

It's been a busy couple of months with elections being the main focus of events. Following the elections Stratford District Council now has a new leader, Cllr Stephen Gray (Long Compton) after Les Topham decided not to stand for re-election. A total of nine Councillors decided not to stand again so there are a number of new faces at the District Council.

In this issue of Talking Partners there is an introduction to the new leader and the new Cabinet. There are articles on the Beacon Event and the Stratford LSP event both held in March, an item on a joint project that's been done with Orbit Housing helping young people learn some of the vital skills required to run their own home, new affordable homes in Fenny Compton, a round up of Warwickshire Police activity during 2009-10 and an invitation to attend our 'State of the District' debate on Friday 2 July.

As always we welcome your feedback with the deadline for the next issue being Monday 6 September if you would like to contribute.

Regards

Paul Lankester




Your Council, Your Services ... working for you

Friday the 12th March saw Stratford-on-Avon District Council, along with their neighbour Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council; host a day of demonstrations and displays at the Motor Heritage Centre at Gaydon. Both councils are currently designated Beacon Authorities meaning they are seen as leaders in the field of Digital Inclusion.

Part of the responsibility of being awarded Beacon status involves encouraging other councils, public sector bodies and their partners to adopt the best practices that the Beacon councils have established. The event at Gaydon was a major event for sharing information and attracted a national audience. Councils from as far apart as Fife and Cornwall were represented as were national bodies such as the Audit Commission.

The event was sponsored by NHS Direct and Coventry University and they, along with the other partners who are instrumental in delivering the areas services, were present through out the day. With over 90 stands and displays the information available covered a wide range of services including active communities, independent living, waste and recycling, libraries and one stop shops.

By having the event sponsored and opening it up to commercial partners and suppliers the councils were able to host the event on a cost neutral basis.



Introducing Stratford District Council's new Leader, Cllr Stephen Gray



I am delighted to have been appointed Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council. The first few days of my appointment have been very hectic and it's a very steep learning curve, but I'm looking forward to this new challenge.

I came from Abingdon in Oxfordshire and moved into Stratford District in 1980 after my job with British Leyland moved to Gaydon. I've always been a car enthusiast and currently own a 1932 Lagonda which only comes out on sunny days. I am married to Gerunde and we have 1 son and 2 daughters who have all since grown up and left the District.

My interest in political life began when I joined Shipston Town Council in 1988 when I was co-opted, obviously in the right place at the right time! I have had the privilege of serving as Mayor of Shipston 3 times and I'm proud to say that Shipston Town Council became the 50th 'Quality Town Council' nationally during my 3rd term as Mayor. I chose not to stand for re-election to the Town Council in 2008.

My next venture up the ranks was when I joined Stratford District Council in 1988 when I represented Shipston, I didn't stand again in 1992 but rejoined in 2005 following a by-election and I have just been re-elected at the most recent District Council elections to represent the Long Compton Ward.

Since 2008 I have been a member of the District Council's Cabinet and was Portfolio Holder for Revenues and Housing where we focused on providing more affordable homes, bringing empty properties back into use and value for money by working jointly with Warwick District Council.

In my new role of Leader I intend to look forward and focus on the needs of Stratford and the District by listening and understanding the views of the residents. I want to continue the transformation of the District Council; we have many achievements for a small rural District Council and there are many things we do well, such as waste management and we have achieved a prestigious Beacon status for our digital inclusion programme. We must protect these but at the same time continue to stretch ourselves in finding better ways at doing things. We can't do this all in isolation and we need to continue to work effectively with our partners and I very much value the relationship the District Council has with Parish and Town Councils to help us realise our goals.

District Council Election Results

Fifty-eight candidates contested 20 seats at the local Stratford-on-Avon District Council elections on Thursday 6 May. The overall turnout was 71.55%.

