

WARWICKSHIRE VIEW

www.warwickshire.gov.uk

SUMMER 2003

Warwickshire feels the "Buzz"

INSIDE

A Royal welcome

Warwickshire on the web

Are you getting Best Value?

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The Warwickshire View is produced by the County Council to keep residents up-to-date with Council news and events. It is distributed to over 200,000 homes in Warwickshire. If you have any views or opinions you would like to feed back to us, please contact the editorial team (contact details on back cover).

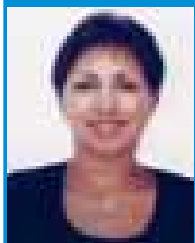
EXCITING TIMES

THESE are going to be exciting and interesting months for Warwickshire. We all await the Secretary of State's final report on the airport proposals with baited breath. There is a general feeling that the battle has been won and that building a new airport between Coventry and Rugby won't happen. Obviously I very much hope that is true – but so far it is only a hope – we won't know until the autumn so the pressure needs to be kept up. If it were to happen the impact on the County would be so enormous it is almost impossible to imagine. One area where the impact would be very severe would be on health – noise, air and light pollution would all increase dramatically with consequent impacts on people's health – not to mention stress. It is timely therefore that in the autumn we will also start a new 'function' as a County Council. For the first time ever we now have the ability to 'scrutinise' the local NHS. Our Health Scrutiny Committee will be able to review any part of the NHS to ensure that it's doing as well as it possibly can to improve health, tackle poor health and promote healthy living. In no sense will the County Council be setting itself up as 'the thought police' for the NHS. We are delighted to say that we have excellent relations with all parts of the NHS in the County – they are our partners in many things. Our task will be to work with patient representatives and the public to ask the 'daft questions' that can sometimes stimulate thought and improve things for everyone. Our role will be that of a 'critical friend' but with our eyes firmly fixed on one objective – health improvement for all. Frankly I can't think of a more important thing we can or should be doing and I'm really looking forward to the first scrutiny processes starting. They will be held in public and we very much hope the public will be involved in all stages of the process.

Ian Bottrill, Leader
Warwickshire County Council



Editor's Welcome



WELCOME to this summer edition of the Warwickshire View which is a showcase of the services run for you by Warwickshire County Council.

At a time when we are constantly looking to the future, looking to improve our services to our customers, it's often worth

looking back to see where we've come from.

The centenary of Warwickshire as a Local Education Authority gives us that opportunity and we can reflect that some of the issues facing us today are not so very different from those we faced one hundred years ago.

In total contrast, this issue also looks at electronic Government (known as e-Government), how it is already changing our lives and what it may achieve in the future. A vital part of e-Government is to encourage everyone to

get involved and Warwickshire View is no exception in wanting your views and comments and anything you may read in these pages.

To encourage your contributions, we will be holding a champagne prize draw again. Congratulations to Kenneth Burditt of Rugby who won a meal for two at the Hard Rock Café in our Winter issue (see page 14).

So to have a chance of winning a case of champagne, fill out the coupon below and send it to me at the address on the back cover or email vieweditor@warwickshire.gov.uk I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks, Nina Heath

Name
Address
Comment



▲ A Warwickshire couple celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary

▼ Warwickshire is a fast-growing county with an increasing younger population



▶ Marriage is still popular in Warwickshire

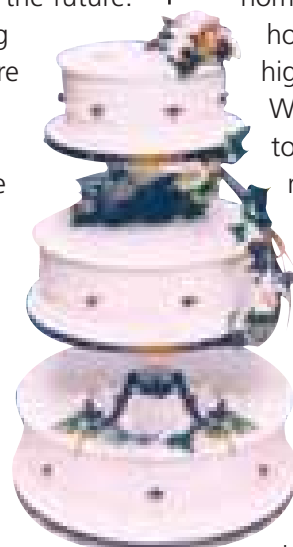
Making Sense of the Census

WE'RE living longer, having fewer children, most of us are chained to a mortgage - and we're in love with our cars.

These are just a few of the facts to be revealed about Warwickshire residents in the 2001 Census.

Two years ago, we all filled in our Census forms - and now the Government has published the first results. Compared to the previous survey in 1991, the results show some important trends that help authorities such as Warwickshire County Council plan for the future.

We live in a fast-growing County. Six per cent more people live in Warwickshire now than 20 years ago. And in the last half a century the population has risen by almost 50 per cent. The number of people from black and minority ethnic groups has also risen slightly and while most people say they are Christians, there are rising numbers of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus.



Many more of us are over 60 years old and we are living longer than ever before. At the other end of the age scale, there are fewer under-fives as the birth rate plummets. But marriage is still important to many Warwickshire families - 41 per cent of households in the County are married couples - much higher than the national average. And the chances are that they own their own

homes too - the number of homeowners is, again, much higher than the national figure. With all these mortgage bills to pay, little wonder that most of us work. And despite its decline over the years, manufacturing is still one of the County's biggest employers. And the chances are that we will almost certainly drive to work. Almost three quarters of Warwickshire residents use their car to travel to work - with a tiny four per cent getting there by public transport.

How are we doing?

Do you get good value for money from your council?



It's an important question for everyone in the County, not least the members and officers of Warwickshire County Council. The Council has several ways of measuring how well it is doing. In the recent 'stock take' by the Audit Commission of all local authorities in England and Wales (the CPA assessment), Warwickshire was rated "good" overall. One way that the County Council judges itself is its annual Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP), which looks at how it is working towards its six priority objectives: health and welfare, environment, crime and safety, economy, education and access to services, and what has been achieved over the last year in these areas. The BVPP for 2003/2004 has just been published, and overall, whilst the Council is satisfied with its performance, it realises that there is still considerable room for improvement in some areas, something it is determined to tackle.

Full information on the BVPP results can be obtained from Andrew Morrall on 01926 412559 or via our website. Here are some of the key findings:

Health check

Customer satisfaction is rising in services for looked-after children and in care-at-home for older people with many fewer being admitted to care homes. But, like most councils, Warwickshire recognises that it needs to improve its recording of cases on vulnerable children, following the report into the Climbié Inquiry.

