

# FOCUS

on Wellesbourne County Council division

News from your Lib Dem team:  
Cllr George Cowcher and Cllr David Johnston



Cllr George Cowcher

07812 584432  
george.cowcher@stratford-dc.gov.uk



Cllr David Johnston

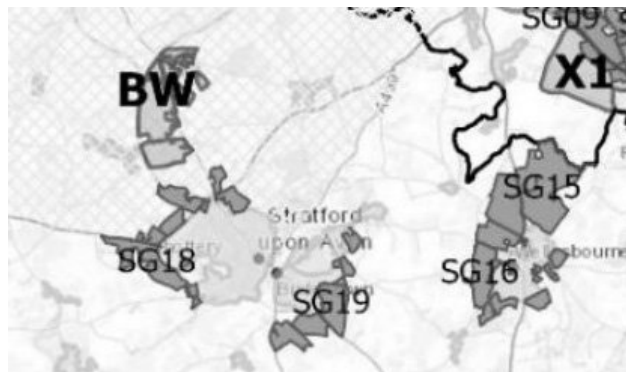
01789 841100  
david.johnston@stratford-dc.gov.uk



Winter 2025



Above: a new settlement near Bearley is being proposed in the plan, partly because of access to a railway station. Stated capacity would be 6,762 dwellings with development expected post 2037.

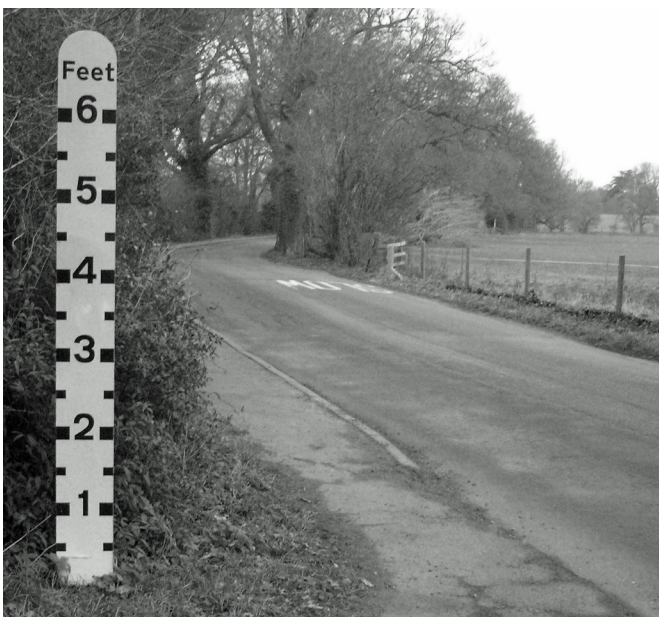


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Above is an extract from the 'Preferred Options' report. BW is the possible new settlement at Bearley and SG 15 and 16 are the possible developments around Wellesbourne. Full details can be found on the interactive map in the report.



Proper infrastructure and flood precautions are needed **before** building takes place.



## HAVE YOUR SAY!

The Government keeps proclaiming that we must have growth and has promised to build 1.5 million houses, as well as 'deregulating' planning. Stratford and Warwick District Councils are determined that we have a proper local plan to ensure growth happens in a sustainable and sensible way, with any new housing and commercial development accompanied by necessary infrastructure. This must cover roads, schools, medical facilities, flood protection, amenities and open space.

The new local plan will cover the period up to 2050. It will ensure new development serves our communities first and address current difficulties in infrastructure arising from the weakness in the current local plan - the Conservative strategy approved in 2016.

The first iteration of the plan has now been published and is referred to as the 'Preferred Options'. An extract from this is shown adjacent to this. It is now open for public consultation until 7<sup>th</sup> March 2025. We would urge you to make your views known. Cllr George Cowcher, the Council's portfolio holder for Planning and Economic Development, has agreed to meet Wellesbourne Parish Council to discuss the village's response. This offer is available to any other Parish Council in the County Division who would like to explore the plan further. There are also public meetings in Stratford, Shipston and Southam. See the Stratford District Council web site for details.

