Warndon Villages Parish Council

News May 2025



Chair's Message

With winter well and truly behind us, we can now start to enjoy the spring flowers and blossoms which are brightening our surroundings.

It has been a busy winter for the Parish Council. At our February Parish Council meeting we unanimously approved the 2.5% increase in the Precept for 2025-26, as recommended by the Finance Committee to cover anticipated increased costs in several budget areas.

Speeding remains a real concern, we recently purchased another speed activation sign, which has been placed on Plantation Drive as a reminder to drivers to reduce their speed. Each month Councillor Stephen Hodgson and Councillor Katie Collier download the data and it is circulated to Councillors and West Mercia Police. There continues to be a downward trend on speeding, although these levels continue to be unacceptable. In recent weeks speed checks have been carried out in Dugdale Drive, Plantation Drive, and the dual carriageway around KFC.

Councillor Forrest is chairing a working group to consider other measures to reduce speeding on Warndon Villages roads. The group is inviting public feedback, by completing a short survey, for details please see the article in this Newsletter.

Over the last 18 months the County has gone through changes to the boundaries for Parliamentary, County Divisions and City Council wards. The most recent boundary commission changes are to the County Divisions. While the City still comprises of ten divisions in the city, Warndon Villages Division now aligns with the parish boundary. Consequently, the city ward of Leopard Hill is now divided in two, with polling district of Leopard Hill 2 which includes the old Hospital Site, Newtown Road, the Heights, and part of Aconbury Close - now falling in Nunnery. As a result of Warndon Villages County Division aligning with the Parish Boundary, the Parish Council recommended at its January meeting to rename itself from Warndon Parish Council to Warndon Villages Parish Council. The Parish Council approved the decision to change the parish name. The Clerk wrote to Worcester City Council Monitoring Officer and requested they start the formal process in accordance with s.75 of the Local Government Act 1972. I attended the City Council's February Meeting and spoke at the start of the meeting about how welcome the name change would be. The report on the name change was presented and proposed by Councillor Andrew Cross and seconded by Councillor John Rudge. The vote to change the name was unanimous.

Chair's Message continued…

You have probably heard in the news about the Government's proposals on devolution. There are proposals for Super Unitary authorities to be created and for district councils to be abolished. Recently, I attended an 'Extraordinary' meeting of Worcester City Council, during which it was decided that the preferred option is to establish a South Worcestershire Unitary authority.

Finally, we welcome our new Parish Warden, Neil Gummery, who is already making a real difference throughout the Villages.

This is my final introduction as Chair, although I will continue to serve as a parish councillor. At our Annual General Meeting of Warndon Villages Parish Council in May, Councillor Stuart Forrest who has served as my deputy and managed the Council's finances over the past two years, will assume the role of Chair.

RSPB Garden Birdwatch

In January, over 590,000 people nationally, took part in the Annual Garden Birdwatch with 9.1 million birds counted. We asked any residents taking part, if they would also share their sightings with the Parish Council, to compare how our local birds are performing compared to the national picture. A big 'Thank you' to those who took the time to submit their results. The national results have now been published and indicate that bird species locally align with the Top 3 bird rankings nationally, with House Sparrows taking the number one slot, followed by Blue Tits and Woodpigeon. Goldfinches appear to be a more common occurrence in Warndon Villages with them reaching No 4 in our Top 10 compared with No 8 in the UK. With Blackbirds and Robins featuring in 5th and 6th positions locally, almost mirroring the national rankings. Although Magpies can be seen regularly in our area, at the time of the count they did not feature within our Top 10 list but were placed in 7th position nationally. Locally, Great Tit and Dunnock, came 8th and 9th position respectively with Long Tailed Tits holding 10th equal placing in both local and national rankings. Sadly, no Starlings were reported by residents, but ranked 8th in Worcestershire and 4th nationally.



