

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Parish Council Meeting held on 30th Jan 2025 in Ratley Village Hall at 7:45 pm

No	Agenda Item	Action by
	<p>Present Cllrs. A Simpkins, A Graham, A Berry, D Payne, J Obbard, Clerk, County Cllr. C. Mills, District Cllr. M Littlewood, and no members of the public.</p>	
1.	<p>Open Forum No items</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies None were received</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest None received</p>	
4.	<p>Edgehill Quarry updates. Several residents have reported an increase in lorry traffic approaching from the wrong direction. – also, driving through Ratley to go in the other direction. Cllr. Mills agreed to report to the enforcement team again. Cllr. Mills had no updates to report regarding the quarry.</p>	CM
5.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – 19th Dec 2024 The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr. Graham, agreed by all and duly signed by the Chair.</p>	
6.	<p>Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 17th Oct 2024</p> <p>6.1 Town Hill Steps. Improved access to Town Hill houses will need careful consideration and any formal approaches to Orbit will need to be agreed by all affected parties. The Clerk agreed to have a discussion with the affected resident to see how they would like the issue to be dealt with.</p> <p>6.2 WCC Grant for picnic bench. The WCC grant funds have now been received. The Councillors passed on their thanks to Cllr. Mills for his support. Clerk to arrange purchase of bench. Sample of material in brown recycled plastic was shown for approval by Councillors prior to ordering.. All agreed and requested clerk to purchase.</p> <p>6.3 All Planning Application actions have been completed.</p> <p>6.4 Hedge by playing field – John White is not now able to carry out this work. Clerk to ask TF for price.</p> <p>6.5 Playground Inspection – This was thought to be generally good. However, there are a few items that will need addressing - Over next few weeks we will have to have a detailed look at all the issues and make plan for correction. Carry over.</p>	<p>JO</p> <p>JO</p> <p>JO</p> <p>All</p>

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

	<p>6.6 Budget / Precept for 2025. Clerk to complete application for £17,000 precept for 2025/26. This has been completed</p> <p>6.7 Clerk to arrange a review meeting with Thomas Fox prior to the start of the 2025 cutting season. This was completed – scheduled for Monday 10th February. Clerk and Cllr. Graham to attend.</p>	JO AG
<p>7.</p>	<p>Planning Applications</p> <p>7.1 24/25/00028/DDT – Dangerous Tree - The Quarterhouse. As this was a dangerous tree application it did not require a PC response. This application doesn't appear on SDC portal – Cllr. Littlewood to check.</p> <p>7.2 24/02735/FUL - Battle Lodge - Extensions and alterations</p> <p>Documents weren't in place – now look OK – Cllr's to look and make comment – by 14th Feb. Cllr. Littlewood to follow up errors with planning / consultation correspondence from SDC</p>	ML JO
<p>8.</p>	<p>District and County Councillors reports</p> <p>8.1 - District Council report – This had been previously supplied and is shown in Appendix 1 Cllr. Littlewood drew attention to the emerging South Warwickshire Spatial Plan which is causing concern in some areas. Unitary Authority White Paper – although the potential changes are unlikely to make much difference, the proposed changes will still need careful planning. There was a conversation about the Ellen Badger convalescence hospital.</p> <p>8.2 – County Councillor's report – This had been previously supplied and is shown in Appendix 2. Cllr. Mills also drew attention to the Unitary Authority White Paper. Although this is not likely to take effect until 2027/28, it is already causing considerable concern.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Parish Plan</p> <p>9.1 Communications Sub-Committee. No items</p> <p>9.2 Environmental sub-committee. 9.2.1 – Cllr. Graham mentioned the recent proliferation of dog waste bags being discarded in the Baulks area of Edge Hill over the past month or two. This appears to be a deliberate act. Consideration to be given to installing a sign advising of the location of the dog waste bin. (Cllr. Payne mentioned that he had a sign available but had a specific distance mentioned so would need careful placement)</p>	AG DP
<p>10.</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>10.1 241 emails and 3 printed communications received since the last meeting.</p>	
<p>11.</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>11.1 Invoices for Payment – 1 transaction had been approved by the signatories and paid by</p>	