Issues that you may wish to give your views about include:

- **Wellesbourne** has two 'Growth zones' - one north of the village and one to the south. Some of the land is in the Neighbourhood Plan as suitable for development, but much of it is not! You may consider some or all of it as unsuitable for development - have your say!
- At **Bearley** a new town is proposed - largely because there is rail access there. How do you feel about that?
- The Plan makes little reference to **infrastructure** and this is your chance to say what is needed for your community. How do we deal with the dangerous A46, lack of school places, flooding? If there is to be growth in your village, what additional facilities need to be provided?

Councillor George Cowcher, District Councillor for Wellesbourne South, said, 'It is an enormous challenge to accommodate what the Government is seeking in growth, providing for the needs of our communities and protecting our wonderful environment and the character of the area, as well as addressing sustainability and the need to move towards zero carbon'.

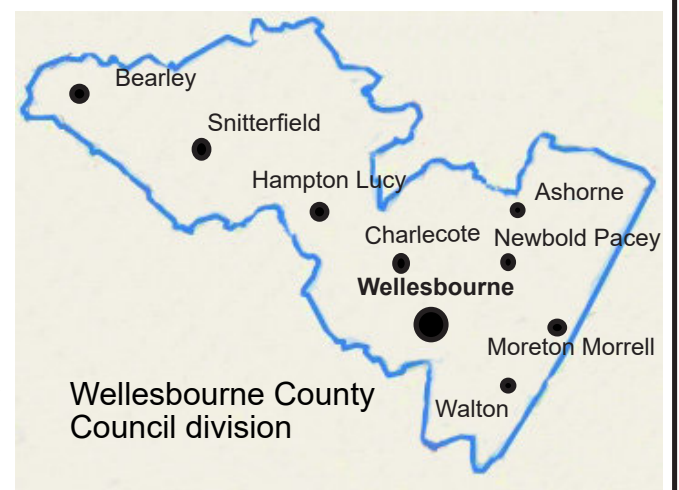
YOUR FEEDBACK IS VITAL TO THE SHAPING OF THE FUTURE OF OUR COMMUNITY. TO VIEW THE PROPOSALS AND HAVE YOUR SAY GO TO:

[www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/preferred-options](http://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/preferred-options). The plan can also be viewed at Elizabeth House and Stratford and Wellesbourne libraries.

## COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

After a long delay the government has now announced that the elections for Warwickshire County Council will go ahead in May. The Conservative leader of the county council had been trying to get them delayed, pending a move to a 'Unitary' authority ie. merging the districts, boroughs and county council into one authority.

The Liberal Democrat candidate for the Wellesbourne division at these elections will be George Cowcher. George was previously an effective county councillor and is currently a district councillor and on the Cabinet of Stratford District Council.





Join our campaign online at [www.stratfordlibdems.org](http://www.stratfordlibdems.org)

# FIGHTING FOR SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE

In December the Labour Government announced their plans to reorganise local government in England and move from two tiers of local government to 'Unitary Authorities'. This could mean all the district and borough councils in Warwickshire being merged with the County Council, to create one council for the whole of the county. The Government maintains that reorganisation will save money and allow the devolution of Government money to be administered locally. The Conservative Leader of the county council - with minimal consultation, even with her own Conservative Councillors - has decided that Warwickshire should be a single Unitary authority and that the district and borough councils, including Stratford, should be abolished. Furthermore, she has proposed that Warwickshire should join the West Midlands Combined Authority. Unlike other adjoining shire counties she has looked at no other options.

## SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE FIRST

Liberal Democrats in Stratford are concerned that the Conservative proposals do nothing to protect the interests of South Warwickshire. There is little common interest between Stratford and Nuneaton. Furthermore, Stratford has financial reserves and these might be hijacked to bale out other councils like Warwickshire County Council which has seriously deteriorating finances.

Standing up for South Warwickshire means protecting **your** finances and your lower council tax. Joining the West Midlands Combined Authority as the only shire council means we could have to accept massive overspill as all of the other authorities are urban cities and boroughs.

