

## **County Councillor report Lighthorne Parish Council Meeting 14th January 2025**

### **Quit Smoking in 2025**

Make 2025 the year you quit!

There's never been a better time

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 safe 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](http://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](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/householdsupportfund)

Learn more: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5860/energy-bill-support-available-this-winter](http://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/>

## **Be better prepared for extreme cold weather**

Take a few minutes to learn how to keep your home running smoothly in cold weather. Find out how to prevent pipes from freezing, and more top tips at [www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/extreme-cold-weather/](http://www.warwickshireresilienceforum.org/risks/extreme-cold-weather/)

## **Improving school experiences for neurodivergent children**

Neurodivergent children and young people in Warwickshire are set to benefit from a new pilot which aims to better support them in the classroom.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5801/new-initiative-to-improve-school-experiences-for-neurodivergent-children-in-warwickshire>

## **Becoming a childminder**

Could becoming a childminder be your new year resolution? Warwickshire County Council is encouraging residents to consider a rewarding career change that allows them to make a real difference in the lives of young children: childminding Discover more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5819/make-a-difference-in-2025-become-a-childminder->

## **Cabinet approves Warwickshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029**

On Thursday 12 December, Warwickshire County Council approved the Warwickshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029, a comprehensive five-year plan designed to address key challenges in services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

### **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. The programme will provide intensive support designed to engage some of the hardest-to-reach people in our communities. Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5806/new-destination-work-programme-supporting-people-into-employment>

### **Leamington Town Vision**

The transformation of Leamington Spa's town centre has taken a step closer after the draft Leamington Town Centre Vision was approved by Warwickshire County Council's cabinet. The Vision is a high-level strategic document aimed at guiding the future regeneration of the town over the coming decade.

Read more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/5818/warwickshire-county-council-endorses-ambitious-vision-for-leamington-spa-town-centre>

### **Unitary Authority**

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

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

Lighthorne