One of the UK's favourite garden birds, the Blackbird is in decline due to the recent appearance of the mosquito-borne **Usutu** virus. Present in Europe for more than three decades but first identified in the UK (London area) in 2020 and is now spreading across the South East. In 2024 a survey was launched by the **British Trust for Ornothology** to map the decline in Blackbirds and help them better understand the spread and impact of this disease on the UK's population. The public can help with this at **www.bto.org/blackbirds.**

Neighbourhood Plan update...

As you may recall, work towards finalising the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) 'stalled' during the Covid outbreak. The NP process has become very closely linked to the timing of the Review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDPR), it also being delayed due to the impact of Covid. During this period, we have been working to resolve a significant conflict between the NP and the SWDPR in respect of the integrity of the Significant Gap.

The key issue is the land at the junction of Berkeley Way and Parsonage Way where a planning application was approved in 2016 for Gtech to build on the land, in the face of extremely passionate local opposition. As you may have spotted, no discernible development has taken place in the nine years since then. It's a (very) long story, but the following key points may help to explain the gist of the current situation.

In 2023, the Parish Council discovered a "restrictive planning obligation" (RPO), which applied specifically and solely to this piece of land. In simple terms, it was a legal agreement which bound the owner of that land to maintain it as a combination of woodland/grassland "without limit in time". The obligation dates from 1988, when the Warndon Villages development was agreed, in the "Warndon Local Plan". Somehow, this RPO must have been "overlooked" during the process of considering the 2016 application.

The Parish Council contacted the City Council, to check whether the restriction was "genuine" and still legally enforceable. The city Council acknowledged that it was. Unfortunately, despite formal correspondence with the City Council, the PC has not yet been able to resolve the situation satisfactorily. So, as things stand we have a situation where there is an RPO (1988) preventing development on the land and a planning approval (2016), permitting development on the land .. which both clearly conflict with each other.

Meanwhile …..

(1) the land in question is proposed for allocation for employment purposes in the SWDPR which itself is in conflict with the Significant Gap designation.

(2) the Parish Council has recently applied for the land to be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). If successful, this would give the PC the right to purchase the land at some point in the future – according to one of the provisions in the Government's recently announced Local Government Reorganisation/Devolution legislation.

(3) the Hearings for the SWDPR took place during last month, with the Parish Council represented, to ensure that its views were heard, with the aim of persuading the Inspectors to dismiss the proposal to allocate the land, given the highly confused legal situation.

(4) we are watching with interest the proposal for the new school and multi-story car park off Newtown Road. Although there is clear need for more school places, the potential impact of the joint development on traffic in the south of the parish remains very troubling. The Parish Council

will be keeping a close eye on developments.

Of course there's a lot more to the NP than just the above issue. For the most part we have few other "issues" with the SWDPR, as its proposed policies are generally consistent with the policies in our draft NP. But, of course, they may be subject to change during the Examination.

(5) we are also keeping a close eye on proposals on the former (Tolladine) golf course. The recently granted "Permission In Principle" in respect of land off Darwin Avenue indicates that a future "full" application is likely. If so, it will then have to grapple with the seemingly intractable issue of the "narrow, constrained" access route along what is currently a public footpath, without negatively impacting either the Latimer Court Care Home, or the houses on the other side of the path. The previous application on this site was refused on both of those grounds.

Once the Hearings are done, and we learn the Inspectors views, we should be in a better position to finalise our NP, but, I have been saying much the same thing for about four years now, so please don't hold your breath!

If you have any questions, or wish to share your thoughts about any of the above, please contact me at: **andy.taylor@warndonparishcouncil.org**

Cllr Andy Taylor



Warndon Villages Summer Fete

Sunday 13th July 2025
12noon—4pm

The Fete is one of the foremost local, community events and people from miles around visit us to enjoy a traditional village experience.

Enjoy a fun-filled afternoon for all the family with traditional fairground rides, face painting, live music, pony rides, hot food, inflatable games, raffle prizes, local charities, a variety of stalls and much more!

The Fete is also an opportunity to discover all the activities that take place at Lyppard Hub.

Organised by Lyppard Hub and supported by **Warndon Villages Parish Council** and **Tesco**.

