

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, D Payne, J Obbard, Clerk, County Cllr. C. Mills, District Cllr. M Littlewood, and 2 members of the public.</p>	
1.	<p>Open Forum</p> <p>1.1 – Can any action be taken to prevent vehicles parking on the grass verges of New Road and Old Road? Can anything be done? This was thought to be an Orbit issue but Cllr. Littlewood believed it was WCC Highway’s responsibility. Clerk to forward recent photo to Cllr. Cllr. Mills – Cllr. Mills to engage with Highways.</p> <p>1.2 – There was another reported breach of the 7.5 tonne weight limit through the villages. [Subsequent to the meeting a MOP reported a further breach. These complaints were forwarded onto Cllr. Mills for onward internal communication]</p>	<p>JO, CW</p> <p>JO</p>
2.	<p>Apologies Apologies were received from Cllr. Berry who was on holiday.</p>	
3.	<p>Declarations of Interest None received</p>	
4.	<p>Edgehill Quarry updates. Cllr. Mills spoke with the enforcement at Highways – Charlie needs evidence – discussion on how difficult this is. There was a discussion around the amount of ‘evidence’ that has already been provided - tyre tracks, dash cam video, witness statements etc. It was agreed that photographing or videoing vehicles breaching the law was difficult, at best, and potentially dangerous and/or illegal. Cllr. Mills to enquire about what evidence is needed and how this might be obtained safely and legally (The previously provided dash-cam footage appeared not to be sufficient?). Weight restriction – the consultation period finished – Cllr. Mills to make enquiries to determine timescale for revised weight restrictions to be implemented.</p>	<p>CW</p> <p>CW</p>
5.	<p>Minutes of previous meeting – 30th Jan 2025 The minutes of the last meeting were proposed by the Chair, seconded by Cllr. Payne, agreed by all and duly signed by the Chair.</p>	
6.	<p>Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 30th Jan 2025</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. Clerk has had a discussion with the MoP, who has agreed that they would not like to make any further enquires at the current time.</p>	

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	<p>6.2 WCC Grant for picnic bench. Picnic bench has been ordered and delivered to 7 Grange Close. Arrangements will need to be made to transport it and assemble it on the recreation ground.</p> <p>6.3 All Planning Application actions have been completed.</p> <p>6.4 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>6.5 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. Completed – on agenda.</p> <p>6.6 Dog waste bags in Edgehill. Cllr. Graham reported that this problem has reduced over the last few weeks. All to monitor the situation for the time being before any preventive measures are considered.</p> <p>6.7 Seeded sycamore tree in Town Hill – this was left of the list of items to discuss with Thomas Fox. Clerk to investigate in-house options.</p> <p>6.8 Fallen tree in recreation ground – on agenda</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>JO</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Planning Applications</p> <p>7.1 25/00119/FUL – Mount Farm – Holiday let buildings. Councillors agreed to support this application given the benefits to the local community that were likely to result. A condition of this support is that a Stop sign and white lines to be installed at the end of Bachelors Lane.</p> <p>7.2 25/00316/COUR – Mount Farm – Prior Approval for change of use for above. No Parish Council comments were required.</p>	
<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 provided further clarification on the SWLP proposals.</p> <p>8.2 – County Councillor’s report – This had been previously supplied and is shown in Appendix 2. Cllr. Mills made special reference to the following items:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults with learning needs – adult social care, SEN etc. • WCC have approved a budget to invest in vulnerable adults and elderly • Unitary authority – agreement has been reached on a proposal – (not likely to take effect until 2027/28) • Council Tax will be increasing by 4 +% in 2025/26 <p>Cllr. Mills reported that an action plan for repairing the hole in The Baulks footpath had</p>	

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	been made and this work will be carried out in the near future.	
9.	<p>Parish Plan</p> <p>9.1 Communications Sub-Committee. No items</p> <p>9.2 Environmental sub-committee. 9.2.1 – It was reported that the grass by the obelisk in Edge Hill has been cut quite low. This is a concern as it is the site of the wildflower planting. It is not known who cut the grass. Clerk to ask Thomas Fox although it is not thought likely to be them as the their cutting season hasn't started yet.</p>	JO
10.	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>10.1 21 emails and 1 printed communications received since the last meeting.</p>	
11.	<p>Finance</p> <p>11.1 Invoices for Payment – 5 transactions had been approved by the signatories and paid by 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>	
12.	<p>Parish Maintenance</p> <p>12.1 Thomas Fox Quote Point 1 – all agreed Point 2 – all agreed Point 3 – all agreed Point 4 – not agreed – speak top TF to remind them that they need to keep it clear going forward. Clerk to instruct Thomas Fox to undertake these work in 1 to 3 above.</p> <p>12.2 – The beech trees in Old Rd opposite the bus stop were reported to looking overgrown and may require crown reducing work. Clerk to ask Lighthorne Tree Care to inspect and quote for work if necessary.</p>	JO JO
13.	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>13.1 – Bollards outside Rupert House in Edge Hill have been damaged in a recent traffic collision - one has been demolished and another loosened. Clerk to report to Street Scene.</p>	JO
14.	<p>Next meeting. The next meeting will be held in Ratley Village Hall on April 10th</p> <p>Dates of following meetings:-</p>	

