Ufton Parish Council Meeting – April 1st 2025

District Councillor Report: Susan Ostrander

Headlines:

1. SWLP Update
2. Tree planting project – update
3. Local Government Reorganisation – 2 options being considered
4. Recycling news and changes

1. Update on the South Warwickshire Local Plan Consultation

Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils extend their gratitude to residents, Parish Councils, landowners, businesses, developers, and agents for their participation in the South Warwickshire Local Plan consultation, which concluded on 7th March 2025.

During the consultation period, the Councils received 19,367 representations submitted via the online portal from 4,682 respondents. In addition, a further 1,402 submissions were received via email and post. These handwritten and emailed responses are currently being processed, and the final number of representations will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

In total, 6,084 individuals and organisations participated in the consultation.

Next Steps

Once all responses have been logged, the planning team will undertake a detailed review of the feedback to inform the next stage of the South Warwickshire Local Plan. A consultation summary statement will also be published later in the year to provide further insights into the findings.

2. Tree Planting Success in Stratford-on-Avon District

The Trees Call for Action Project (TCAP) has successfully planted 275,182 trees across the West Midlands, supporting landowners, farmers, and community groups in tree planting and maintenance. Launched in 2022, TCAP was delivered by the Heart of England Forest in partnership with Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Warwick District Council, and Wychavon District Council, funded by a £499,446 grant from the Trees Call to Action Fund.

In Stratford-on-Avon District alone, 41,734 trees were planted, with support provided on planting advice, woodland design, maintenance, and funding opportunities. Warwick District saw 27,721 trees planted, and Wychavon focused on restoring orchards, planting 13,742 trees.

The Free Trees for Farmers initiative, supported by Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, and others, provided woodland and hedgerow packs to farmers and landowners, significantly increasing tree cover across the region. The project concludes on **31st March**, but ongoing support and resources will be available via the Heart of England Forest website to continue assisting communities and landowners.

For more information, visit: **www.heartofenglandforest.org/trees-call-action-project**

3. Local Government Reorganisation

The Government's English Devolution White Paper outlines plans to restructure local government by replacing existing councils with larger Strategic Authorities led by elected mayors. This means that by April 2028, our current District and County Councils may be replaced by a unitary system.

On 5th February 2025, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and others in Warwickshire were invited to submit proposals for how this new system should look. Two options are being considered:

1. A single unitary council covering the whole of Warwickshire (population 617,000).
2. Two unitary councils, one for North Warwickshire, Nuneaton & Bedworth, and Rugby (323,000 people) and another for Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick (295,000 people).

The second option is the option favoured by Stratford District Council, in part, because we feel it will keep your carefully managed money (Stratford's finances are in very good order) in the south of the county rather than being siphoned off to the north of the county where need is greater. Although the Government has said they are looking for unitaries of ~500k, they have also said that they will consider smaller numbers, and we are set to grow considerably under the new projected planning numbers. This may also be taken into consideration.

The District Council is working on a proposal, and there will be opportunities for public input before the November 2025 deadline. A further update will be provided on how this will happen following the local elections on 1 May 2025 and there will be a further detailed briefing at the next meeting of the Parish Forum. Following the formal submission in November 2025, the Council understands that Government will undertake a consultation exercise in the spring of 2026 on their preferred option for the future of Warwickshire. A final decision on this issue is expected by Government by the Summer of 2026.

During this unsettling period the Council is committed to continue to deliver high quality services. There may of course be some anxiety from Parish Councils; the new Parish Liaison Officer will be able to help in providing support to some of your queries.

4. Recycling news and updates

Stratford-on-Avon District had the **third highest** household recycling rate in England last year (2023/24) according to figures published by Defra this week.

With a 61.0% household recycling rate, Stratford-on-Avon District Council has jumped up two places in the league table after seeing a 1% increase from the previous year.

Increasing recycling rates brings significant environmental, economic, and social benefits, including:

- Waste Reduction – Less landfill and incineration, reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

- Resource Conservation – Saves raw materials like metals, paper, and plastics, preserving natural resources.
- Energy Savings – Manufacturing with recycled materials requires less energy than using virgin resources.
- Cost Efficiency – Reduces waste disposal costs for councils and taxpayers.
- Job Creation – Supports employment in recycling and waste management industries.
- Environmental Protection – Reduces litter, protects wildlife, and improves overall sustainability.

From the 14th April there will be additional items that can be recycled:



Any excess recycling that you cannot fit in your bin can be placed in a rigid container, cardboard box or clear plastic sack next to your recycling wheeled bin. **Please do not put your recycling items into plastic bags or refuse sacks, as materials need to be separated at the recycling facility.**

Textiles, household batteries and small electrical items can be put into a standard carrier bag and placed next to or on top of your recycling bin.