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

	<p>the Clerk since the last meeting – See Appendix 3 for details.</p> <p>11.2 2024/25 Accounts – these were discussed – See Appendix 3.</p> <p>11.3 Bank statements for both the Current account and the Savings account covering the period since the last meeting were presented for inspection. These tally with the Parish Council accounts.</p> <p>11.4 Donation to Home Nursing charity. A donation of £200 was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr. Payne and agreed by all. Clerk to make payment.</p>	JO
12.	<p>Parish Maintenance</p> <p>12.1 The maintenance person employed by Orbit has again being carrying out grounds maintenance work at Town Hill. However, it has been pointed out that a seeded Sycamore tree near to No 1 is becoming a problem and needs removal before it causes a problem. Agreed – needs taking out. Approach to be agreed.</p> <p>12.2 Recreation field – trees to the right hand side of the playing field – It appears as though a tree or large branch has fallen. Clerk to ask Ben from Thomas Fox for a quote for removal.</p>	All JO
13.	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>13.1 – There is now a potential plan for the land opposite Obelisk – next to Vicarage – Sarah Brook-Taylor has agreed to attend the April meeting to talk about the new proposals with revised plans for surface water drainage. Clerk to send invite.</p>	JO
14.	<p>Next meeting.</p> <p>The next meeting will be held in Ratley Village Hall on March 6th</p> <p>Dates of following meetings:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April 10th May 22nd (Annual Parish Meeting and annual meeting of the Council) June 26th September 4th October 16th December 11th <p>Meeting closed at 21:15</p>	

Signed (Chair) _____

Date _____

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix I – District Councillor Report

District Council Report December 2024/January 2025

1. Ellen Badger – Rehabilitation Beds – Consultation

There are two potential options that are being consulted on to ensure these beds remain accessible, effective and sustainable. The options are:

Option A – Three sites: Distribute all 35 beds across three sites: Ellen Badger Hospital, Leamington Spa Hospital, and Stratford Hospital.

This would reduce the number of beds currently at Stratford Hospital and Leamington Spa Hospital and return up to 12 beds to the Ellen Badger site.

Option B – Two sites: Provide all 35 beds at two sites, Leamington Spa Hospital and Stratford Hospital.

The wards would remain the same current size at Leamington Spa Hospital and Stratford Hospital and there would no longer be any beds at the Ellen Badger site.

The Trust prefers the second option, i.e. NOT having beds at the Ellen Badger.

SDC have reserved some £1.5M to support the project that included the provision of a GP practice and the Rehab beds. Neither provision is certain. At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting prior to Christmas 2024 I asked the Portfolio Holder for Development if planning permission was granted for a site for beds, would the lack of such provision require a change of use and as SDC had supported the project for beds and new GP facilities and if neither provision was to be implemented then would any grant funding be withdrawn and he assured me that it would.

The original proposal was that rehabilitation beds would be a 'halfway house' for those in Shipston and area before returning to self-sufficiency so easing the bed shortage in the acute care sector and would also provide care in the community. Removing this facility from Ellen Badger not only flies in the proposal but would particularly impact on local families having to travel from the Shipston area to either Stratford upon Avon or Leamington Rehabilitation hospital an almost impossible return journey by public transport.

I therefore urge Parish Councils to advertise the Consultation and help as many as possible to participate.

<https://www.happyhealthylives.uk/integrated-care-board/your-voice/current-consultations/south-warwickshire-community-hospital-rehabilitation-bed-consultation/consultation-document/>

The survey can be accessed here:

<https://surveys.garesearch.co.uk/WebProd/Interview/8U3338DPKOTGSH5Q8U300ASAWP0CJOYK>

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

2. South Warwickshire Local Plan

Central Government have issued a draft revised National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF]. This coincides with the development of the South Warwickshire Local Plan [SWLP] which has been in development as a replacement of the current Core Strategy for SDC but includes Warwick District Council as well and has therefore been developed jointly between the two Councils.