A good place to live

Most people like living in the County. Last year almost 84 per cent of people said they were satisfied with where they lived, up more than three per cent on the year before. And what could improve the County more than a less polluted environment. That's why the Council is working hard to encourage youngsters to travel to school in other ways than by car, plus using concessionary bus fares to encourage use of public transport. Recycling and composting of household waste in Warwickshire has increased to about 15 per cent but that's still not good enough, the target for 2002/3 was 18 per cent, and next year's target of 20 per cent is even more challenging.

Safety first

Crime is always higher than anyone would like it to be, but the fear of it is much greater than the chances of actually becoming a victim of crime. While crime has continued to rise, there has been a 19 per cent fall in the number of young people known to have committed offences, as we work with young people in targeted

areas. There has been national recognition for Neighbourhood Watch schemes that have reduced crime in the north of the County. On the plus side, the number of people killed or seriously injured on the County's roads last year was down by 10 per cent in 2001, but one fatality is one too many and the Council has more work to do. The Fire & Rescue service has worked through difficult times, with a reduction in casualties and no deaths in any property fires – an excellent result.

Your world of work

Warwickshire is lucky to have an unemployment rate (1.7 per cent) well below the national average (3.1 per cent). Jobs remain fairly plentiful though, and the Council continues to work with partners to attract new businesses to the County and help the most disadvantaged into jobs. See p15 for details of regeneration in the County.

Lifelong learning

It's great to see results at all levels improving in Warwickshire schools but there is much more to lifelong learning, with the County's libraries taking a lead by becoming 'High Street Universities'. A network of 250 PCs in libraries and the new County Record Office offer free broadband internet access.

Access for all

Order a library book, access information for carers or give your views on the latest issues. In these and many more ways, the web will play an important part in the future. The County Council's website is well-regarded, and there is much more to come.

Mark of Excellence



Charter Marks awarded:
1 - Fire & Rescue
1 - Registration
1 - Warwickshire Education Services
8 - Planning, Transport and Economic Strategy

RESIDENTS in Warwickshire are demanding better services for their money – and they are getting them from the County Council, with 11 services now awarded the Government's stamp of approval – a Charter Mark.

Take Warwickshire's Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages service, for instance. Its award was renewed in December after being assessed by Government inspectors last year. The Registration Service has 11 offices throughout the County. County Councillor Tim Naylor, Cabinet member for Resources Management, said: "This is an excellent achievement by a frontline service to the public that is efficient,

reliable and puts its customers first. However, we are not complacent about this award and we will continue to find ways to improve the service to the public." Warwickshire Education Services (WES) – the county education department's business arm – has gone one better, winning a Charter Mark for a third time.

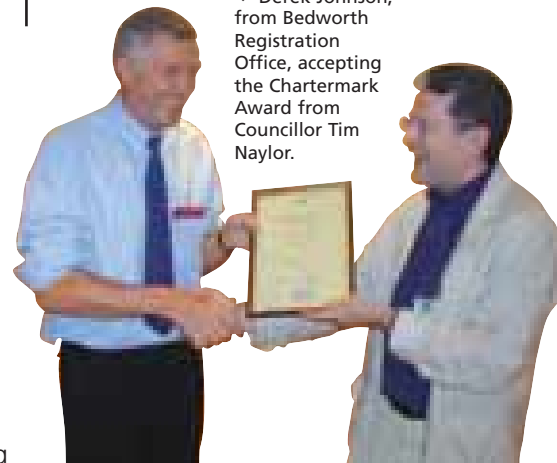
WES sells expert advice and services to schools - in competition with other suppliers - to help with a wide range of important issues, including finance, premises and personnel.

It was the first education business of its kind in the country – and the first County Council service - to win the Charter Mark in 1996, repeating

the feat in 1999 and capturing it for a third time in 2002.

The assessor's report said WES had a "real commitment to customer service. There is an exceptionally high level of satisfaction among schools."

▼ Derek Johnson, from Bedworth Registration Office, accepting the Chartermark Award from Councillor Tim Naylor.



Fire Service Looks to the Future

COUNTY Fire Officer Brian Hibbert delivers a positive message:

"We are delighted that the long-running fire dispute has finally come to an end and that we can now direct our full attention towards preventing fires and delivering a first-class Fire & Rescue Service to the people of Warwickshire. In particular, the settlement of the dispute allows the Fire Service to move forward with the Government's Modernisation Agenda.

In the very near future the

Government will be issuing a White Paper which will shape the future of the Fire Service and drive the Modernisation Agenda for the next 5-10 years. It is expected to set challenging targets for fire authorities, as well as placing a strong emphasis on prevention through active participation and consultation with the community, as well as promoting closer working not only with other fire authorities but also with all other public sector partners.

Warwickshire itself has been at the forefront of a modernising agenda for many years, particularly in the

areas of youth development, introducing fire safety education into schools, and partnership working with multi agencies to reduce fires and casualties. The Service is also actively involved in joint activities with other fire authorities and is enthusiastically looking forward to developing an even better service.

The future holds a great many challenges, and our emphasis will always be on both public and firefighter safety with increased efficiency, whilst maintaining public confidence, to benefit the people of Warwickshire."

Lose the Booze



(left to right) Councillor John Haynes, Inspector Pete Brown and Councillor Martin Brassington adding their support to the campaign.

OFF licence managers were left with red faces when Warwickshire County Council and the County's police launched a campaign to curb under-age drinking.

Fourteen and 15-year-olds, who looked their age and made no attempt to look older, were sent by trading standards officers and the police to shops to see if they could buy alcopops.

And more than half of the 45 off licences tested served the youngsters, despite the law that they shouldn't sell drink to under 18's. The "No, No, Known" campaign aims to get shopkeepers to think again, educate youngsters not to ask for drink in the first place and encourage the use of the Validate UK proof of age card.

The campaign features a series of promotions including massive posters on buses urging young people to verify their age if they attempt to buy alcohol.