Name Change for Warndon Parish

Over the years there have been many discussions in relation to changing the name of the Parish, due to the confusion this has caused with 'Warndon', which does not fall within our parish boundary.

On 17th January 2025, the Clerk to Warndon Parish Council formally requested Worcester City Council to consider changing the name of the Parish from **"Warndon Parish**" to **"Warndon Villages" Parish.**

Permission has now been granted in accordance with Section 75 of the Local Government Act, 1972 and was resolved at the Worcester City Council meeting which took place on 18th February 2025, it was effective with immediate effect.

Therefore, we will now be known as **Warndon Villages Parish Council**.

To view the **'Notice'** in full please go to our website, or you will find a copy on the Parish Noticeboard situated at the entrance to the Lyppard HUB.



Farewell Diane

Reverend Diane Cooksey of St Nicholas church moved to the parish in October 2014. Throughout the last 10 years she has been a very active member of our community and particularly her involvement as a trustee and volunteer at the Lyppard HUB.

We would like to thank Diane for all her hard work in the parish, she will be very much missed.

Diane will be returning to her roots in the Black Country, as Team Rector and Renewal Leader for Gornal and Sedgley benefice. We wish her all the very best in her new role.

Replacement Play Equipment

The 'stepping log walk' at the rear of the Lyppard Hub will be replaced in the coming months due to its age. The Parish Council and Worcester City Council will share the cost.

This site is one of the eleven play areas to be found in Warndon Villages and is specifically designed for use by very young children with equipment provided to develop their co-ordination and balance skills. It can be found at the rear of the Lyppard Hub and is accessed by using the footpath at the (Tesco) side of the Hub building and is available for everyone to use.



Environment

Since the beginning of the year, Jake and his team have been focused on reducing shrub beds, tidying roundabouts, and clearing grass, moss and other debris which has built up on our footpaths during the winter months, ensuring all is tidy, before nature once again springs into action!

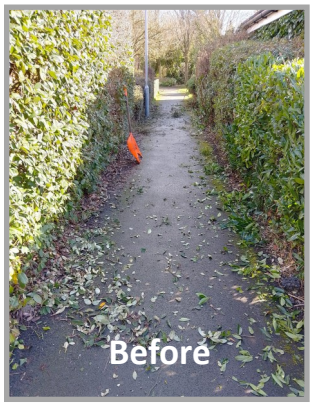
Neil Gummery, the new Parish Warden, began his role in February and is making a big difference continuing the work Jake has been doing on the footpaths and tidying up the greenspaces. Prior to his move to the parish he worked in St John's area, but has also previously worked with Jake's Streetscene team, making him a familiar face in Warndon Villages.

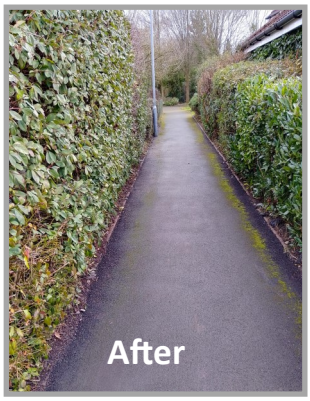
Neil is currently awaiting some additional training before taking over all of the Warden duties which includes managing the Speed Indicator signs. He will also be carrying out work at the allotments and liaising with Matt, the City Council's Conservation Operative, to assist with pond maintenance. He is regularly litter picking around the villages, so when you see him please do say hello!

You may have noticed more wildflower beds being created. along both Woodgreen and Hastings Drives. This initiative was first introduced by the City Council last year to increase biodiversity. Having received so many positive comments from residents the beds are being resown this year. With additional ones being introduced sown with seed funded by the Parish Council.









John Rudge, Parish and City Councillor and his neighbours, following City Council Conservation advice, have been clearing reeds from Corfe Avenue ponds to create more open water and in early March, a significant population of frogs were observed spawning in the area. Additionally, John is also advocating for overdue maintenance at Offerton Lane Local Nature Reserve. The Worcester Environmental Group (WEG) have organised a number of volunteer sessions, which has improved access to the reserve.