The results are as follows with winners in bold (Councillors who were fighting for their seats are underlined)

ALCESTER

Barry Doherty (Lab) 241
Yvonne Hine (Cons) 1438
Susan Juned (Lib Dem) **1651**
Turnout 68.80%

BIDFORD & SALFORD

Michael Atkins (Ind) 551
Maurice Howse (Cons) 1354
Daren Pemberton (Lib Dem) **1448**
Matthew Stephens (Lab) 316
Karen Varga (Green) 109
Turnout 69.45%

BRAILES

Laura Nelson (Lib Dem) 416
Philip Seccombe (Cons) **976**
Turnout 77.58%

HARBURY

Richard Hamburger (Cons) 1340
Richard Tonge (Lib Dem) **1461**
Turnout 73.83%

HENLEY (by-election)

John Hartigan (Lab) 285
Jem Jones (Cons) **1664**
Karyl Rees (Lib Dem) 606
Turnout 70.07%

KINWARTON

Mike Gittus (Cons) **675**
Jeffrey Kenner (Lab) 54
Nina Knapman (Lib Dem) 565
Turnout 74.84%

LONG COMPTON

Stephen Gray (Cons) **859**
Ginny Mason (Lib Dem) 499
Turnout 75.53%

LONG ITCHINGTON

Michael Pugh (Lib Dem) 494
Bob Stevens (Cons) **901**
Turnout 73.34%

QUINTON

Mike Brain (Cons) **959**
Jeffery Dench (Lib Dem) 467
Turnout 71.49%

SAMBOURNE

Justin Kerridge (Cons) **696**
Clive Rickhards (Lib Dem) 380
Turnout 73.34%

SHIPSTON (by-election)

Christopher Aston (Lab) 315
Robert Ballantyne (Green) 70
Clive Smithard (Cons) 1108
Philip Vial (Lib Dem) **1376**
Turnout 71%

SNITTERFIELD

Helen Hayter (Cons) **940**
John Insoll (Lib Dem) 403
Turnout 74.91%

SOUTHAM

Jennie Ellard (Cons) **1631**
Helena Knight (Lib Dem) 977
Peter Thomas (Lab) 900
Turnout 69.60%

STRATFORD ALVESTON

Stuart Beese (Cons) 1682
Michael Crutchley (Ind) 378
Ian Fradgley (Lib Dem) **1938**
Samuel Hargreaves (Lab) 288
Turnout 74.81%

STRATFORD AVENUE AND NEW TOWN

Ian Hurst (Cons) 1423
Juliet Short (Ind) 620
Clive Thomas (Lib Dem) **1531**
Stephen Troup (Lab) 352
Turnout 65.57%

STRATFORD GUILD AND HATHAWAY

Hugh Chatwin (Green) 144
Irving David (Cons) 1473
Jenny Fradgley (Lib Dem) **1876**
Bill Lowe (Ind) 364
David Talbot (Lab) 315
Turnout 70.66%

STUDLEY

Jacqueline Abbott (Lab) 330
Bill McCarthy (Cons) 1085
Hazel Wright (Lib Dem) **1755**
Turnout 69.05%

TANWORTH

Eric Holder (Lib Dem) 613
Peter Oakley (Cons) **1723**
Turnout 73.09%

VALE OF THE RED HORSE

Kenneth Osborne (Lib Dem) 435
Gill Roache (Cons) **1048**
Turnout 77.88%

WELLESBOURNE

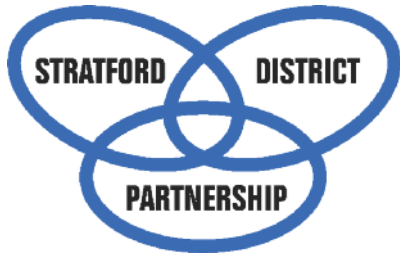
Danny Kendall (Cons) 1737
Jessica Pinson (Green) 392
Roger Wright (Ind) **2018**
Turnout 75.37%

The current political standings of the Council's 53 seats are:

Conservatives 31 seats
Liberal Democrats 20 seats
Independents 2 seats

The result for the Stratford-on-Avon Parliamentary Constituency was:

Neil Basnett (Independent) 1032
Fred Bishop (English Democrats) 473
Robert Johnston (Labour) 4809
George Jones (BNP) 1097
Brett Parsons (UKIP) 1846
Martin Turner (Lib Dem) 14706
Karen Varga (Green) 527
Nadhim Zahawi (Conservative) **26052**
Turnout was 72.95%



Stratford LSP

A little less conversation, a little more action please

Taking inspiration from Elvis, delegates at Stratford District Partnership event on 22 March were inspired to turn conversation into action. Over 80 delegates from 50 organisations gathered at Stratford racecourse looking back at achievements of the partnership so far and looking forward to what's to come.

