

Wellesbourne & Walton Parish Council – March 2021

District Council

Full Council

At a meeting of Full Council on 22 February, SDC Councillors set the district element of the Council Tax with an increase of £5 for a band D property up to £149.12 per annum.

This means that all the services provided by the District Council cost £2.77 a week in 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.

Although the collecting agent for Council Tax, the District Council only receives 7.5% of Council Tax paid by residents - Warwickshire County Council receives 77%, the Police 12.3% and Towns/Parishes 3.2%. This means the District Council only retains 7.5p of every £1 paid in Council Tax to provide services. The total Council Tax amount for a Band D property in Wellesbourne will therefore be £2021.99.

As part of the budget, the District Council also approved plans to work together with Warwick District Council to explore the opportunity 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. The first stage of this initiative received full cross-party support from councillors, providing a mandate to investigate the mechanics of the proposal in more detail and how it could work for both districts. As part of the process extensive public consultation would be undertaken at the appropriate time to assess the features, benefits and risks of undertaking such a venture.

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

Green Bin Waste Charge

Over 22,500 households have already subscribed to the early bird offer for the green bin waste charge which increases from £35 to £40 on 1st March 2021.

Land Charges

House purchasers hoping to capitalise on the stamp duty window before it ends on 31 March 2021 can be reassured that all official land searches requested by 12 February will be fulfilled by SDC's Land Search Team before the deadline. SDC has increased its resources over the last six months in response to the buoyant property market in order to significantly reduce the turnaround time.

Environmental Health

Officers from SDC's environmental health department have been in contact with shops and supermarkets in the district to check if COVID safety measures in shops are being enforced as strictly as they were during the first lockdown. 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.

Wellesbourne Airfield Update

Since March 2019, SDC officers have been negotiating with the owners of the airfield to ensure the retention and enhancements of flying functions and aviation related facilities continue at Wellesbourne Airfield as part of the Council's Core Strategy policies.

As part of the negotiations, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was put in place between the Council and the owners of the airfield. This has ensured that aviation has continued at the site, whilst negotiations continue and all but one of the businesses operating from the airfield have been granted new tenancies. As highlighted in previous communications, SDC is unable to intervene in matters between landlords and tenants, despite requesting that all businesses at that time be granted new tenancies by the owners of the airfield.

Despite COVID-19 and allegations that the terms of the MoU have been breached, the MoU is continuing to serve its purpose, as aviation is continuing at the site and to terminate the MoU would likely bring about an early demise of the airfield which would be against the public interest.

Under the MoU the CPO process has been paused whilst constructive negotiations were ongoing, providing that aviation was continuing. To date this has been the case and SDC is actively engaging with the owners and their agents to find a mutually acceptable solution for the long term future of the site. However, if it is not possible to agree a solution it will be necessary to progress with CPO proceedings.

A budget of £1M was set aside to fund the necessary CPO work, and is still being maintained to support further CPO proceedings should they be needed.

Census 2021

Just a reminder to look out for information to complete the Census on 21 March 21. Nearer the time households will receive a letter with an access code to take part online, however paper forms will be available for those who need them.

County Council

Firstly, I wish to let you know that I shall be standing down at the forthcoming Warwickshire County Council Elections in May. It's been a huge honour to represent the seven parishes across the Wellesbourne county division and whilst I shall miss the interaction and involvement with residents, I now wish to devote more time to my ward role as a Stratford on Avon District Councillor for Wellesbourne East.

The proposed merger of Stratford District Council with Warwick District Council to form a super South Warwickshire District Council heralds both an exciting but particularly busy time and this will be amplified as a member of Cabinet. As a relatively new Granny I also need to create more time to spend with the family!

Making a difference to communities has been my focus during my time with Warwickshire County Council and I am pleased to have helped initiate nearly £150k worth of new road safety schemes across the division and awarded £24k in grants to many community projects.

I am delighted to advise that Penny-Anne O'Donnell who knows Wellesbourne particularly well, living just outside the village in Loxley, has been selected as the Conservative candidate for the Wellesbourne seat and she has my full support and brings extensive experience as a district councillor and chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Stratford District Council.

If Penny-Anne O'Donell is elected I would ensure a smooth handover in respect of cases, issues and initiatives currently being progressed under my watch.

Road Safety Initiatives

This is to let you know that I have allocated funding from my road safety budget for the following initiatives and which are now being implemented:

- Ettington Road, Wellesbourne - 4 Gateways and lining - to be started in March with Engineer £15,000
- C72 Loxley Road Pedestrians crossing signage - Scheme drawings to be completed by end February to go to County Highways - £2000
- B4086 Kineton Road approach to Wellesbourne - to be started in March with Engineer - £9,000
- Newbold Place, Wellesbourne - Footpath Improvement - £4,800 with County Highways

Council Tax

WCC is increasing its share of Council Tax by 2.99% with 1% ringfenced for Adult Social Care which represents an increase of £44.64 to £1533.51 per annum on a Band D property. In addition, Warwickshire Police has increased its precept by £14.99 to £252.96 which will be used in the recruitment and training of extra police officers, more special constables and a new state-of-the-art control room.