Lastly, Conservatives trying to save their own skins have proposed the cancellation of the county council elections in May, **DEPRIVING YOU OF ANY SAY IN THE MATTER.**

**Stratford's Lib Dem MP, Manuela Perteghella, has demanded residents keep their vote. Conservative MPs have been silent.**

## Health and Social Care in Crisis

As the BBC reported in early January on the Warwick Hospital crisis:

*'Warwick Hospital has 375 beds and at one point the predicted demand was almost 100 more than that. For the first time ever, it's had to declare a critical incident - the highest alert level in the NHS. At one point during our time at the hospital we were taken to a bank of screens displaying statistics. It showed that patients in the emergency department were waiting nearly 30 hours for a bed and there were six ambulances queued up outside. One had been there for four hours. 'It's the worst I've ever seen it,' one doctor says'*

Though the critical incident was stood down this shows the pressure on our health service locally. At present the NHS is consulting on removing the community beds at the Ellen Badger. These are popular with local people as it is so much easier to travel to Shipston, instead of Stratford or Leamington.

Liberal Democrats will continue to press the Labour Government, which has put off reform of the social care system again, asking for yet another report, which will take three years. Delayed discharge of patients aggravates the hospital beds' shortage and happens because of delays in hospital discharge processes or when other care arrangements are not available.

According to NHS England data, in February 2024 there were between 13,200 and 14,200 patients remaining in hospital each day who did not meet the criteria to stay. This represents over one in eight general and acute beds in England.



**Above:** Manuela Perteghella, the Liberal Democrat MP for Stratford on Avon, fully supports the campaign to keep beds at the Ellen Badger Hospital in Shipston. Last year Manuela became the first person in over 100 years to defeat the Conservatives at a General Election in Stratford.

# LOCAL NEWS

## THIS IS WHY WE NEED REPRESENTATION ON WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

- Barford quarry proposal: still not determined. The Conservatives have put this in their Minerals Plan and our county councillor was not there to vote against it.
- Market traffic: the market traffic in Wellesbourne on the Saturdays before Christmas was chaotic. The market operators are willing to work with the Police and highway authorities to resolve this but there has been no coordination to discuss this.
- Poor educational planning: Wellesbourne school is over-subscribed and some parents are having to see their children travel to Barford and other schools outside the village.
- Due to poor provision for those with special educational needs, children have to travel long distances - often outside the county and at huge cost.
- Do you know how your county councillor spends her yearly budget? There is no annual report on how this money is spent and are we certain that it is all used to improve services in the Wellesbourne Division?



Left: the road junction in the middle of Snitterfield and the junction of Kings Lane with the A46 are two concerns about traffic that residents have raised with Cllr George Cowcher.



There is pressure of numbers on some of our local schools, including Wellesbourne, shown here. This means that some children do not get to go to their local school and have to travel every day.

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Wellesbourne Airfield application is still being determined. There are doubts about the viability of the proposals and the Planning Authority is seeking expert advice about the future operation of the airfield. It is essential that the new runway can be funded without crippling debt on any future operations at the airfield.

The application for the Wellesbourne campus at the HRI site has been lodged with the council and a further consultation is about to start. The outline application will facilitate the creation of 4000 quality jobs. The University facilitated a satisfactory exhibition and many of those who attended were impressed by the proposals.

A proposal to build houses on land off Kineton Road is premature as Stratford District Council has the required five year housing land supply.

## OTHER UPDATES

Wellesbourne Parish Council is to carry out a survey of demand for housing in the village. This will provide important data for use in delivering the number and types of housing that ought to be provided in the village in the South Warwickshire Local Plan.

The District Council is preparing a bye law for the village which will cover all open spaces and recreation and sports facilities. It will make it illegal for owners to allow their dog to foul any of these areas. This will help all parishes, as previously this responsibility was left to them.

Congratulations to the Flood Control Group for their clearance of the brook in Wellesbourne. Also for the work in Snitterfield where engineering is ongoing to ensure water quality is improved in the brook running through the village.

**HOW TO CONTACT US:** Phone: 01789 295970

email: [stratforduponavonlibdems@gmail.com](mailto:stratforduponavonlibdems@gmail.com)

Website: [www.stratfordlibdems.org.uk](http://www.stratfordlibdems.org.uk)

Twitter: @sualibdems

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/sualibdems](http://www.facebook.com/sualibdems)

By post: Liberal Democrats, 55 Ely Street, Stratford, CV37 6LN