Councillor Martin Brassington, Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities, said:

"We want to protect the community and the long-term health and well-being of young people by trying to prevent the use of alcohol by young people who are under age."

If you want a secure and handy photo ID card, call VALIDATE UK on 01725 517 459.



Music to our ears - children from Quinton Primary attending a choral Workshop.

Sounds of Music

THOUSANDS of Warwickshire children have been 'feeling the buzz' this year – by discovering that there really is no business like showbusiness.

'Feel the Buzz' is a County-wide project run by Warwickshire County Council's County Music Service (CMS). It aims to introduce thousands of primary-aged children to

large-scale choral singing – and give them the chance to enjoy the excitement and 'buzz' of performing. A team of specialist teachers from CMS give ten weeks of lessons in the schools taking part – and at the end of the term, all the youngsters from each area get together for a big performance.

'Feel the Buzz' has certainly hit all the right notes with the schools which have taken part so far. The project started in September, and is now working with its third group of schools.

Val Whitlock, Head of Voice and

Choral at CMS, said: "We have been really pleased with the way the children have taken this

It's an excellent way of giving them an early chance to taste the thrill of a big performance

initiative on board. It's an excellent way of giving them an early chance to taste the thrill of a big performance, and the children have really enjoyed the opportunity." Organisers at CMS hope the project will also encourage children to join a singing group at their local area Music Centre.

Climate Change

ALL change on the weather front

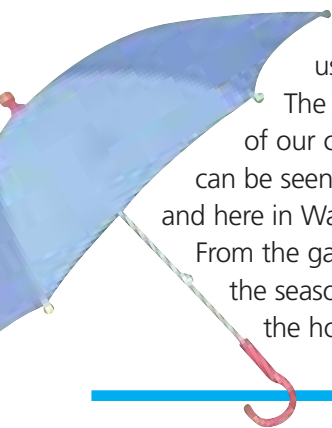
Drier summers, shorter, milder, wetter winters... the evidence of climate change seems to be mounting. And how we all deal with it is seen as a huge environmental challenge.

The Government has set challenging targets to cut carbon dioxide emissions, caused by burning fossil

fuels, and it will be up to all of us to help meet it.

The possible effects of our changing weather can be seen both globally and here in Warwickshire.

From the gardeners who see the seasons changing, to the householders who



suffer flooding - 1998 saw record-breaking floods hit homes close to the rivers Leam, Avon, Nene, Great Ouse and Cherwell - climate change has serious consequences for us all.

To help us understand and tackle climate change in the West Midlands, Leamington-based consultant Entec was commissioned to set out the regional issues.

And its report warns of summer droughts, poorer air quality during hot weather and warmer winters, with increased threats of flooding.

Sustainability West Midlands, based in the Government Office, will use the study to produce a strategy for change, to be launched this



September.

But everyone can help by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and stabilising the greenhouse gases in the

atmosphere by:

- ▶ Reducing the amount of energy you consume by being energy-efficient.
- ▶ Not using your car for short journeys - walking is good exercise.
- ▶ Designing your buildings with energy efficiency in mind - save thousands of pounds during the building's lifetime.

If you think you have noticed signs of climate change in Warwickshire please write to us (details on back cover) marking your envelope "climate change".

Picture This...

CUTTING drivers' speed can cut casualties... it's as simple as that.

With over 630 people dying or suffering serious injuries on Warwickshire's roads in 2001 and around a third of all collisions as the consequence of excessive speed, it was time to take a new approach to cut this horrific toll.

The Warwickshire Casualty Reduction Partnership, (which consists of the County Council, Warwickshire Police, the Highways Agency, the County's NHS Trust and others) has completed its first year of operations. During this time the Partnership focused on highlighting the dangers of driving at excessive speed and has used carefully placed safety cameras to enforce speed limits throughout the County. Has it made a difference? It would appear so.

There were 107 fewer casualties at camera sites in 2002 when compared against the annual

average for the period 1994-98. And with a 45% fall in the number of people killed or seriously injured in areas where there are cameras - it would seem that they are having a positive effect.

A smiley camera logo has become a



Cut your speed, saves lives!

familiar sight across the County, spreading the message that speed cameras are something to smile about, because they can help reduce casualties.

Chief Superintendent Jon Bond, Chairman of the Partnership said "If we can get people to drive within the speed limits and avoid being

detected by one of the Partnership's safety cameras, then we will have achieved one of our main aims. As the Partnership has said before, what we want is for people to respect speed limits for what they are - maximum limits. Motorists who stay within the limits have nothing to fear from the cameras."

Accidents don't just have a human cost. Injuries caused by a speed-related crash can cost a local hospital up to £100,000. So the overall cost to the NHS runs into millions. Catherine Griffiths, Chief Executive of the South Warwickshire Primary Care Trust, explained:

"The human cost of speed related accidents is enormous and if there is anything we can do to prevent them in the first place it must have our support. Reductions in the number of injured people needing care will in turn reduce the cost of emergency care and allow other people to be seen more quickly and free up funds for other areas of priority."

All Roads Lead to...

IS the street light outside your home on the blink? Or has a pothole suddenly opened up in your road?

Whatever the problem with highways in your area, there is now just one number to call, no matter where you are in Warwickshire.

Contact the highways maintenance group on **01926 412515** who will make sure that the problem you report goes through to one of the local teams who will take action to put things right.

As a result of a recent Best Value Review a big change took place on 1 April in the Highways Maintenance Service. Councillors decided to improve the service by establishing five local teams responsible for routine maintenance and emergency repairs. Central teams in Warwick will deal with road resurfacing, streetlighting and the monitoring of gas, phone, and other utility companies that dig up our roads. Councillor Ken Browne, Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment and Rural Affairs, said:

"We were satisfied with the service we were offering before April, but the new set-up will give us the scope to deliver even more efficient local and countywide services to the public. Customers who want to tell us about problems will find it very simple. All they need to do is call our customer service staff, who will tell the local team what action is needed. We constantly review what we offer customers and look at ways to provide efficient, value-for-money services that will make a difference to people."

A Little Change a Long Way



CAB manager David Gooding gratefully receives the £4,000 cheque from Councillor Richard Chattaway to create a community resource centre.

