

**ROWINGTON PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF A MEETING
HELD AT LOWSONFORD VILLAGE HALL ON THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30PM**

Present

Councillor A Coleman (Chairman)
Councillor J Coles
Councillor I Henderson
Councillor A Marsden (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor D Weir
Parish Clerk – Nicola Everall
8 members of the public
Warwick District Councillors R Hales & D Armstrong

151. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Parish Councillor L Firth, District Councillor K Aizlewood & County Councillor J Cooke.

(No apology or response received from Councillor T Remment for five meetings).

152. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

153. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2025

It was proposed by Councillor I Henderson and seconded by Councillor A Marsden, that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 having been previously circulated were agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

154. Resignation of a Parish Councillor

The Chairman reported that Tricia Parker had resigned from the Parish Council.

155. Questions from Members of the Public

Mrs B Wilson asked for information regarding a suggested boundary change between Lapworth and Rowington as she understood that Lapworth Parish Council had approached Rowington Parish Council to change the current boundary up to the bridge, which would incorporate Kingswood into Lapworth.

The Clerk confirmed that she had not received any such notification.

156. Report from County Councillor

In the absence of Councillor J Cooke, the Clerk read his report which is also appended to these minutes.

157. Report from District Councillors

District Councillor R Hales read the WDC report which is also appended to these minutes. Councillor D Armstrong encouraged everyone to submit their objections to the SWLP before 7 March.

158. Planning Matters

a) The following planning matters were reported.

Application Number	Application Details	Comments required by	PC Decision	WDC Decision
W24/0927	Land to North East of High Cross Lane, Shrewley Change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian, construction of stables, hard standing and outdoor arena.	08/08/24	Object	Granted
W24/1094	Oaktrees, The Cumsey, Pinley Remodelling of second floor	04/11/24	Object	Appeal Dismissed

b) Planning Applications

W24/1725 - The Homestead, Case Lane, Shrewley - Erection of a two storey rear extension

Whilst members raised no material objections, they did question why there was no Design Statement available for viewing and raised concerns regarding the overall percentage increase on the property.

c) South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) Preferred Options Consultation – Call for Sites
The SWLP Consultation went live on 10 January and is open until 7 March 2025.

The Chairman had asked members for their views on the SWLP at the previous meeting in order to facilitate a co-ordinated response for submission.

Councillor D Weir proposed that the Parish Council holds a public meeting and also employs the services of a Planning Consultant to formulate a response. A majority of Councillors voted in favour of this proposal, and it was resolved accordingly.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.30pm due to personal issues. The remainder of the business would be transacted as quickly as possible.

Signed..... Designation..... Date.....

Report from District Councillors

South Warwickshire Local Plan

The Public Consultation on the Preferred options is now open and runs until 7 March.

The plan describes a need to build over 50,000 new homes by 2050, in response to the national “housing crisis”. It includes the identification of 36 emerging housing and employment growth location options (12 potential new settlement and 24 strategic growth location options) across South Warwickshire that, based on current evidence, are considered suitable growth locations.

The proposals can be viewed following this link: <https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swlp/preferred-options.cfm>

Responses are sought via a Portal and a series of directed questions, for which you need to register:

<https://southwarwickshire.oc2.uk/instructions>

English Devolution White Paper

There is much discussion and speculation about the future of Warwick District Council (WDC) and the potential for delayed elections to Warwickshire County Council (WCC) as a result of government proposals.

Essentially two major structural changes are proposed.

Firstly, it is proposed to extend existing mayoral arrangements such that the whole country will be covered by a patchwork quilt of elected mayoral “strategic Authorities” (such as the West Midlands Combined Authority - WMCA). Areas not covered are asked to work out how they can combine into an equivalent that includes Warwickshire.

Secondly, it is proposed to abolish a tier of local government and form Unitary Authorities that combine the functions of District / Metropolitan / County Councils. The aim of this is to centralise services and to save money otherwise spent on local elections. Again, Local authorities are asked to agree these arrangements amongst themselves.

It appears likely that WDC will be subsumed within a new Unitary Authority, by May 2027 or May 2028. District-level elections will be abolished and non-essential services are likely to be cut-back, to save costs and decisions on local services will be made at a more remote level. There is no reference in the proposals to the future of Town and Parish Councils.

WCC has asked government to delay the May 2025 elections and has proposed that WCC and its constituent District Councils join the WMCA (i.e. strategic Mayoral authority).

The Council met on 30 January to hear numerous external speakers and to debate the situation. During the discussion it was clarified that there will be no locally-led consultation about the proposals, it was a matter of “when” rather than “if” proposal would move ahead and that these will be managed by (central) government.

It resolved to ask the Chief Executive and Leader, in conjunction with Stratford on Avon District Council, to explore the potential options:

- To join the WMCA as a constituent member
- To form a new Solihull, Coventry, Warwickshire strategic authority
- To form a new strategic authority with: Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and towns along the M40 / Chiltern line corridor
- To form a new strategic authority with: Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and possibly Shropshire

The Council noted that whichever option it prefers, all have serious challenges, other councils will have different views and the final decision rests with government.