The consultation period for the SWLP commenced on the 10th January 2025 details of which can be viewed at;

<https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/>

I urge all Parish Councils to comment within the consultation period and to encourage residents to do the same as this plan will impact them locally going towards 2050; this is a plan for a generation and will shape the environment in which we live and cherish.

The NPPF focus is on delivering affordable housing and that includes new settlements, traveller sites, and the status of green belt as well as 'green' power generation projects such as solar and wind farms.

In addition, the government has determined that District Councils will be abolished within this Parliament. That makes the design of the SWLP most critical for local democracy and protection of our countryside, because decisions on planning will become more remote from communities by definition.

3. Devolution

As mentioned above, in December 2024 the government issued an English Devolution White Paper. Warwickshire was already designated as a Tier Two devolved Council but retaining the two tier political system of District and County Councils. The white paper would remove the District Council tier but retain Parish Councils. It is likely therefore that Warwickshire will be in the van of implementation which might happen as soon as 2027 [see page 32 of the English Devolution White Paper]. There is therefore an argument to delay WCC elections due in May 2025. District elections are due in May 2027 but would no longer be required with the abolishment of the Councils. It costs around £1,000,000 to run the WCC election and having to repeat the election some 24 months later does not seem a good use of public money but others may take a different view.

In any case, the requirement for a non-mayoral Unitary Authority [Foundation level] is to have a population of 500,000 or more. Warwickshire has around 650,000. A mayoral authority would require a population of 1.5M and to achieve that Warwickshire would need to join with another authority such as Worcestershire or as some District/Borough Council Leaders have suggested, the West Midlands Combined Authority. The Mayor of the West

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Midlands has appeared to have ruled that option out but the Northern Boroughs seem to be in favour as does the Leader of SDC.

If Warwickshire moves in the van of authorities to a non-mayoral Unitary Authority, it can design its own destiny rather than have won imposed that does not have the priorities of residents at its heart.

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RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 2 – County Councillor Report

County Councillor report Ratley and Upton Parish Council Meeting 28th January 2025

Quit Smoking in 2025

FREE stop smoking support is available for everyone living or working in Warwickshire aged 12+ this new year. In 2019, there were an estimated 74,000 deaths in the UK attributed to smoking this was a 3% decrease from 2018.

Start your smoke free journey today <https://smokefreecw.co.uk/>

Warwickshire welcomes new Safe Accommodation Strategy for victim-survivors of Domestic Abuse

In line with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Warwickshire County Council and its partners has launched its Safe Accommodation Strategy. The strategy highlights the provision in Warwickshire to provide a haven for victim-survivors over the next three years. Find out more:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5865/warwickshire-welcomes-new-safe-accommodation-strategy-for-victim-survivors-of-domestic-abuse

Energy bill support available this winter

The Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme is distributing funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund to support people who may be struggling with energy bills this winter.

The Household Support Fund can provide short-term financial assistance in the form of a one-off voucher payment to meet an immediate need and help those who are finding it hard to manage the cost of their energy bills. This supplements ongoing emergency support from the [Local Welfare Scheme](#) for residents in financial crisis.