Chair of the LSP Core Group, Charles Goody opened the event this morning. He was followed by a presentation from Lynne Winstanley from the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, on the value of partnership working.

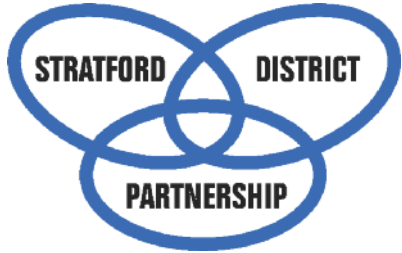
The morning's programme was packed, as further talks on the state of the district; countywide partnership working and the impact of Community Forums followed - and all before a mid-morning break! The afternoon's session kicked off with a look at the synergy of partnership working, a real success story about Safer Schools in Shipston, and a workshop on improving performance and communication within partnerships. The day ended with the opportunity to ask questions of the LSP Core Group, and a summing up session on what are the next steps to working together better.

So what next?

We need to start a new 2 year action plan focused only on partnership based activities that wouldn't otherwise happen, and on a bit of innovative thinking, for example:

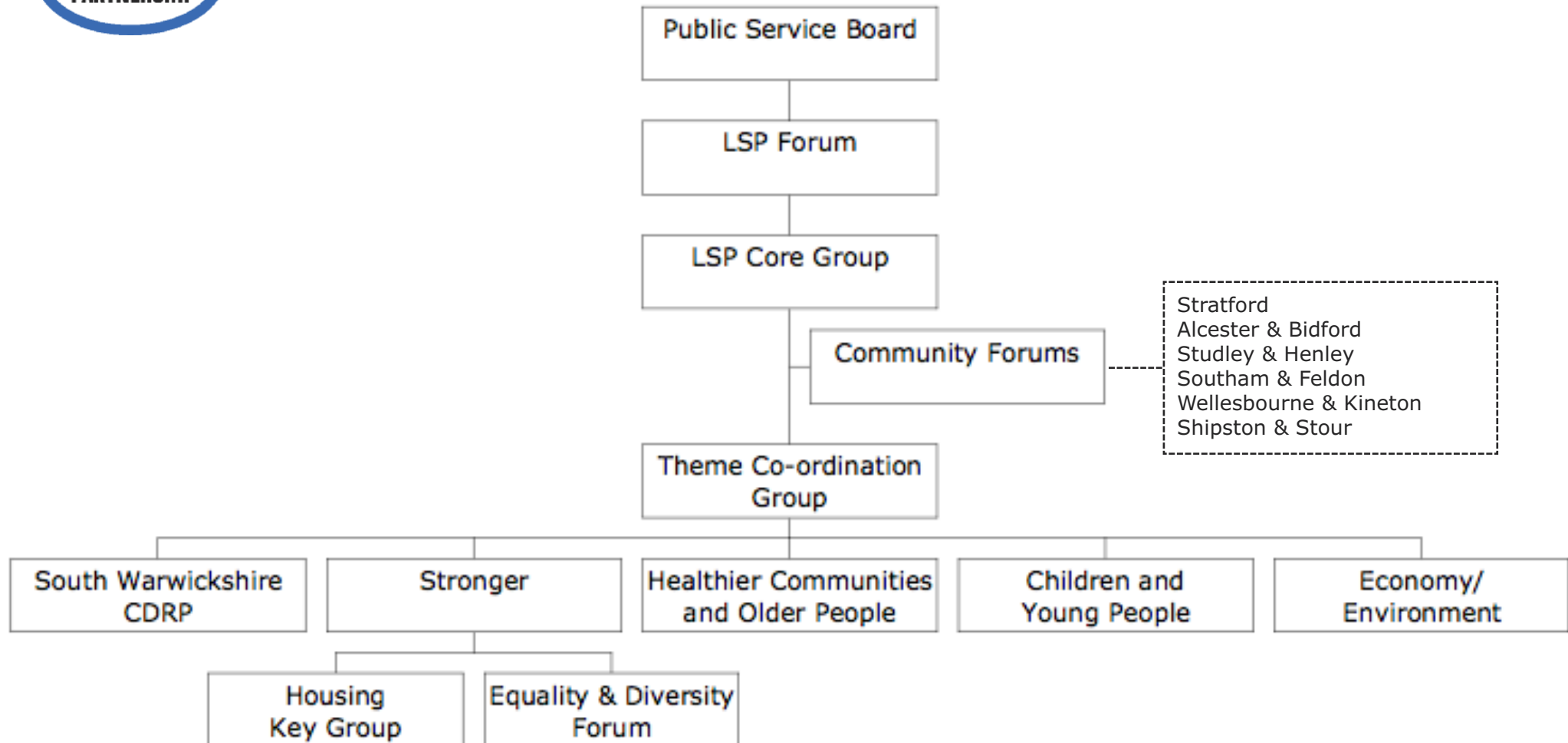
- Project focused on generating more inward investment into the district.
- Project focused on changing the concept of the role of the fire service and enhance their community engagement activity with partners.
- Project focused on maximising the resource available to us via Parish Councils/access to services in rural communities.
- Project looking at better harnessing power of partners to tackle issues around access to affordable housing.
- Project to tap into opportunities from commercial sector to tackle fuel poverty.
- Project to improve how people access public transport, and how providers work better together - including the commercial sector.
- Project to build capacity and potential of Community Forums - including allocating funding to each one for community projects, and enabling people other than councillors to chair them.





