

## Weekly Update Warwickshire County Council

### Alcester Division

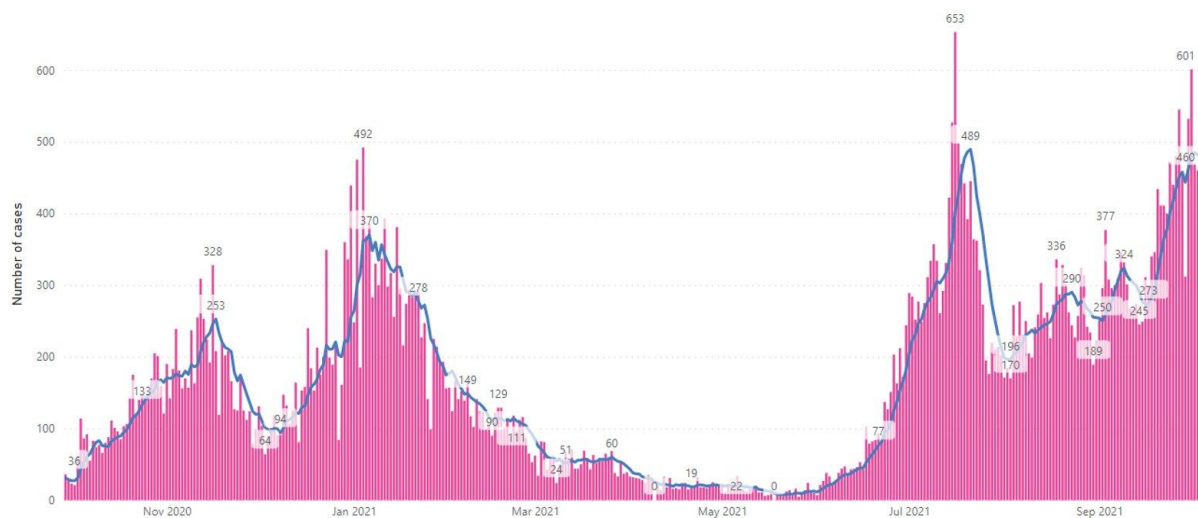
#### Local updates

##### Covid-19:

As the weather starts to turn we are seeing an increase in infection levels across the county, as expected with peaks close to July levels. Our hope is that hospital admissions don't rise dramatically, and deaths remain disconnected from the levels of infection.

Warwickshire cases: Wave 2, from 29/08/2020

Number of cases ● 7 day average



##### County Council Meeting:

At the County Council meeting last week it was agreed that a further £50m would be spent on supporting the new school, Oakley Grove, in South Leamington. It requires further funding due to increased costs in HS2 and levelling the land.

4,500 new homes are being built in the area and that requires a further 1022 children to be schooled. Oakley Grove is being built to support Primary and Secondary education. Early Years will offer 50 places, 420 places in primary school and 900 places in Secondary. SEND resource is also being dealt with a further 8 places for the primary and 10 to 14 places for secondary as a through school.

This additional money comes at no direct cost to the taxpayer. £11.2M will come from 106 developer funding and £38.27M from the Department of Education.

Also Warwickshire's Youth Justice Plan 2021/22 was agreed. For the first time entrants are rising slightly which we need to be aware of and there has been an increase of serious crime (this is across the nation). Therefore, performance of employment, educating and training needs further improvement. The plan looks to address these challenges especially as 69% of young offenders have speech and language challenges, which is why this is being fully funded and supported.

There was a motion to bring forward the climate change targets but this was voted down as being seen as unrealistic and costly. We have a dedicated website for the Climate Change Emergency <https://www.warwickshireclimateemergency.org.uk/>.

### County Council Plan Refresh

Warwickshire County Council is updating its Council Plan which will set out what it wants to achieve over the next five years. As part of this we want to know what's important to you. To let us know what you think visit <https://ask.warwickshire.gov.uk/insights-service/refreshing-council-plan/>

### District Council Update

There is a significant amount of work going on behind the scenes regarding the merger with WDC. Please do complete the consultation <https://www.southwarwickshire.org.uk/swc/consultation.cfm>.

The integration of services across the two Districts continues with a paper going to full council in December. This will effectively sanction the merger of the two organisations if the results of the consultation are in favour.

We have a number of large projects going on and review them regularly, things like the Gateway Project and Riverside Project. The latest meeting was held with a 'Critical Friend' – Quentin Wilson. Quentin's role is to assess projects with a residents 'eye' and his insight was really useful. The boards is to look at ongoing major projects and assesses progress and value for money.

Waste collection is pretty much back to normal following the recent fire and well done to all the officers for recovering the situation so quickly. We sourced alternative recycle centres but these are more expensive than the Pure facility. Some recyclate has had to go as far as London although we now have closer locations in Worcester. Needless to say the costs have increased too.

We have finally agreed the new waste contract with Biffa. They have had some issues with drivers but have trained up other operatives to take on that role. They have not been affected by the recent panic fuel buying. As part of the contract negotiations (joint across SDC & WDC) we looked at purchasing electric waste vehicles however they can each be up to £250k more expensive and that does not take into account maintenance and infrastructure. We have the option in the contract to review that in a few years.

Visitor numbers have recovered somewhat however the last week with the fuel strike has affected numbers and with the downturn in the weather we expect numbers to drop. It was only a few weeks ago that our parking numbers (a proxy for visitor numbers) was higher than in 2019.

Financially SDC are still struggling with an anticipated £1m shortfall in revenue this year. This is in despite of the success of the green bin charge generating an additional £1m revenue. We will not be able to make a contribution to the reserves that were hit until next year, hopefully.

Employment. There is a mop fair to be held at the Stratford Playhouse with 45 businesses already booked. This is an ideal opportunity to see what employment opportunities are available.

The land charges team are now turning round applications in 11 day, beating the 15 day target. This is great news for the department.

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to Robert Weeks who headed up the planning and enforcement team at SDC for many years. We wish him well in his retirement.

#### Alcester Bridge Removal

Roadworks are currently in place in Alcester to remove an old railway bridge that was unearthed as part of a housing development by Bloor Homes. There has been a lot of social media coverage on it along with calls as to why it was not restored/protected.

Find out more: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/article/2458/roadworks-to-take-place-to-remove-unearthed-railway-bridge-in-alcester>

#### Updates:

Please be aware that Mark and Piers post regular updates to /AmazingAlcester/ – but we are also keen to share good news. If you have any stories that you want us to share, please let us know.

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