

## **County Councillor report Kineton Parish Council Meeting 25th February 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](http://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, through a number of supported employment services to plan a journey to work and receive extensive support and coaching to gain and remain in work. Find out more about this exciting

programme of work:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5976/funding-approved-for-connect-to-work-programme-in-warwickshire>

### **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 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:

No changes to Sunday opening hours.

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.

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/>

Chris Mills

County Councillor

Kineton