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April 10th

May 22nd (Annual Parish Meeting and annual meeting of the Council)

June 26th

September 4th

October 16th

December 11th

Meeting closed at 21:15

Signed (Chair) _____

Date _____

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Appendix I – District Councillor Report

District Council Report 5th March 2025

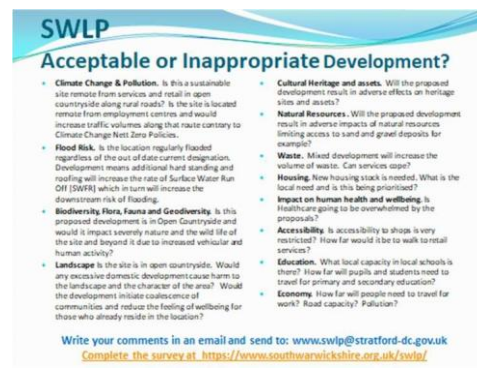
This Month's report covers the recent Budget, South Warwickshire Local Plan [SWLP], and the potential effects of the Government's Local Government Reform and Devolution White Paper.

SDC Budget 2025/26

At the last Full Council Meeting the Administration's Budget for 2025/26 was passed by a majority. I personally voted against a number of items and this is a matter of public record as all votes were recorded. The reason I voted against a number of the proposals was because they were focussed almost exclusively on Stratford upon Avon with little attention to the District as a whole. In particular I was very much against the River Avon Hydro-electric Turbine Scheme. In "headlines" this proposal at a cost of £1.2m is for a scheme that might generate electricity from the flow of the River Avon at the wear. On questioning it was clear that no Cost Benefit analysis has been completed for this project without rigorous research into potential customers. There was a suggestion that the RSC might be interested in purchasing the output but as no capacity calculations have been worked through this is meaningless. My thoughts are that if this scheme were to be commercially beneficial to SDC the production would be need to be considerable and a 3-phase output. No ecological survey has been completed. No initial construction and commissioning costs presented. No lifetime cost of ownership calculations presented, and no overall return on investment shown. This is simply a headline grabber in the year of elections.

SWLP

The South Warwickshire Local Plan is now at Regulation 18 and in consultation. The consultation period ends this week on the 7th March, Friday. I think that you will all, have seen a considerable amount of literature already so I will not repeat that but ask that responses are made by your respective Parish Councils.



Whereas your Parish may not be earmarked for development the issue as I see it is that the proposals as they are would well put unmanageable load on already struggling public services and the general infrastructure of South Warwickshire especially as the Governments new instruction on calculating Housing Need has increased the annual house building target by 104% for our District.

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Local Government Reform and Devolution

You will be aware of the Government's White Paper on Devolution and Local Government reform. The consequences for SDC are that this tier of Local Government will be abolished, and a new Unitary Authority will replace both the County Council as well as District and Borough Councils, and it is possible that it will be necessary to join more than one Local Authority with parts of Warwickshire; Worcestershire for example is one option, as a new Unitary Authority.

The Government has required all authorities to propose a mutually agreed plan which may come into being by 2028/29. Much has to be worked through, and nothing is either set or fully explored at this stage. If agreement across the six Warwickshire authorities cannot be achieved, the White Paper suggests that a plan will be imposed.

A working Group has been set up at SDC to explore the options, and I am a member of that group. I will try to keep you all informed as far as I am able.

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Appendix 2 – County Councillor Report

County Councillor report Ratley and Upton Parish Council Meeting 6th March 2025

Residents offered support with financial concerns

If you are feeling concerned about money and the cost of living, support is available. Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5931/coventry-and-warwickshire-residents-offered-support-with-financial-concerns-during-and-beyond-january>

Warm and well

Help is available if you are struggling to afford food or pay household bills this winter. Information and support is available through www.costoflivingwarwickshire.gov.uk or call the cost of living support line: 0800 408 1449

Mental Health

If you are struggling with your mental health, remember you are not alone. There's support and help available to you and it's just a click or phone call away visit

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/mentalhealth> to find out more.

Adults with a Learning Disability JSNA

The Adults with a Learning Disability, JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment) examines the needs of the adult population with a learning disability aged 16 years and over. This JSNA looks at the demographics of the adult population with a learning disability, their health outcomes, and how some of the wider determinants of health impact on these outcomes. Read the full report:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directory-record/8076/adults-with-a-learning-disability-jsna-2025>

Funding approved for Connect to Work programme

Warwickshire County Council Cabinet has approved the grant funding to develop and deliver Connect to Work in Warwickshire. Connect to Work, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions, is designed to help people with a disability, those with health conditions and people with complex barriers to employment, to find sustainable work. The programme is designed to support people across 3 areas, people who are neurodivergent, people with mental health barriers and people with health barriers. Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5976/funding-approved-for-connect-to-work-programme-in-warwickshire>

Residents affected by Storm Henk flooding

Was your property internally flooded by Storm Henk in Jan 2024?