Stratford District Local Strategic Partnership

How does it all fit together?



YOUNG WARWICKSHIRE PEOPLE TO LIVE 'HOME ALONE'

Twelve young people from Warwickshire lived 'home alone' in a 'Big Brother' style project that aimed to teach them vital life skills.

The Home Alone scheme is the brainchild of Orbit Heart of England housing association, which is running the project in partnership with Stratford District Council and Warwickshire County Council's Youth and Community Service.

The young people, all aged 15 to 17, were children of current Orbit Heart of England tenants from Alcester, Studley and Henley in Arden. Two Orbit Heart of England properties, owned by Orbit Heart of England and part of Stratford District Council's temporary housing stock, were loaned out purely for the duration of the innovative project.

These properties were home for the youngsters for four days and four nights between Monday 29 March and Friday 2 April. During this time they learnt some of the vital life skills required to run their own home and play a part in supporting the local community. Two youth workers stayed in each of the properties throughout the project to ensure the safety and well-being of those living there.

Orbit Heart of England community housing officer Hannah Kavanagh is one of the project organisers. She explains: "The project aimed to explore the issues surrounding successfully managing a tenancy and everything you would need to consider when moving into your own home.

"The 12 young people were split between two houses for four days and four nights, during which time they were responsible for carrying out all of the household chores and looking after a simulator baby as well as taking part in a range of volunteering activities in the local area and work experience with the Orbit Heart of England property maintenance team.

"They started with a mock tenancy sign up and went on to learn basic independent living skills such as budgeting, reporting repairs, dealing with anti social behaviour and contributing to the local community - all under the supervision of a team of youth workers from Warwickshire Youth and Community Service."

The participants were allocated a budget that reflects the current rate of benefits and were guided by the youth workers on how they should prioritise their spending.

They also had a simulator baby for the duration of the project to explore the emotional, financial and social consequences of parenthood, and kept a video diary throughout the four days to record and reflect on their experiences.

County Council youth and community worker Anna Stowe is another of the project organisers. She says:

"Recent research amongst young people in the Stratford area showed that the 15 to 17 age group is particularly susceptible to housing difficulties brought about through a variety of reasons, from relationship breakdown to being asked to leave by family or friends. The research also showed that this group is most in need of help with benefits, housing support and training or employment.

"The Home Alone project aims to raise awareness of the issues of homelessness, unemployment and financial exclusion; and help young people develop the life skills they need to live independently."

SUPPORTING AND SUSTAINING VILLAGE LIFE

A £1.5 million development which will provide much-needed homes for the people of a bustling Warwickshire village is underway.

Work to build 10 houses for affordable rent and two bungalows for sale started on site in Station Road, Fenny Compton, yesterday (WED) where the ground was ceremoniously broken.