Picture courtesy of the Heartland Evening News

SOMETIMES it only takes a little change to make a big difference to people's lives.

That's where Warwickshire County Council's Community Development Fund comes in, giving grants to community groups and voluntary organisations throughout the County. Making life a little brighter for a section of the community has been the basis of the fund since it was launched in 1994 - and there are many schemes that would not go ahead if they did not receive grants from the fund.

The focus is on helping people to improve their lives, especially those in underprivileged parts of the County. This year's summer holidays will be a great deal more fun for children and young people with disabilities who will have the chance to enjoy a special two-week activities scheme at the Brooke School, Rugby. Following a grant of £3,900 from the Community Development Fund, the youngsters will enjoy arts and

50es Way

crafts, sports and creative games. A very different project supported by the fund came from the Bedworth and District Citizens Advice Bureau, which wanted to enlarge its offices in the town to bring a range of agencies together under one roof in a community resource centre. The CAB applied successfully for a £4,000 grant towards four new offices and meeting rooms. Backed all the way by the Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee, the project is now much closer to reality, with Age Concern, Warwickshire Youth Offending Team and the Community Health Council among the organisations on board. CAB manager David Gooding said: "The range of services we hope to offer when the community resource centre is established will be of great benefit to people living in Bedworth." Arts and drama for people in Nuneaton and Bedworth with learning disabilities also benefited from funding last year. Helped by a £2,000 grant from the Community Development Fund, the Rainbow Sunshine Company ran 12 drama workshops in the area. And the result was a charity gala performance in Bedworth in January. Arlene Brindley of the Rainbow Sunshine Company said: "Project funding like this is the only thing that keeps the group going. The grant meant we were able to fund professional teachers specialising in music and movement,



▲ ▼ Sparkling performance - the Rainbow Sunshine Company's charity performance.

as well as additional instruments." Bids must be for one-off projects and must not exceed £5,000 each. All bids must be supported and signed by a local County Councillor. Councillor Martin Brassington, the County's portfolio holder for Supporting Communities, said: "The Community Development Fund has proved to be a huge success with around £1.4 million given to support almost 400 projects since the fund was first launched, in 1994. It is an opportunity for local groups to come up with ideas and apply for help in funding projects of various sorts that are important to their communities. The funding has been particularly helpful to projects that are in deprived areas, which find it difficult



to get the help they need from other sources. We hope that many local voluntary and community groups will take this opportunity to apply."

How to Apply

If your community group is interested in applying, the latest round of funding is now open for bidding. You will be sent a Community Development Fund pack, containing an application form. Remember, that you must have the support of a County Councillor (details of your local Councillor can be found on www.warwickshire.gov.uk or by calling **01926 410410**). Bids for this round must be received by 31 August 2003. They will then go before members of the Area Committees of the County Council in November and the bidders will be told whether they have been successful by the beginning of December 2003.

For more information, please call Paul Williams on **01926 418196**.

A Ticket to a New Look



Warwick Library's new DVD collection.

FORGET the old image of libraries as stuffy and dusty – Warwickshire's libraries are moving with the times.

So you can now surf the internet, borrow CDs and DVDs - and choose from a huge range of books - in bright, fresh surroundings that will appeal to customers of all ages.

Nuneaton Library has just reopened after an exciting revamp Adrian Litvinoff, Area Manager said:

"We think our customers will be delighted with the changes. As they walk through the new doors, they will see a light and spacious fiction browsing area, new books, comfortable seating and new furniture.

We have new displays for CDs, videos and DVDs and an area for large print and talking books, now on CD and cassette.

BX4U is a new space for teenagers with seating, their own notice board, magazines, graphic novels, study guides, quick reads, science fiction, horror and romance books. And there is a new-look children's library."

There are also 20 PCs for public use, that offer fast broadband access to the internet and there is a new family history area.

Warwickshire on the Web... Phone... or Even Your TV



Picture courtesy of the Coventry Evening Telegraph

Hannah Twigger aged 96 with Councillor Ray Sweet, opening Badesley Ensor's Library computer network.

THE world is changing and local government is changing too, using a wealth of new technology to make its services easier for everyone to use.

Warwickshire County Council's e-Government plans will make many of its services available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year direct to its customers wherever they are via the internet. But just as important will be telephone access to our customer service centre, mobile phone services and possibly even interactive TV. But what does it all mean for the County's residents? For one thing it opens up wider than ever access to Council services. If you want to renew a book from a Warwickshire library outside opening hours, do it on the internet. If you want to complain about a trader in Warwickshire, phone the customer service centre, who will get the right department to deal with it. These services will be for everyone, wherever they are in the County. If you've never used a

computer in your life, don't worry, telephone services will be maintained, and indeed improved. However, for those who would like to learn to use a computer, training courses are at hand to help and free access to the internet is available through PCs at the County's libraries.

Warwickshire Web

The County Council's website www.warwickshire.gov.uk - is the cornerstone of e-Government in the County and this year it was judged one of the best sites of its type in the country.

Praised for its user-friendliness, it has also earned a Crystal Mark for its use of plain English on its Learning pages. Tonino Ciuffini the County's E-Government Officer, said: "We are improving the site by offering many new interactive services



Brandon and Dylan Barnes enter cyberspace at the revamped Nuneaton Library

to visitors in our 'Do It Online' section, such as locating the nearest country park or recycling centre, or finding out who their County Councillor is. This adds to already successful online services such as the WILD system, which allows the renewal of library books online. And in the future it will be possible to reserve books online." Equal opportunities is a key consideration in our web development policy. Welcome messages are displayed in the most commonly used languages in the County and a translation service is available for some pages. Text-only pages are available for people who use screen readers.