Report From County Councillor

Encouraging love for reading during National Storytelling Week

During National Storytelling Week Warwickshire Schools Library Service (WSLS) is celebrating the joy of reading and highlighting how stories can inspire children and young people.

Reading for pleasure has many benefits – it helps children develop empathy, builds connections with others, boosts wellbeing, and even improves academic success. Stories allow young readers to step into different worlds, see life from other perspectives, and recognise both the similarities and differences that make us unique.

However, fewer children are choosing to read for fun. A recent report from the National Literacy Trust found that the number of children and young people who enjoy reading and do so daily in their free time is continuing to fall. There are many reasons for this, including an increase in screen time, less frequent shared reading at home, and the misconception that reading for pleasure is the same as school literacy work. But when reading is fun, children naturally want to do more of it – and that’s when the magic happens! Please see events in your local Warwickshire Library

Visit Kenilworth Library on 12 February to discover the power of storytelling with Human Books

Warwickshire County Council’s libraries service is inviting you to enjoy a very different type of storytelling experience at Kenilworth Library on Wednesday 12 February, 6-7:30pm.

Step into the remarkable world of Human Books, where stories come alive, and strangers become storytellers.

Human Books are individuals who have volunteered to share their extraordinary life stories with others, speaking their narratives in ways that can inspire, enlighten, or sometimes challenge our own perspectives. In just 20-minute one-to-one conversations you can learn about a stranger's life, their journey, and lessons learnt along the way, embracing the opportunity to enjoy listening to another human being and asking questions without judgement.

The event is open to readers aged 18 and above, with some 20-minute stories expected to cover challenging experiences. Attendees will be encouraged to browse through the available Human Book titles and blurbs carefully before selecting their preferred book.

To secure a free place at Kenilworth Library's event and to find out more about each Human Book, visit www.eventbrite.co.uk/cc/human-books-kenilworth-library-3899933.

Warwickshire Property and Development Group confirms new board member

Martin Yardley has been appointed as a non-executive director for Warwickshire Property & Development Group (WPDG) as the organisation expands its board.

WPDG was launched by Warwickshire County Council in 2021 to realise the full potential of the Council's development sites, commercial buildings and mineral rights across Warwickshire.

Mr Yardley is a former Deputy Chief Executive (Place) at Coventry City Council and was once Chief Executive of Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

A trained town planner, he joined Coventry City Council in 2007. During his 12-year stint at the Council he served as active chief executive, from 2016 to 2017. Yardley now spearheads the development of the University of Warwick's Wellesbourne Campus and has created a development strategy for the 466-acre innovation campus in order to maximise its potential for the University and the wider Warwickshire region.

Dangers of Romance Fraud highlighted in Valentine's Day campaign

Warwickshire County Council's Community Safety Team and Safer Warwickshire partners are sharing valuable advice to help protect people against it, with a social media campaign providing information on spotting the signs of romance fraud and where to report it if you've fallen victim.

Romance fraud happens when someone thinks that they have met the perfect partner through an online dating website or app, but the other person is using a fake profile to form a relationship with them.

The fraudster will use the site or app to gain the victim's trust and ask them for money or enough personal information to steal their identity.

Warwickshire County Council and partners are encouraging residents to ask themselves whether the person they've met online is really who they think they are, so they don't fall victim to romance fraud and stay safe online.

Romance fraudsters are masters of manipulation and will go to great lengths to create a false reality in which an individual feels that they are making reasonable and rational decisions.

But there are steps people can take to protect themselves from being tricked by the manipulative criminals who commit romance fraud.

The challenge for many families and friends of romance fraud victims is being able to disrupt the false reality created, to enable the victim to see the situation for what it really is: fraud.

Safer Internet Day: Young people encouraged to ask if it's 'too good to be true' when online

With Safer Internet Day taking place on Tuesday 11 February, young people in Warwickshire are being encouraged to stay safe online.

This year's theme is 'Too good to be true?', and Warwickshire County Council's Community Safety Team, in conjunction with Safer Warwickshire partners and Child Friendly Warwickshire, have produced a short, animated film featuring the character 'Safer Internet Bear' to encourage younger children to take care when on the internet.

'Safer Internet Bear' also encourages children to be kind and respectful when online and suggests alternative, offline activities they could do instead.

It is hoped that schools, parents and carers will share the video with children and that it will prompt discussions about the changes that young people would like to see to help protect themselves online.

Residents and businesses in Warwickshire to benefit from state of the art mobile coverage checker

The River Severn Partnership Advanced Wireless Innovation Region (RSPA-WIR), of which Warwickshire County Council is a member, partnered with Streetwave, who have developed a web-based tool for residents and businesses, allowing them to enter a postcode, and receive information on the best networks for their area.

The tool allows users to see results based on real data, collected locally by partners, and enables them to make a more informed decision on their choice of mobile operator, as this is a known point of interest for many residents in the local area. This is opposed to standard mobile operator coverage maps, which are usually based on algorithms, and therefore may not give the most accurate and up to date information.