Covid19 Response

WCC and Public Health Warwickshire continues to play a vital role in managing infection rates, testing and the vaccine roll out across the county and this intense effort will be continued and carefully monitored particularly with the adult social care and education sectors. I shall of course continue to provide my weekly updates on the local scene.

Broadband

Following contact from a number of residents I have asked WCC to investigate the broadband quality issues experienced by a number of households on the Ettington Park development which has resulted in the following comprehensive information from CSW Broadband after discussions with Openreach.

Background information

Unfortunately, the developers of Ettington Park gave no consideration to broadband connectivity and did not provide the necessary infrastructure to cater for this. Whilst there is a legal requirement at present to offer a copper telephone line to new properties, there is no such requirement to offer fibre connectivity. This will become obligatory from 2025 onwards, but only as Openreach convert

your local telephone exchange to 75% fibre connectivity or above as part of the national UK copper to fibre move (Openreach's Fibre First programme).

In order to comply with the legal requirement for a telephone line, the developer has to register any new development with Openreach's New Sites team. When they do this, they are also given the option of whether they want to install fibre broadband to the development as well, as it is much easier to install during the construction phase than after the development has been completed.

For whatever reason, the developers decided not to take up this option on construction of the first phases of the development. This is less of a problem now since a deal was struck in 2016 between Openreach, the Home Builders Federation and the Government [to put superfast broadband into UK new builds](#) but, at the time that this estate was built, such a deal was not in place.

This will also help to explain why the newer Grange development to the south of the Ettington Park development does appear to have FTTP (Fibre to the Premise).

Ettington Park – Analysis:

As is often the case with broadband infrastructure builds, the picture is quite complex. There are some properties (Ettington Lodge and some of Lowes Lane) which have already been upgraded by Openreach as part of their own commercial deployment programme. There are also some properties (parts of Copeland Ave, Nurseries Road, Joseph Arch Road, Lowes Lane & Daisy Lane) which Openreach have previously stated they were going to upgrade as part of their own commercial deployment programme which have not yet been upgraded.

Under State Aid rules, the CSW Team are not allowed to intervene in areas where commercial build is stated.

The rest of the development (including parts of Oak Avenue, Lowes Lane, Snowberry Lane, Honeysuckle Lane, Rose Lane, Nurseries Road, Baden West Road, Macaulay Lane, Copeland Avenue, Chedham Road, Grantham Road & Joseph Arch Road) are currently 'Awaiting Funding'.

WCC has spoken to the Openreach Project Managers working on the CSW Broadband Project and they have looked at Openreach's own commercial plans in the area. They have confirmed that a retro-build is planned for part of the Ettington Park Development – which seems to cover properties on Joseph Arch Road, Nurseries Road, Redhill Way, the southerly end of Grantham Road, Honeysuckle Lane, Oak Avenue and possibly Rose Lane & Daisy Lane.

They have also confirmed that the retro-build is due to be completed this quarter (by end of March 2021). This will be an FTTP (Fibre to the Premise) solution.

While this is obviously good news for those residents, there doesn't appear to be any plans for a commercial retro-build for the area that includes the rest of the Ettington Park development including the remainder of Grantham Road, Chedham Road, Copeland Avenue, Baden West Road & Macaulay Lane.

Possible solution for the remainder of residents:

As CSW has already allocated the funding we had available for Contract 3 and Openreach do not appear to have any plans to cover the rest of the Ettington Park development at the time of writing, one possible solution that these residents could consider is what is known as a Community Fibre Partnership (CFP) through a supplier such as [Openreach](#).

Basically, Openreach (or another supplier) can put together a quote for how much it would cost to upgrade these areas to full fibre. Eligible residents and businesses can then apply for vouchers through the [Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme](#), which they can then aggregate to offset the cost of the build.

DCMS are about to close the current voucher scheme and are going to replace it with a newer version as of April 2021. While details are still to be finalised as to how exactly this new scheme will work, we have been led to believe that the Ettington Park area would still be eligible for vouchers under the new scheme. This would have to be confirmed though – if residents are interested in such a solution - once further details of the new scheme emerge. We are expecting the new scheme details shortly once ministerial signoff has completed and this is due by early March at the latest.

I hope this gives you a better insight into the works to date, the premises which will be taken forwards by CSW and Openreach and the possible option to complete fibre upgrades in the area for the remainder of the premises above.

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