

Anne Parry, Wellesbourne East

South Warwickshire District Council

The extensive public consultation in respect of the proposed merger has now been analysed for members to review and make a decision at Full Council on 13th December 2021. As well as the public consultation, discussion groups have been undertaken by the research agency (Opinion Research Services) with businesses, the voluntary/community sector and town/parish councils. They have also conducted 600+ telephone interviews with a sample of residents matched to the profile of the districts, plus undertaken focus groups again with residents matched to the profile.

Council Tax 2022/23

The basis for the calculation of Council Tax proposals is the number of residences that will be levied with Council Tax. This number is reviewed each year to take into account the changes in the number of housing units that have and are projected to take place since last year's calculation. This exercise will be completed during December and the relevant numbers made available to individual town and parish councils before Christmas. It is this number that town and parish councils must use as the basis for setting their own precepts for 2022/23.

In order to be able to accurately include the precepts set by individual town and parish councils in the Council Tax Demand Notices to be sent to residents in March 2022, Finance Department must have been informed of the agreed precepts of all town and parish councils by the end of January 2022.

This means that **Wellesbourne & Walton Parish Council** will need to make the necessary arrangements to meet, discuss and agree their precepts so that Finance Department can be informed of their decisions before the end of January.

Avian Flu

Cases of Avian Flu have now reached Walton in addition to Stratford and Bidford and therefore we all need to be extremely vigilant and in particular residents who keep poultry or have wild birds attracted to ponds etc.

What is the risk to Animal Health?

- The H5N1 strain is highly pathogenic to other birds.
- As a result, the national Prevention Zone declaration declared across Great Britain effective from 5pm on 3 November 2021 requires all bird keepers in Great Britain (whether they have pet birds, commercial flocks or just a few birds in a backyard flock) are required by law to take a range of biosecurity precautions. Namely:
 - keep free-ranging birds in fenced areas to minimise contact with wild birds, neighbouring poultry, or captive birds
 - inspect outdoor areas, removing wild bird contaminants like faeces, feathers, and wild bird carcasses
 - fence off or put netting over areas of standing water or ponds
 - provide feed and water undercover, so wild birds can't access it
 - make your premises unattractive to wild birds. Use bird scarers, foils, or streamers
 - keep ducks and geese separate from other poultry
 - store bedding under cover to reduce the risk of contamination
 - clean and disinfect footwear before and after tending to your birds. If you own more than 50 birds, place foot dips containing government approved disinfectant at all entry and exit points
 - clean and disinfect hard surfaces regularly
 - clean and disinfect equipment and vehicles to avoid disease spread between premises
 - minimise the movement of people, vehicles, and equipment to and from bird areas and keep records of movements

- keep records of poultry, captive bird, and egg movements
- maintain buildings that house birds to prevent water ingress
- ensure pest control is effective
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975119/birdflu-protect-birds-leaflet.pdf

What is the risk to Human Health?

- The risk to human health is considered very low.
- It is vital that people do not touch sick live birds or bird carcasses, and infection control measures may be necessary if they do.
- In areas where the infection has been confirmed or is suspected, anyone who has been in contact with sick or dead birds or their droppings, while not wearing the correct PPE, should make sure any footwear is properly cleaned and thoroughly wash their hands in soap and water. They should then notify the UK Health Security Agency's West Midlands Health Protection Team on 0344 225 3560 so that public health experts can determine if antiviral medication and active surveillance of their condition is necessary.
- The UKHSA has made it clear that the risk of the disease transferring from birds to humans is considered to be very low. **To ensure this situation remains**, the advice we have received is that members of the public should not touch or go near sick or dying birds. In the event of finding a sick bird members of the public should call the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999 and in the event of finding dead birds contact SDC on 01789 [267575](tel:01789267575) in hours and 01926 339 577 out of hours.
- The Food Standards Agency has said that on the basis of the current scientific evidence, avian influenza poses a very low food safety risk for UK consumers. Properly cooked poultry and poultry products, including eggs, are safe to eat.

New Head of Development

Following the retirement of Robert Weeks from Stratford District Council, Adrian Harding has been appointed in an interim capacity as the new Head of Development for SDC and WDC. He brings extensive experience across the planning, enforcement and building control roles to the District Council.

Enforcement

The revised Local Enforcement Plan and comments from the consultation is now available on the website. The team now boasts the most experienced team of enforcement officers we have ever had who are all exceptionally busy at present on a number of urgent cases.

Planning

Recruitment continues to be a major focus within the team. Following the departure of two senior planners some well-deserved internal promotions have been triggered. We are recruiting assistant planners to fill the current vacancies. The recruitment freeze earlier this year, combined with a number of departures, has impacted the key performance indicators on the smaller household application turnaround times. This will, however, greatly improve and return to our normal levels once the new starters arrive. Fortunately this time of year tends to be a quieter period for applications. We have received more applications for extensions this year which reflects the change towards hybrid working as an impact of the pandemic.

Land Charges

Turnaround times are continuing to be less than our target of 15 working days which reflects the hard work and focus of the teams following the restructure and the transfer of data to HMLR.

Anne Parry

29/11/21