The properties will be built to level four of the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes, in which level six indicates a carbon neutral home.

It is the first time Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, which will own and manage the homes, has built to level four.

Energy efficiency features fitted within the properties will include a ground source heat pump system, which converts natural energy found in the earth to heating.

There is a proven need for new homes in the village, sandwiched between Burton Dassett Hills and Oxford Canal. A survey completed by Warwickshire Rural Community Council in the village in June 2008 found there was a need for two bedroom bungalows and two and three bedroom houses.

Fenny Compton Parish Council and the community have supported plans for the housing development from the outset. Stratford-on-Avon District Council has provided funds in excess of £230,000 and the Homes and Communities Agency has invested £770,000 in the development.

Derrick Dyas, chairman of Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, welcomed key partners to the site yesterday. He said: "I am really excited that our scheme at Fenny Compton will be a major contribution to making the village more sustainable – not just in terms of energy consumption but also ensuring the availability of more affordable homes for local people.

"This is surely a fine example of working in partnership with a number of agencies and the parish council and community as a whole have been unanimous in its support. This has meant moving from completion of the housing need survey in June 2008 to starting on site less than two years later, which bodes well for our future work, helping rural communities satisfy their housing needs."

Dave Webb, Head of Revenues & Housing at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: "We are delighted another affordable rural housing scheme is underway in Fenny Compton. The scheme is testimony to the hard work of all partner organisations, in particular the parish council and local community. The district council also welcomes the energy efficiency features of the new homes which support its environmental and sustainability priorities."

Completion is scheduled for spring 2011 and only those with a local connection to the village, for example through family or work ties, will be eligible to move into the development.



Police Authority praise force for increased protection delivered to Warwickshire communities



Warwickshire Police Authority has today praised Warwickshire Police and local partner agencies for increasing protection for people in the county.

The authority set the force a series of challenging targets for 2009-10 and is delighted that all but one of these have been met and exceed.

Commenting on the force's end of year results, Chair of Warwickshire Police Authority Ian Francis said: "The authority is thrilled with the results Warwickshire Police has achieved working with the county and borough and district councils and other local agencies. Crime continues to fall in the county and public confidence is rising thanks to a significant amount of hard work by all members of the force.

"We are all committed to delivering the best protection from harm to our local communities and this year I am delighted that this has been achieved so successfully. Not only were targets met but they were greatly exceed, for example one target was to identify and charge 15 members of organised crime groups whose activities harm communities. In total the force actually identified and charged 45 members of organised crime groups."

"There has been a 29% reduction in violence in the county since 2007/08, this is the greatest reduction achieved by any force in England and Wales. Overall Warwickshire continues to be a safe place to live, work and travel in and it is fantastic to know that in the last three years crime has been reduced in Warwickshire by 25.2% (2009/10 compared to 2006/07)."

"I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all our partners, officers, staff and volunteers for their dedication to protecting the people of Warwickshire."

"Without this ongoing work we would not have made the excellent progress we have to date."

Mr Francis added: *"I hope that all of the ongoing work and efforts continue and this gives the public the confidence and trust to come forward and report offences to their local police."*

"Overall satisfaction levels among those who use policing services – victims of crime and those involved in road collisions for example – currently stands at 84%, an increase from 73% in 2006/07. The performance this year was one per cent below target, however further efforts to improve this figure and increase general public trust and confidence in police and local councils are ongoing. All of these successes amount to increase protection for people who live work and travel in Warwickshire and the authority fully welcomes this."

In Stratford this year:

- There were **37 fewer victims of serious violence crime**, a reduction of 8.3%.
- There were **10 fewer victims of aggravated burglary and robbery**.
- The number of homes burgled and vehicles stolen increased by 1.8% (8 incidents).
Homes Burgled increased by 12.5% (33 incidents).
Vehicles Stolen decreased by 14.5% (25 fewer incidents).
- **Theft from vehicles fell by 8.6%** (60 fewer incidents).
- **Criminal Damage fell by 4.8%** (56 fewer incidents).

New initiative launched to combat anti-social behaviour in Studley

In February 2010 a partnership initiative to reduce anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in Studley and further reduce incidents of violent crime in the area was launched. The operation ran until March 31, 2010 and included high visibility police foot patrols in and around the centre of Studley on Friday and Saturday evenings. Joint agency visits to licensed premises by police, licensing officers and fire officers also took place.