Sharing knowledge, including yours

When you visit the Warwickshire Web you can find a wealth of information about the County Council's services including the latest news items. In addition, an exciting new feature on the Warwickshire Web now allows you to showcase events in your part of the County by enabling you to log details about them in:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/events

The County Council also offers a facility for Warwickshire community groups to set up their own website free of charge. Further information is available at:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/community

Access all areas

Wherever you are in the County, an ICT Access Point will be nearby. All Warwickshire's libraries have a bank of PCs connected to the internet. The computers are available for use free of charge to everyone (although there will be charges for printing material or saving to a floppy disk). The ICT Access Points are open for many uses, including email, researching local and family history, word processing, designing posters, booking your holiday flights and hotels and much more besides.

Learn all about it

Still confused about the worldwide web? Don't know the difference between a database and a spreadsheet? Don't worry, Warwickshire County Council has set up eight ICT Training Centres across the County to help people like you. The centres provide tuition and the chance to gain a qualification if you wish. For details of your nearest centre contact: 01926 410410

Making contact

With the busy lives that so many of us lead these days, it can sometimes be difficult to get in touch with the services that we need. That's why Warwickshire County Council is setting up a customer service centre. Already, two key departments, Social

Services and Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards, have been involved in a small scale pilot scheme to provide a phone hotline for customers on weekdays from 8am until 8pm. The new centre operates alongside the County switchboard service taking calls from the public. The people staffing the hotline have received special training to help them answer customers' questions and provide access to services.

And the future?

Offering services electronically not only provides more choice and convenience for customers, but as more and more people opt for "self service", it enables us to focus on improvement and innovation.

Tonino Ciuffini said:

"e-Government is all about making our services better and easier to use. As we plan these exciting new service delivery options over the next few years it is vital that we talk to the public about the electronic services



Future learners get to grips with the computer courses.

they want." With this in mind, we will be taking the website out on the road later this year. However, if anybody has any suggestions for service development, or comments on the website as it is today, please send them to

egovchampion@warwickshire.gov.uk

Alternatively if you would like to talk about our telephone services, please contact Kushal Birla on

01926 412862.



Louis Ford and Fern Evans from St Benedicts Primary in Atherstone pond dipping at Kingsbury Water Park.

Water Everywhere

ONCE it was an area of unsightly holes in the ground, but today it is an attractive watery landscape that attracts more than a quarter of a million visitors every year.

And now the story of Kingsbury Water Park's transformation will be revealed to its youngest visitors at an exciting new environmental education centre, which opened in April.

The new centre at the 620-acre country park, between Coleshill and Tamworth, was built with funding from the Countryside Agency's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. The £135,000 grant paid for the building, classroom and a restroom block. Rose Smith, a dedicated education ranger will also be on hand to tell the story of Kingsbury Water Park.

The centre will show how the land at

Kingsbury was used for sand and gravel workings for decades, but in recent times has been transformed into the park that we know today. Cartoon-style characters – Graham Gravel, Peter Pebble, Betty Bulldozer and Digby Digger – will help children learn about what happened there. Youngsters visiting the park will also be able to see much of the wildlife that now lives on the site and enjoy activities such as pond-dipping and other environmental games. Councillor Cliff Cleaver, former Chairman of Warwickshire County Council, performed the official opening of the centre in April. He was joined by youngsters from nearby Kingsbury Junior School who

showed off many of their paintings of the water park.

Councillor Cleaver said:

"This education centre will provide schoolchildren and community groups both in Warwickshire and the surrounding areas with an excellent base from which they can learn about the countryside and the importance of looking after it.

We're extremely grateful to have received such a generous amount of funding from the Countryside Agency, which has enabled us to get this project off the ground."

And for visitors to Kingsbury who get a taste for the countryside in Warwickshire, there are another seven country parks and picnic sites.

Warwickshire County Council has also unveiled a new series of way marked walks around the River Avon.

The County Council has been working with Worcestershire County Council and the Environment Agency to create four walks - two in Warwickshire and two in Worcestershire. Each will open up a particular part of the Avon Valley for greater public enjoyment.

The walks follow the banks of the River Avon for at least part of the route, giving an opportunity to experience the natural history and ecology of this lovely area at first hand. One of the walks in

Warwickshire starts in the centre of Stratford, the other at Milcote.

Each of the walks is signposted, making them easy to follow without the fear of getting lost. In addition, the routes are stile-free with easy to use gates and gentle gradients and moderate distances, so the walks can easily be enjoyed by less experienced walkers.

A full colour leaflet containing a brief route description and a simple map is available from local tourist information centres, libraries and other visitor attractions for each of the walks.

For more information visit our website at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/countryside

What's in a Name – Your Name?

YOU can now delve into the lives of millions of people with a visit to the new look County Record Office at Priory Park, Warwick.

The office reopened recently after a programme of major improvements and now offers access to the General Register Office indexes of births, marriages and deaths from 1837 to 1950 across the whole of England and Wales.

This index is available on microfiche and will be particularly popular with the growing army of people who want to research their family history. Caroline Sampson, Head of Archive Service, said:

"I am delighted that we can re-open the record office with this additional

service.

For a long time, visitors have asked us if we can get these indexes, so I am pleased we can finally offer the service. The indexes can be invaluable for people tracing their family history and complement the archives held here at the Record Office."

The indexes record, in alphabetical order by year, holds the names of all births, marriages and deaths recorded since Civil Registration was introduced in 1837.

So if you're trying to obtain a copy of a birth certificate but do not know where the person was born, the indexes should point you in the right direction.

Once you've found the entry and the name of the register office where the birth was registered you can then write off for a copy (details of local registers are held within the Record Office).

The indexes have been funded through donations to the County Record Office, particularly a contribution of £4,000 from the Friends of the County Record Office. There is a charge of 50p per half hour to use this service, and you should book in advance.

The office is open from Tuesday to Friday and Saturday morning. Bookings can be made at the Record Office in person or by calling

01926 738959.



Friends get Together

WE'VE got so much in common! People with learning difficulties in Bedworth and older Asian people are joining forces to create a cultural café.

The café is just the latest sign of a blossoming friendship between adults at the Bridgeway Centre and Edward Street Day Centre for older Asian people in Nuneaton.

The two groups met through Warwickshire County Council's Coming Together programme – and now they're getting to know each other through exciting and fun activities.