Families and households in Warwickshire can apply whether they use pre-payment meters, pay by direct debit or on receipt of a bill. Residents are invited to contact the Local Welfare Scheme team for a confidential discussion about their situation. Call 0800 408 1448 or 01926 359182 or Visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/householdsupportfund

Learn more: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5860/energy-bill-support-available-this-winter

Measles vaccinations

More than 3 million unvaccinated children are at risk of catching measles in England, make sure you and your child are up to date with a free NHS MMR vaccination. To check if you or your child has had the vaccine, ask at your GP surgery. Go to <http://nhs.uk/conditions/measles/>

Flu vaccinations

Flu is very infectious and easily spreads. It's important to get your winter flu vaccination if you're eligible. Getting vaccinated every year will top up your protection and reduce your risk of severe symptoms. Check your eligibility via <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well/>

New Destination Work programme

A groundbreaking new programme – Destination Work - has been launched in Warwickshire to deliver intensive employability and skills support to economically inactive people aged 25 and over. Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5806/new-destination-work-programme-supporting-people-into-employment>

Cabinet approves key funding for education in Warwickshire

Warwickshire County Council Cabinet has approved a series of additions to its Education Capital Programme 2024/25, focusing on expanding specialist resourced provision and increasing early years places.

The decision, made at the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 28 January, will see significant investment to enhance educational opportunities for children with special educational needs and increasing the availability of childcare places.

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Early Years Expansion: Funding has been approved to support the creation of 69 new early years places in Long Lawford, Rugby, to meet the growing demand for childcare in the area.
Focus on SEND Minor Works: The establishment of a dedicated SEND Minor Works Fund will enable the swift implementation of smaller-scale capital projects to improve SEND provision across the county.

Warwickshire Resilience Forum website

Did you know you can find your key contacts in a range of emergencies, on the Warwickshire Resilience Forum website? This will include *Industrial Accidents and Major Fires. Cyber-attacks. Emerging Infectious Diseases. Extreme Cold Weather. Heatwave and Drought. Loss of Gas or Electricity. Malicious Attacks. Pandemics. Flooding. Animal Diseases.* Select a risk and enter your postcode at <https://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/emergency-contacts/> and find out who's here to help near you.

Register your appliances

Every January, a nationwide campaign gets underway that encourages people to register their appliances allowing them to get up to date safety information, such as product recalls. The cost-of-living crisis is driving more people to consider buying second-hand large domestic appliances, but only one in five (20%) take the simple safety step of registering that appliance with the manufacturer before installing it. Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5889/register-your-old-and-new-appliances-to-stay-up-to-date-with-the-latest-safety-information>

Home to school transport process simplified

Students living in Warwickshire starting Year 7 in September 2025 will benefit from a simplified school transport process. Rather than having to complete applications forms, the Home to School Transport Team will now contact families directly to confirm their eligibility.

This approach is designed to simplify the process for eligible pupils, ensuring transport is arranged earlier and more efficiently, ahead of the new school year.

Discover more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5901/home-to-school-transport-process-simplified-to-help-families->

Warwickshire County Council moves forward with support for all-electric bus city scheme

Warwickshire County Council has approved plans to procure all-electric buses for cross-boundary services operating into Coventry as part of the Coventry All Electric Bus City (CEBC) Scheme. The decision – made at the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 28 January 2025 – will see the Council work with bus operators to introduce a fleet of zero-emission vehicles on key subsidised routes operated under contract to the County Council, contributing to a cleaner and greener transport network for the region.

The CEBC Scheme, a major initiative co-funded by the Department for Transport, aims to transform Coventry into the UK's first all-electric bus city. Warwickshire County Council is playing a vital role in this project, ensuring that subsidised cross-boundary bus services are included in this transition. Along with the West Midlands Combined Authority, Warwickshire has been instrumental in making CEBC a reality through the provision of a £1.366 million contribution from its Capital Investment Fund.

Highway Code video

Warwickshire County Council is pleased to announce the launch of a new video designed to refresh the knowledge of experienced drivers on the updated Highway Code. Read more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5896/new-video-launched-to-refresh-warwickshire-drivers-knowledge-of-the-highway-code>

Unitary Authority

The Government published a White Paper on 16th December proposing Unitary Authorities throughout the UK.

RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Izzy Seccombe has written to Jim McMahon, Minister of State for Local Government to signal willingness to be considered for delivering local government reorganisation and devolution in keeping with the Government's ambitious timeframe and recognising that, consequently, the Government may decide it is necessary to postpone the May 2025 County Council elections. We now await the Government's response which we anticipate by the end of January. When we receive that response, I hope it will be clear on timescales and next steps. Regardless of whether Warwickshire is in the priority programme for Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation, it is clear that the next few years will bring significant change.

Chris Mills
County Councillor
Ratley and Upton

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RATLEY AND UPTON PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 3 - 2024/25 Account

Payments					
Date	Who	Ref	VAT	NET	Total
10/04/2024	WALC Subs	1324316673	£24.20	£151.00	£175.20
11/04/2024	Npower - Lighting charges	1327752922	£12.35	£246.98	£259.33
22/04/2024	Caloo - Swings	1331006163	£737.00	£3,685.00	£4,422.00
22/04/2024	Thomas Fox - Cuts 2 and 3	1331007392	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
22/04/2024	Lighthorne Tree Care - High Street Bank	1330273438		£550.00	£550.00
18/05/2024	J Obbard - Clerk fees Q1	1355034626		£453.57	£453.57
18/05/2024	HMRC - PAYE Q1	1349952711		£302.38	£302.38
25/05/2024	John Hopkins - cleaning bus shelter	1354117305		£100.00	£100.00
25/05/2024	Clear Insurance	1354216305		£382.62	£382.62
30/05/2024	Thomas Fox - Cuts 4, 5 & 6	1354707810	£249.45	£1,247.25	£1,496.70
01/06/2024	Well Medical (J Obbard) - Defib' pads	1359050568	£23.98	£119.90	£143.88
27/06/2024	Thomas Fox - Cuts 7 and 8	1331007392	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
28/06/2024	Monika Morgan - Internal Audit	1376553754		£75.00	£75.00
27/07/2024	Thomas Fox - Cuts 9 and 10	1384370556	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
02/08/2024	Naturescape wildflowers	1401546423	£112.00	£560.00	£672.00
02/08/2024	Claranet Web Hosting	1402960160	£12.10	£60.50	£72.60
03/08/2024	Lighthorne Tree Care - Cherry trees Town Hill	1389261671		£540.00	£540.00
22/08/2024	Thomas Fox - Cuts 11 and 12	1408518338	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
09/09/2024	A Graham - warning tape for wildflowers	1422139270		£9.96	£9.96
24/09/2024	J Obbard - Clerk fees Q2	1431152536		£453.57	£453.57
24/09/2024	HMRC - PAYE Q2	1432579095		£302.38	£302.38
24/09/2024	Ratley Village Hall	1427557221		£750.00	£750.00
24/09/2024	Ratley PCC	1431251103		£750.00	£750.00
25/09/2024	Thomas Fox - Cuts 13 and 14	1428123370	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
26/09/2024	A Berry - Glue for Barbeque	1419425884		£5.85	£5.85
21/10/2024	PlaySafety Ltd	1443318359	£19.60	£98.00	£117.60
21/10/2024	Thomas Fox - Cuts 15 and 16	1434079924	£166.30	£831.50	£997.80
26/10/2024	Caloo - bolt covers	1437099099	£7.10	£35.50	£42.60
28/11/2024	Thomas Fox - Banks, hedges and wall	1465089386	£93.32	£466.62	£559.94
07/12/2024	J Obbard - Clerk fees Q3	1474492963		£644.29	£644.29
07/12/2024	HMRC - PAYE Q3	1474493507		£429.53	£429.53
07/12/2024	Moore & Tibbets	1470777976	£150.00	£750.00	£900.00
07/12/2024	A Berry - land registration	1474497377		£6.00	£6.00
27/01/2025	WCC - Street light maintenance	1497738356	£14.90	£74.52	£89.42
	Year 2024/25 Total		£2,453.80	£18,239.42	£20,693.22
	Current Balance				£2,847.05