MTFS. So, for the year 21/22 we intend to increase the Council Tax by 2.99% in total which represents an increase of 86p per week on an average Band D property.

One word describes this Budget – Recovery. We are confident of our approach which will mean that Warwickshire's communities and economy will be able to recover more quickly. Here are some of the major items we are funding in the budget:-

1. £9.1m into our Children's Social Care Services;
2. £8.2 million to protect the Elderly and Vulnerable;
3. £3.8 million to continue support for children with disabilities;
4. £1.5 million into Home to School Transport;
5. £1.3 million to offset the lower interest return on our investments

We have a plan for an even better Warwickshire in the future. This includes:

1. Leading the COVID recovery across Warwickshire – Distributing millions of pounds across Warwickshire in grant funding to hundreds of local businesses.
2. Protecting Warwickshire's most vulnerable residents – Throughout the pandemic the Conservative-led County Council has protected and supported our most vulnerable residents.
3. Giving our children the best start in life – By working closely with Warwickshire's nurseries and schools.
4. Building safe, vibrant, local communities throughout Warwickshire – The last year has been tough for everyone but local communities have come together to support each other.
5. Millions more in funding for Warwickshire's vital infrastructure – We are investing in our essential services to ensure Warwickshire remains the best place to live and work.
6. Facing the challenge of climate change – Warwickshire Conservatives are committed to helping make our county a greener and more environmentally friendly place to live, work and raise a family.

After a lengthy debate the Conservative proposal for the next year was passed by a majority of 35. This proposed that the increase next year should be set at 2.99% for the Warwickshire County Council budget allocation

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Parish Council Guidance

The pre-election period for the 2021 Council Elections in May. Council elections commence on 19th March 2021 and will end at the close of Poll on 6th May 2021. This period is known as being in Purdah.

During this period the County Council will continue to operate on a business as usual basis but will avoid matters which are potentially politically contentious. This means that the number of formal public meetings will be kept to a minimum necessary for the County Council to fulfil its functions. The County Council will meet on 16th March 2021 when a full council meeting will be held.

Covid-19 Update 5th March 2021

The figures over the last seven days are down to 68/100,000 from 91 last week, but the over 60's rate has slightly increased to 53/100,000 (50 last week) (with 22 cases over the last seven days) – which when compared to other districts in Warwickshire for all ages is Nuneaton & Bedworth 110/100,000, North Warwickshire 164/100,000, Warwick 77/100,000 and Rugby 113/100,000. So Stratford and Warwick Districts still have the lowest case rates across the county.

According to the government's dashboard 10 new people had a confirmed positive test result across our division over seven days ending 27 February (17 last week). which translates into 100/100,000, so is considerably higher than the district average.

The situation regarding SWFT Hospital Beds continues to improve and is now 22 (27) confirmed cases of COVID-19 but there are 2 (4) patients in ICU (figures in brackets are from 26 Feb). Capacity levels have improved with 113 unoccupied general and acute beds.

Sadly the cumulative deaths across our area have increased by seven over the last week and now number 130 from the start of this second wave (28th August 2020) 36 occurring in care homes, 85 in hospital (including all seven from last week), one in a hospice and seven at home and one in a communal establishment, out of a total of 766 all cause deaths in the district for this new second wave period.

The cumulative total of deaths across Warwickshire for Wave 2 has now increased to 599 from 571 last week within a total of 3191 all cause deaths. The cumulative total of Covid-19 deaths in Stratford district is 298 since the start of the pandemic and in Warwickshire 1200.

The locally led Lateral Flow Testing facility for people without coronavirus symptoms in Stratford at has now carried out 16,728 tests with 60 positive results.

The messages coming out of Public Health Warwickshire remain focused on conforming to the lockdown restrictions in order to stay safe and protect everyone else, as with the schools scheduled to return on Monday it is essential that extreme vigilance and the wearing of face masks and not household mixing (unless you are in a support bubble) is continued throughout the lockdown.

More vaccinations amongst residents living in Stratford District have been carried out than any of the other districts and boroughs in Warwickshire with a total of 39159 vaccinations as of 4th March.

I am still undergoing chemotherapy treatment for the foreseeable future and therefore I will not be joining you at your meeting for which I apologise but should you have any queries or issues that I can help you with please do not hesitate to contact me by email and I will reply as soon as I am able.

Cllr Chris Williams

Member for Kineton and Red Horse Division

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07.03.21.