Bridgeway Centre manager Lawrence Storey-Brown says these have included photography, drama and cookery workshops funded by Social Services' Arts Fund, a redesign of Bridgeway's in-house café using

mural and artwork.

"We hope to involve arts workers, musicians, artists and performers in this project.

We see this as the start of a blossoming and positive relationship between the two groups. It's also about people coming together and



understanding each other better and to help break down traditional barriers, and to build friendships instead."

The cultural café will serve mouth-watering Asian cuisine and be run by

service users from both centres, supported by Social Services. It will be based in Bedworth town centre.

Other plans include recording a CD of multi-cultural music performed by people from both centres.

Already, users from the Bridgeway Centre have enjoyed Chandalika, a show of Indian dance music. Before visiting the show, at Warwick Arts Centre, they enjoyed a workshop from one of the dancers who explained the story, and invited the group to join in with the moves and music.

Bridgeway users have been encouraged to start discovering and learning about different cultures and religions.

And this appetite for learning has included sampling Asian food too. Recipes and ingredients were part of a recent workshop in planning for the café, which sounds like good news for fans of spicy food in Bedworth.

WINNING VIEW

Write to: Communications Division, Chief Executive's Department, Warwickshire County Council, P.O Box 9, Shire Hall, Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 4RR

Prize Draw Letter

RUGBY poet Kenneth Burditt is the latest Warwickshire View reader to win a prize in our letter competition. Pensioner Mr Burditt, of Mercer Court, was delighted when he was presented with a voucher for a meal for two at Chicago Rock Café by our corporate mascot, the Warwickshire Bear. He said: "I enjoyed reading this excellent magazine which gave a clear insight into County Council issues that might

have an impact on my local community. I think it's a very good idea to give residents a voice on local affairs." The former warehouse foreman and a published poet, moved to Rugby from his native Leicestershire in 1991 where he spends his days painting, drawing and tracing his family tree. "I'm very happy here" he added "Everything is so convenient."



A Right Royal Welcome

PUPILS at a £3 million new special school in Rugby had a date with Royalty in May at the official opening of the state-of-the-art buildings.



Picture courtesy of the Coventry Evening Telegraph

HRH Duke of Gloucester views the sandpit at Brooke Special School

Pupils moved into the new Brooke School in Overslade Lane last September, but had an eight-month wait before the opening ceremony, performed by HRH The Duke of Gloucester.

On his afternoon tour, the Duke met many of the 130 pupils and teachers before unveiling a plaque in the new primary building and signing the school's visitors' book. Brooke School used to be based on two sites in Rugby, but the £3 million initiative means all pupils are now under one roof. The move is part of the reorganisation of special schools by Warwickshire County Council's Education Department. The school has pupils aged between two and 19, with a wide range of

physical and learning disabilities. New facilities include purpose-built nursery and primary facilities for the school's younger pupils, and new-look facilities for secondary-aged pupils. Older children now have a food technology room, science lab, art room, IT suite and music room. Facilities for all of the pupils include a hydrotherapy pool, soft play area and an interactive sensory room. Headteacher Sheila Cowen said: "This was a fantastic day for all our pupils and staff and the whole school was very excited. We wanted to make it a day that all our pupils will remember, and we are thrilled the Duke was able to accept our invitation. The new-look school is great – it's a hugely improved environment for the students and they are all really enjoying the new facilities." County Education Officer Eric Wood said: "The County Council is committed to providing opportunities for all, and the new Brooke Special School provides a much improved learning environment for children and young people with individual and special educational needs."

A Focus on Regeneration

MILLIONS of pounds could be heading our way over the next few years – targeted to areas where it can do the most good.

Warwickshire County Council has been working with local Borough and District Councils, partners in the business and voluntary sectors and - most importantly - local communities themselves to put a series of projects in place to revitalise priority areas of the County. Many of these schemes are in the north because this is where our main external funders - Advantage West Midlands (our Regional Development Agency) and the European Union - target their main funding programmes. But our efforts are not confined to Nuneaton and Bedworth alone, projects are in the pipeline for priority areas elsewhere in the County as money may become available for a broader range of activity and across a more diverse area than before.

Councillor June Tandy, Cabinet member for Regeneration at the County Council, says:

“Putting our money where the need is and where opportunity beckons is today’s message. In the current economic climate, it’s critical that all partners – local authorities, businesses, voluntary sector and the community – work together to make our shared dream a reality.”

Regeneration isn’t just about creating better conditions for businesses to thrive and create jobs - it’s about ensuring the benefits of a more vibrant local economy also reach the most disadvantaged communities to improve job prospects and quality of life locally. A good example of this ‘holistic’

approach to regeneration is the Camp Hill project in West Nuneaton. About £90 million will be spent on the estate over the next six years on a variety of initiatives ranging from new roads and houses to community and leisure facilities and improving the local environment. As project director Colin Ball explains, “We’re now on our way to seeing big changes for the better at Camp Hill. It’s a very busy time, but we shouldn’t forget why we’re here. We must always remember to work with local residents. They need to

get what they want – not what someone else thinks is a good idea.”



Councillor Sid Tooth handing out community chest cheques for Pride in Camp Hill projects.

Picture courtesy of the Heartland Evening News

Other Regeneration Projects

Nuneaton & Bedworth

- ▶ The Rope Walk shopping centre, in Nuneaton due to open in 2005, will be car-free and feature new shops, restaurants and cafés, served by new multi-storey car parks.
- ▶ New opportunities to develop local business and improve job prospects are behind plans to build a business resource centre at Bayton Road industrial estate near Bedworth. Computer training and support will be on offer to local companies.
- ▶ Updating IT skills is also one of the driving forces behind a new Opportunities Centre at West Nuneaton. Construction skills will be taught and a motorcycle training centre is planned to get nuisance riders off the road and safely trained.
- ▶ The former Dunn’s foundry in Caldwell Road, Nuneaton, will bring jobs and investment to the area as it is redeveloped as a new business park.

- ▶ A new partnership development is planned at Eliot Park to help start up small businesses in the area.