Warwickshire County Council is calling on residents whose properties were affected by Storm Henk to apply for Property Flood Resilience Repair Grants before the deadline on 31 March. More:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/6003/residents-affected-by-storm-henk-flooding-urged-to-apply-for-property-flood-resilience-grants>

National Highways Survey 2025

You can be assured that the roads and highways in the county are in good hands, as the latest National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey reveals strong public approval for the work carried out by Warwickshire County Council. The survey results show that Warwickshire has ranked second among 29 of its peer authorities for highway maintenance - an improvement of two

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places from the previous year, where it ranked fourth. Read more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5989/warwickshire-ranks-among-the-best-for-highway-maintenance-in-national-survey>

County Council announces intention to maintain current library service levels and amend public health savings

Warwickshire County Council today announced that it intends to remove savings planned in library services and some public health and invest more in preventative activity.

When the budget was set in February, final Public Health grant and Business Rate figures had not been confirmed. Now, having received better than anticipated figures, the Council has reconsidered some of the most difficult savings planned and is now pleased to propose the following:

Scaling back of planned expansion of the Community Managed Library Network.

A £900k boost in spending on preventative activity through our main Public Health contracts, including a particular focus on new birth visits within 14 days, infant mortality, NHS health checks.

Removal of the Public Health savings relating to domestic violence and abuse due for implementation in 2027/28 and Independent Sexual Violence Advice due for implementation from 2026/27; and Removal of the saving relating to mental health prevention services.

Cabinet will be asked to confirm the above at its meeting in April.

Warwickshire County Council approves budget for 2025/26

Warwickshire County Council has approved its budget for 2025/26, alongside the medium-term financial strategy for the next five years.

Investing in key areas to protect vulnerable people

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy includes significant investment over the next five years in key areas such as:

£46.8 million to support vulnerable adults and elderly citizens, meeting increasing demand and managing placement costs while progressing with the integration of health and social care. Such are the pressures on social care, this allocation is nearly six times higher than the £7.9m funds generated by taking the 2% adult social care precept.

£8.1 million for children's social care services, including £5.5 million to address rising costs and demand for children's placements.

£7.4 million in home-to-school transport, ensuring services meet demand, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Council will also use £4.813 million from reserves in 2025/26 to cover time-limited costs and budget allocations.

Warwickshire County Council debates local government reorganisation

Following a meeting of Warwickshire County Council on 18th February, County Councillors have unanimously reached agreement on the key points that will underpin the development of a proposal for local government reorganisation in Warwickshire. This decision follows the Government's publication of the English Devolution White Paper on 16 December 2024 which set out ambitions for both devolution and local government reorganisation.

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On 5 February 2025 the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution wrote to the leaders of the six councils in Warwickshire to invite them to develop a joint submission proposing local government reorganisation in the county. This invitation set out guidance for the development of any proposals and the criteria against which proposals will be assessed, along with a timeline for this work to be completed. An interim plan is required by 21 March 2025, with full proposals submitted to Government by 28 November 2025.

The Council meeting provided an opportunity for all County Councillors to discuss and debate the subject of local government reorganisation in Warwickshire and share their views. The principles agreed by all County Councillors at the meeting will underpin the development of the proposals and the interim plan due in March. The County Council committed to engaging with District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils, and communities in developing proposals. A cross-party working group will be established to support this work.

Council tax increase

The Council Tax increase from April will be capped at the Government's national limit of 4.99%, including a 2% rise for adult social care and a 2.99% core increase for all services. This is equivalent to an increase of £1.67p per week for a Band D dwelling. Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5958/warwickshire-county-council-approves-budget-for-2025-26-to-support-vulnerable-residents-amid-financial-challenges>

Support for residents facing financial hardship

Anyone struggling to pay their Council Tax is encouraged to contact their local District or Borough Council to explore potential discounts or exemptions.

Additional information on support for households facing increased costs is available at <https://www.costoflivingwarwickshire.co.uk/>

Hole along the Baulks

A site visit was held on February 19th to look at the problem with the hole along the Baulks. The landowner of Grange Hollow, Roger Field will be instructing his builder to extend the fence downwards into the hole while WCC will make the footpath safe.

Chris Mills

County Councillor

Ratley and Upton

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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
03/02/2025	No Butts Bins - picnic bench	1498576571	£226.80	£907.20	£1,134.00
13/02/2025	Shipston Home Nursing donation	1504073874		£200.00	£200.00
28/02/2025	J Obbard - Clerk fees Q4	1507542165		£517.14	£517.14
28/02/2025	HMRC - PAYE Q4	1516721007		£344.76	£344.76
01/03/2025	Thomas Fox - Banks and hedges 2	1521846008	£39.24	£196.22	£235.46
	Year 2024/25 Total		£2,719.84	£20,404.74	£23,124.58
	Current Balance				£415.69