

County Councillor Report

Lighthorne Parish Council Meeting 10th February 2026

Utility bill support available in Warwickshire

A scheme providing financial assistance to help those who may be struggling with their utility bills this winter is now available until 16th February.

The Warwickshire Local Welfare Scheme is distributing funding from the Department for Work and Pensions' Household Support Fund providing 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 and water bills. Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7370/utility-bill-support-available-through-warwickshire-local-welfare-scheme>

Direct Payments for Social Care

If you provide regular unpaid emotional or physical support to a friend, neighbour, family member or member of the community you might be able to receive a payment from us, to help support you outside of your caring role?

Find out more <https://orlo.uk/5UZC5>

New support for Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance

Support is being rolled out across Warwickshire to help children and young people who are struggling to attend school. Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) describes the difficulties some children experience in going to school or their education setting. It is not about refusal or a lack of motivation. For these children, attending school can feel overwhelming and emotionally distressing. These difficulties are often linked to anxiety, emotional wellbeing or unmet needs and are more common for children who are neurodivergent, have sensory differences, or have experienced challenging life events. Without the right support in place early on, these challenges can impact a child's mental health, friendships and learning, and place additional pressure on families. Read more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7371/supporting-attendance-and-wellbeing-warwickshire-introduces-new-support-for-emotionally-based-school-non-attendance>

Dedicated Schools Grant for 2026/27

Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has approved the allocation of the 2026/27 Dedicated Schools Grant, confirming how more than £752 million of government funding will be used. Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7382/warwickshire-county-council-agrees-allocation-of-752-million-dedicated-schools-grant-for-2026-27>

Sexual Violence Awareness Week 2026

This Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week, Warwickshire County Council and partners are reaffirming the message that #ItsNotOK for any form of abuse. Advice and support are available across Warwickshire for anyone who needs it. Read more: Nationally 1 in 4 women and 1 in 5 men have experienced rape or sexual abuse, and at least 1 in 6 children too.

This Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week, Warwickshire County Council and partners are reaffirming the message that #ItsNotOK for any form of abuse. Furthermore, advice and support is available across Warwickshire for anyone who needs it.

The emphasis for this year's campaign is around open conversations, recognising survivor-led awareness and a collective responsibility to challenge stigma and harmful behaviour to help protect victims. On average, female survivors take 12 years for them to reach out for support, and this is even longer for male survivors, which is around 26 years.

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7392/warwickshire-stands-with-survivors-for-sexual-abuse-sexual-violence-awareness-week-2026>

Loneliness

Loneliness can impact mental and physical health, and older people are most at risk during winter. Warwickshire offers local groups, befriending services, and mental health resources to help you stay connected. In Warwickshire, it is estimated 23,500 people aged 16-64 in Warwickshire may be lonely all or most of the time. Age UK runs a telephone befriending service which allows you to sign up for a free weekly friendship call. It can be a great way to speak to someone new. Search 'telephone friendship' on the Age UK website to find out more or call 0800 434 6105. You could also visit your local Age UK to see if there are any classes or local groups you could attend.

Have your say on Local Government Reorganisation

The government has launched a consultation to invite residents, businesses, and key stakeholders, to have their say as part of the consultation on what Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) should look like in Warwickshire. Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7405/have-your-say-on-local-government-reorganisation-in-warwickshire>

Warwickshire LRF: Sandbag position statement

Did you know Warwickshire's Resilience Forum has published a Sandbag Position Statement? It lays out the ability of each of Warwickshire's local authorities to provide sandbags in case of flooding.

Visit <https://orlo.uk/MKrih> to learn the approach for your area.

Innovative road safety scheme coming to the Fosse Way

Warwickshire County Council has launched a pioneering road safety initiative aimed at tackling inappropriate speeding on rural roads, with a particular focus on the historic Fosse Way. Read more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7383/county-council-launches-innovative-road-safety-scheme-on-fosse-way>

Warwickshire's highways maintenance contract

Warwickshire County Council has awarded its highways maintenance contract along with partners at Coventry City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to Balfour Beatty Living Places. Find out more:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/7390/seven-year-contract-awarded-for-warwickshire-s-highways-maintenance>

Concept Masterplan for the Parade in Leamington Spa finalised

A masterplan that will create a vibrant, accessible and thriving environment on and around the Parade in Leamington Spa has been finalised.

The Parade Public Realm Concept Masterplan has been brought about by the Leamington Transformation Board which comprises key stakeholders including Royal Leamington Spa Town Council, Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

The masterplan has a range of adaptations and changes that, combined, will create a place that will boost the economy, create a safer and accessible environment for visitors of all ages and reinforce the town's Conservation Area status through its design.

These include:

Exploring options to remove vehicular traffic from the Parade (from Hamilton Terrace to Clarendon Avenue)

- A new Town Square adjacent to Town Hall, extending to Livery Street and Hamilton Terrace
- A water feature such as a fountain or mirror pool to make a more attractive space. The aim is to encourage families and longer visits so this will support the objective of creating a family friendly, fun space
- Integrating trees, planting and sustainable management of water
- Supporting cycle access, prioritising segregated cycle links on side streets along with secure cycle parking in the town
- Fully accessible seating, carefully located with different views and social settings for all ages and abilities

- Prioritising safety with good lighting, natural surveillance and designs that consider neurodivergence and the safety of women and girls

Chris Mills

County Councillor

Lighthorne