Regeneration elsewhere

- ▶ A new market towns initiative is targeting funding for Alcester, Atherstone, Polesworth and possibly Coleshill, to kick-start a series of projects aimed at reviving these towns. In Southam and Shipston-on-Stour local partnerships are looking at more modest improvements.
- ▶ Rugby Town Centre has been chosen in a pilot scheme for a new Business Improvement District. Local businesses will be offered the opportunity to pay additional business rates to fund improvements in areas like community safety.
- ▶ The Stratford Waterfront project which involves plans for the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre is possibly one of the most significant schemes to affect not just the town but potentially the entire region for decades.

WHAT do Larry Grayson, Shakespeare and a women's world darts champion have in common?



Author David Howe (second row third from left) at his Warwickshire school.

At School for 100 Years

THE surprising answer is that they have all been taught in Warwickshire schools – and this is just one of the entertaining facts to be revealed in a new book celebrating 100 years of education run by Warwickshire County Council.

This July marks the centenary of the Council taking control and 3 July will see the launch of "Willingly To School?: The Story of 900 Years of Education in Warwickshire" (a title inspired by a Shakespearean quotation).

Author David Howe has spent much of his life in the County's schools, as a pupil, teacher, county English adviser and chief inspector.

"Warwickshire County Council took over the running of education from the old school boards," he says.

"Before 1870, whether you went to school or not was down to whether someone – usually the Church or the lord of the manor – had bothered to build one in your area.

The Government wanted a more consistent approach, so put the matter into the hands of local boards such as those at Leamington and Atherstone and then into the hands of the County Council's.

It's interesting looking back that many of the issues that face education

today were being talked about almost 100 years ago. There were school league tables, regular inspections and there was concern about whether exams placed too much stress on teachers and pupils. These issues may have gone away at times during the hundred years, but they always resurface."

David also unearthed a newspaper report of the time quoting a local MP as saying that education standards in Britain were slipping behind neighbouring countries, such as France and Germany.

"Apart from the language used, you could lift these pieces and put them into today's newspapers with no one noticing," he says.

One thing that does come through in the book is that Warwickshire has always been in the vanguard of pioneering changes in education.

As early as 1908, a Parent Teacher Association was operating in the County – thought to be the first in Britain.

And Bolton King, the second Director of Education (the fate of the first is shrouded in mystery, says David) started consultations with teachers

long before it became common elsewhere.

Today, gone are the slates and learning by rote of yesteryear, replaced by computers, DVDs and up-to-the-minute teaching techniques.

But the same rules set out 100 years ago hold good today. Partnerships between teachers, pupils, parents and others in the

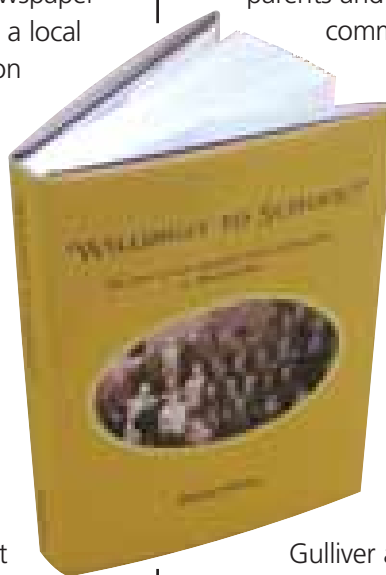
community are just as important, and schools continue to run in a spirit of tolerance and mutual respect.

Former pupils William Shakespeare, novelist George Eliot, comedian Larry Grayson and woman's darts champion Trina

Gulliver all had good reason

to be grateful to their schooldays in Warwickshire – and hundreds of thousands of others do too.

'Willingly To School?' Published by Warwickshire Publications, is available from local libraries, the County Record Office, Warwickshire County Museum or ask for it at your local bookshop. (ISBN no. 1-871942-21-7) priced at £15.95.





The High Street in Stratford on a busy day



Easing Stratford's Snarl-Ups

EVERY year, thousands of tourists flock to see Stratford upon Avon's historic sights. It's great for the local economy, but it causes huge traffic problems.

Warwickshire County Council is determined to tackle these with a strategy that looks at all types of transport in the town and has been gathering views from residents and visitors during the past few months.

A strategy to tackle the problems is being finalised, and very shortly the Council will bid for cash from the Government to back this.

County Councillor Ken Browne, Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment & Rural Affairs, said: "There are a lot of things we could do to improve the town's transport

problems, which is why we have been seeking the views of residents, businesses and District and Town Councillors.

These include giving pedestrians more priority over vehicles in certain areas of the town centre, new pedestrian and cycle routes; more Park and Ride sites; new bus services and upgrading of bus stops and shelters; a possible new Western Relief Road; traffic calming; junction improvements; and new access routes to some car parks." Among the issues facing the Council and its transport consultants Arup in Stratford are traffic congestion, including streets blocked by illegal parking, delivery vehicles, coaches

and tour buses; overcrowding of pavements; and conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Tackling transport in the historic town is to get high priority. Electronic signs are already in place to update drivers on how many parking spaces are free and plans are in the pipeline for a new 750-space Park and Ride site at Bishopton and a crackdown on illegal parking.

The bid to the Government will be made at the end of July and this will be the backbone of a Stratford Transport Strategy, affecting everyone, whether they walk, drive, catch a bus or train, or cycle in the town.

Council Continues to Urge Government to Reject Airport Option

THE Government's proposal for a new airport in Warwickshire would have a bigger impact on the County than any development since the Second World War. It would also mean the closure of Birmingham International and Coventry airports and the building of a new airport larger than Heathrow between Rugby and Coventry.

on all the options including the controversial Rugby proposal. Public interest debates were held in conjunction with the BBC at venues in Corley, Bedworth and Leamington. A final debate was held in Rugby that was broadcast in full. The Warwickshire Panel, (a representative group of 1000 residents of the County) was also used to gauge opinion along with information



Thousands protesting against the proposed Rugby airport. Picture courtesy of the Coventry Evening Telegraph

Understandably this issue has created huge concern not only in Warwickshire but also throughout the Midlands. It is hoped that the matter will soon be resolved when the Government's long awaited White Paper on air transport development is published later this year. Alistair Darling, Secretary of State for Transport, in his evidence to the House of Commons Transport Committee on 21st May, stated the Government does not want to prolong uncertainty but will bring as much certainty as it can as to where airport development should take place in the UK.

