

Appendix 6

Great Alne Parish Council Report for Parish Assembly
District Councillor Thom Holmes- 2 March 2024

Budget Proposals for Key Priority Areas:

1. Rural Communities and Vulnerable Residents:

- **Rural Crime Advisors:** £28,000 allocated to support the employment of Rural Crime Advisors, enhancing the capability of the Community Safety Team to address and mitigate rural crime effectively.

- **UBUS Service Support:** An investment of £85,000 to ensure the continuity of the UBUS service, vital for linking isolated communities with crucial public services and enhancing their quality of life.

- **Customer Access Terminals:** A strategic investment of £5,500 to pilot new Customer Access Terminals in Southam and Alcester libraries, aimed at facilitating better access and communication between residents and the District Council.

2. Staying Healthy and Active:

- **Leisure Community Instructor:** £25,000 dedicated to hiring a new Leisure Community Instructor to provide specialised support for individuals with long-term health conditions, aiding their access to beneficial physical activities.

- **Public Playing Pitches:** A reduction in hire fees for District Council-owned public playing pitches, intended to lower barriers to sports participation and encourage more community engagement in physical activities.

3. Cost of Living Crisis Support:

- **Financial Assistance:** An allocation of £250,000 to offer financial support to our most vulnerable residents most affected by the cost of living crisis, with a focus on providing essential aid for energy bill payments.

4. Climate Change Emergency:

- **Carbon Reduction Funding:** An ambitious £500,000 allocated to propel the council toward its carbon reduction targets, including initiatives aimed at reducing energy consumption in leisure centres and other council buildings.

- **Transition to HVO Fuel for Refuse Vehicles:** Dedicated funding to transition the current fleet of refuse collection vehicles to HVO fuel, aiming to cut harmful emissions by 90% as part of broader efforts to adopt more sustainable technologies.

Updates and Information:

1. Waste Management System Review:

- The overhaul of the waste collection system led to a recycling increase, with 68% of district waste now being recycled and a 26% reduction in residual waste, placing stratford in the top 5 councils in England for recycling rates.

2. Concessionary Parking Permit:

- The reintroduction of concessionary parking permits for residents of state pension age for £50 a year enhances accessibility and convenience, supporting the mobility of older community members.

3. South Warwickshire Local Plan:

- Active participation in the South Warwickshire Local Plan, with a focus on assessing and selecting suitable development sites, underscores the council's commitment to thoughtful, sustainable growth.

4. Live & Local Events:

- Continuing our support for the Live & Local network illustrates the council's commitment to cultural enrichment, leveraging Arts Council England funding and local enthusiasm to bring diverse performances to community spaces.

5. Climate Change Fund and Adaptation Strategies:

- The Climate Change Fund, with an initial allocation of £100,000, is poised to support community projects reducing emissions.

6. Winter Warmth Grants:

- Introduction of targeted schemes like the Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2 and the Energy Support Fund, providing direct assistance to vulnerable households for energy efficiency improvements and bill payments.

7. Stratford-upon-Avon Gateway Masterplan:

- Involvement in the Gateway Masterplan Framework, particularly the development of the World Shakespeare Centre, to enhance cultural assets and drive economic vitality in the District.

8. Climate Adaptation Motion:

- The Adaptation Motion I proposed which passed at full council emphasises the need for urgent, coordinated action in response to climate change, particularly addressing the recent severe flooding of communities along the river Alne, including areas like Aston Cantlow and Great Alne. Despite national goals set by the Climate Change Act of 2008, local communities have faced significant impacts, as flooding events become normalised for our rural communities as they are no longer isolated or infrequent events. This motion advocates for a district-wide, integrated strategy focusing on nature-based solutions and collaborative stakeholder engagement to enhance local adaptation and resilience. It calls for leveraging local planning to prioritise climate adaptation, ensuring departments adopt a focused, people-centered approach to drive necessary improvements and secure critical adaptation funding from government.