Sergeant Bob Shaw explains further: *"This police operation formed part of a number of coordinated initiatives with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and violent crime to further protect our communities from harm."*

Other agencies actively involved were: Studley Parish Council, Stratford District Council, Warwickshire County Council, Licensing, South Warwickshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Warwickshire Youth and Community Service.



The Wellesbourne Safer Neighbourhood Team Speed Gun

In December Wellesbourne's Safer Neighbourhoods Team raised funds via the Community forum for a new hand held laser speed gun and tripod. The aim of this was to address concerns raised at the forum over speeding in the area.

David Close, Chair of the Community forum said: *"This is a great example of how the community forum is working together with our communities."*

Funding for the speed gun was received from the following partners; Warwickshire Police Stratford District, Warwickshire County Council, Kineton Parish Council, Wellesbourne Parish Council, Charlecote Parish Council.



Crime continues to fall in Warwickshire – The Facts

Warwickshire Police, with our local partners, is committed to protecting communities together. The following were our priorities for 2009 -10 to further protect people from harm.



Priority - To reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured.

Last year:

- 10 (3.2%) fewer people were killed or seriously on the roads,
- 395 (13.0%) fewer people were the victim of serious violence,
- 103 serious sexual offences were detected, an increase on 100 last year.
- There were 66 (17.7%) fewer aggravated burglaries and robberies, and
- 45 members of organised crime groups have been identified and charged – our target was to identify and charge 15 members.

Priority - To improve trust and confidence.

- 100% of agreed policing activity has been delivered that supports Community Forum priorities
- 17 more victims of serious sexual offences have reported crimes to us

Following a User Satisfaction survey to victims of crime in Warwickshire last year:

- 83.9% (2092 of people) satisfied with the overall experience they received, of which
- 93.6% (1271 of people) were satisfied with ease of contact with the force,
- 82.1% (2033 of people) were confidence in police actions,
- 71.3% (1709 of people) were satisfied that they were kept informed,
- 92.8% (2310 of people) were satisfied with their treatment by police
- 53.3% of people were confident that 'the police and local council were dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour issues that matter.'

Priority - To reduce the number of homes burgled and vehicle crimes committed.

During 2009-10:

- The number of homes burgled and vehicles stolen fell by 192 (5.5%)
- Theft from vehicles fell by 768 (18.6%)

Overall, crime in Warwickshire has fallen by 25.2% year to date compared with 3 years ago. In 2006-7 there were 124 crimes a day in Warwickshire, in 2009-10 this fell to 93.

Some other highlights:

- There has been a 29% reduction in violence since 2007/08, this is the greatest reduction any force in England and Wales has seen.
- Criminal damage fell by 19.3 %, 1544 less offences this year compared to last year
- 4440 (14.7%) less anti-social behaviour incidents this year compared with last year

GET INVOLVED!

**Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Local Strategic Partners
are hosting a public event,**

'The State of the District Debate' on Friday 2 July at the Town Hall in Stratford-upon-Avon

Just as National Government is involving the public in crucial decision making the District Council and partners wants to engage with local residents about the big issues that affect them and the whole District.

At this event the new District Council Leader, Cllr Stephen Gray and the Local Strategic Partnership Chairman, Charles Goody will start the ball rolling in a debate about the current District-wide issues and priorities for District communities before engaging in wider discussions.

Previous 'debates' have been held in the Council Chamber, this year the new District Council Leader is keen to take this debate outside and involve as wide a group of residents as possible.

Cllr Stephen Gray, Leader says: "I am keen to engage with the public about the issues facing the District, listen to what they are telling us and enable residents to participate in decisions that help shape their own and their communities' futures. I am looking forward to engaging in an interesting and informative debate and would encourage as many people to attend as possible."

The State of the District Debate starts at 10am on Friday 2 July and will be held at the Town Hall, Sheep Street, Stratford-upon-Avon.

**To register your interest in the event please contact Tina Brain at Stratford District Council
on 01789 260802 or email tina.brain@stratford-dc.gov.uk**