This is an important matter for Warwickshire, as the proposed new airport would impact on health, housing, jobs, the economy, environment and transport including roads and rail. Warwickshire County Council has gauged public opinion

posted on the Council's website. A questionnaire, which could be completed on line or from the Autumn edition of the 'View', provided the Council with valuable information on how the public saw the issue.

The Council has fed back these findings to Central Government and is campaigning vigorously to argue our case with them.

The inevitable consequences for the people of Warwickshire if the Rugby option is chosen are:

- ▶ Job insecurity for local people economically dependent on Birmingham International Airport;
- ▶ Disruption of the entire regional planning process and economic regeneration strategy for the West Midlands;
- ▶ Fundamental alteration to Warwickshire's widely acknowledged and appreciated

character reflected in its distinctive towns and villages set in open countryside and

- ▶ Personal distress and planning blight for the communities likely to be destroyed to make way for the proposed Rugby airport

County Councillor Ian Bottrill, Leader of Warwickshire County Council recently said:

"What is particularly upsetting for the people of Warwickshire is that the Rugby Airport option is being seen by the Government as a means of solving the capacity problem in the South East rather than a development which will advance the economy and wider interests of the Midlands. Indeed it is these considerations which formed the basis of the County Council's response to the Government in November, 2002 and we have seen no reason since then to change it."

The Council along with the five District and Borough Councils and Warwickshire's MPs' and MEPs' are opposed to a new airport near Rugby and have urged the Government to reject this option at the earliest opportunity. It supported the progressive development of Birmingham Airport, providing measures are taken to reduce environmental impacts and manage demand, including improvements to road and rail transport infrastructure. It urged the Government and Birmingham Airport to work with adjoining Local Authorities to secure an acceptable modified option. Finally, the County Council objected to any expansion of Coventry airport unless a full assessment of the impacts on the environment and local community demonstrates that an expansion would be acceptable.

Evidence from consultants along with Warwickshire County Council's formal response are available on our website at

www.warwickshire.gov.uk

(click on the aeroplane graphic).

Q AND A'S

We receive more than half a million enquiries a year from the public through our Customer Service Centre (01926 410410). These are some of your most recently asked questions.

Q What's the population of Nuneaton and Bedworth?

A The population of N&B is 119,300 (Office for National Statistics 2001 estimate). If you would like to know the population of your area please visit the Warwickshire Web at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/research the research unit pages will hold all the information you need, alternatively please contact Ed Dunn on 01926 412775.

Q I need a new school bus pass.

A Contact Education Transport on 01926 412029, 01926 412330 or 01926 412600.

Q Where can I get married in Warwickshire?

A We keep a comprehensive list of hotels, golf clubs, abbeys etc that are approved for wedding ceremonies. Please contact Felicity Howard on 01926 746805.

Q What does Paddington Bear have in his sandwiches?

A Marmalade of course! At the Customer Service Centre staff get asked a very wide-range of things by callers doing competitions! Name the seven Dwarfs; what's the highest mountain in Warwickshire? are just a few of our strange requests!

www.warwickshire.gov.uk or ring 01926 410410

Dates for your Diary

Date	Event	Venue	Time
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August 2003

21	GCSE results		
28	Cabinet Meeting	Shire Hall, Warwick	13.45

September 2003

1	Autumn back to school		
2	County Council Meeting	Shire Hall, Warwick	10.00
10	Rugby Area Committee	Brinklow Church Room, Rugby	18.30
16	Warwick Area Committee	Shire Hall, Warwick	18.00
17	North Warwickshire Area Committee	To be confirmed	18.00

Date	Event	Venue	Time
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18	Cabinet Meeting	Shire Hall, Warwick	13.45
23	County Council Meeting	Shire Hall, Warwick	10.00
24	Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee	Civic Hall, Bedworth	18.00
25	Warwickshire School Organisation Committee	Manor Hall, Leamington Spa	18.45
29	Warwickshire Police Authority	Shire Hall, Warwick	10.00

October 2003

1	Stratford upon Avon Area Committee	Stratford District Council Offices	16.30
9	Cabinet Meeting	Shire Hall, Warwick	13.45
27-31	Schools half term holidays		

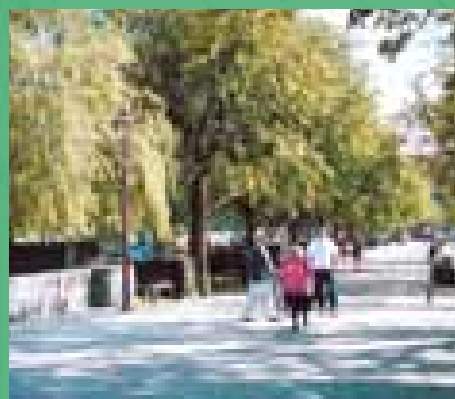
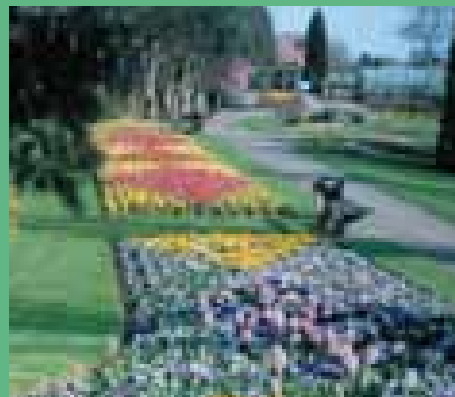
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Click web: www.warwickshire.gov.uk
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Our normal office hours are 9 - 5.30pm weekdays, however by calling the above telephone number you can obtain advice, help or signposting to any of our services from 8 - 8pm weekdays.



If this information is difficult to understand, we can provide it in another format, for example, in Braille, in large print, on audiotape, in another language or by talking with you. Please contact us on 01926 412758.

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