Sadly, we have experienced the impact of the winter storms, resulting in the loss of several trees within the parish. Unfortunately, this includes a veteran oak tree located near Walmer Crescent in the Berkeleys, which sustained severe damage. The original developer Taylor Wimpey, being the owner of the land has since ensured the tree has been made safe, but this has meant heavily reducing it. Oak trees are resilient and it is hoped it will re-grow, however should it have reached the end of it's life, then it will go on to provide a valuable resource for deadwood attracting insects and birds.



Wheelie Bin Assistance

Did you know if you have trouble moving your wheelie bins, help is available?

Worcester City Council recognises that not all our residents are physically able to place their recycling and refuse at the boundary edge of their property (nearest the road) on their own and are pleased to be able to offer assistance to those who need it.

An Assisted Collection application can be made to them where you will need to confirm the following:

- I confirm I am physically unable to put my sacks and/or bin out and that there is no-one else in my household or close by who can assist me with my recycling and refuse collections.
- I agree to allow Worcester City Council Staff access to my property in order to collect my recycling and refuse.

www.worcester.gov.uk/recycling-waste/household-waste/request-help-moving-my-wheelie-bin-or-sack

Or speak to Customer Services **01905 722233** Mon to Fri between the hours of 9am & 5pm.

Food Waste Collections



In 2006, the City Council began a three-year plan to provide green and black wheeled bins to improve recycling. After twenty years, further changes include food waste collections for businesses starting on March 31 this year, and for Worcester households by Autumn 2026. This aims to help Worcester become more environmentally sustainable and enhance recycling quality and quantity. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has funded councils for the set-up costs of waste and recycling collections. Waste food will be collected and sent to an anaerobic digester to be turned into biogas.



Dog Poo Bins!

A quick reminder that the black bins in the Warndon villages area can be used for dog-poo bags. Green bins are for recycling, but black ones are for general rubbish including poo bags. There are a good number of dog bins in the Villages area so everyone should be able to find one. It is appreciated by everyone who walks in the area if the place is clean and not strewn with litter (including used dog-poo bags), and also saves us money in our council tax rather than having to pay the Parish Warden or City Council cleaners to pick it up for us. If you don't like carrying the bag, you can buy waterproof pouches to put the bag in until you get to the next bin.



Daffodils in Woodgreen Drive

Last autumn **Worcester Environmental Group** volunteers organised and planted native dafffodil bulbs on the bank by Aconbury Orchard, next to Woodgreen Drive, providing a wonderful display this spring and food for hungry insects.

A BIG thank you to you all!

Speed Reduction in the Villages



Warndon Parish Councillors Stephen Hodgson and Kate Collier are responsible for downloading the data from the Vehicle Activated Speed devices which are located on the main roads in the Parish. The number of vehicles which are a breaking the speed limit is alarming, particularly as this is happening during the day and sometimes during school drop off and pick up times!

As a result of these concerns Warndon Parish Council has recently set up a sub-committee to consider how we can make Warndon Villages a better place to live for residents, pedestrians and cyclists. As part of this process we are reviewing traffic calming measures in our neighbourhood to enhance safety and reduce speed. Your feedback is crucial to ensure these measures align with community needs.

Please complete the online survey - Traffic Safety Measure **https://tinyurl.com/4vjzsfff**

Parish Council Meetings 2025

Monday 12 May AGM	**Wednesday 14 May Annual Parish Meeting**	**Monday 9 June**	**Monday 7 July**
Monday 9 September	**Monday 6 October**	**Monday 10 November**	**Monday 8 December**

Warndon Villages Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 14 May 2025, 7.00pm @ Lyppard Hub

Topics for discussion: **Speed reduction in the Parish—we need your views!**

Undeveloped land adjacent to St Nicholas Lane

All residents welcome

Parish Council Surgeries: due to the lack of residents using the surgeries, Councillors have decided to suspend them for the time being, pending review later in the year. Please contact the Parish Clerk if you have a query or concern and would prefer to speak directly to a Parish Councillor.

Website: https://warndonparishcouncil.org Email: clerk@warndonparishcouncil.org
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