

Report of Borough Councillor Stuart to Water Orton Parish Council – May 2025

Committee Membership

Following the recent Annual Meeting Of the Borough Council I can report I will be sat on the following committees:

- Executive
- HS2 Consultative Committee
- Parking Working Group
- Special Sub Group
- Senior Management Recruitment Sub – Committee
- Climate Change Working Group
- Member Performance Working Group
- Shop Front Improvement Working Group

Membership of these committees, which match the priorities of the village and my own skill / knowledge base, is possible due to the creation of the North Warwickshire Independent Group which has expanded the placements on committees. Last year I sat on 4 boards, one of which did not meet and one which had a single meeting. None took advantage of my particular knowledge, skillset or the requirements of the community I was representing.

Allowances

Due to the politically motivated decision to limit my committee membership I donated 30% of my allowance to community projects. This has been spent on various projects including the funding for the first two issues of “the Villager” on behalf of the Parish Council.

Given the increase in committee memberships this year I will no longer be donating that portion of my allowance to community causes.

However, it has always been my policy to not claim any expenses for undertaking council duties. I will now be claiming mileage for attendance at council meetings and donating this towards community causes.

Local Government Reorganisation

Following meetings in March, North Warwickshire Borough Council alongside the other 4 borough and district councils in Warwickshire submitted proposals for a 2 unitary authority model for Warwickshire.

Warwickshire County Council submitted proposals for a single unitary authority to run council services.

Following the elections it is uncertain what the policy of the county council now is and what steps they will be taking to meet the next deadline for firm proposals to be submitted in November.

The North Warwickshire Independents Group will be writing shortly to the government to detail that it wishes for a third proposal to be considered. Presently the numbers around a single authority or 2 authorities fall outside the ideal of 500,000 residents. Neighbouring Staffordshire will be facing the same challenge.

It is the feeling of NWIR that there is merit in exploring whether a cross border “Mercian” unitary consisting of North Warks, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Lichfield and Tamworth (and possibly Sutton Coldfield) would enable the creation of 3 distinct unitaries each with a distinct history, character and focus.

Position Clarification

There have been a number of queries as to my position since the recent County Council elections. To clarify, I remain a Borough Councillor for the village alongside David Reilly.

My period of office runs through until 2027 although with Local Government reorganisation on the agenda this may be subject to change.

SMZ

Following a recent meeting of SMZ emails have been exchanged with community engagement personnel at HS2. This includes emails relating to the temporary traffic lights on Birmingham Road.

The responses from HS2 were infuriating and exasperating.

I wish to discuss with the Chair of SMZ of how best to progress these matters as there is a need for escalation. Input from the Parish Council may also be requested in the coming months.

Noise

The matter of the new noise emanating from HS2 is a matter that has been raised on various platforms. Initial investigations from BBV suggest it may be due to a machine that has actually been in operation for over a year. It is questioning why the previous mitigating activities are no longer being successful. I am hoping to visit the site in the coming days.

Outgoing Mayor

At the annual meeting of the Borough Council the outgoing mayor reflected on his year performing the function of first Citizen of the Borough. He detailed two events that he attended that made the greatest impression on him.

One was an Easter Bonnet Parade, and the other was the “incredibly impressive” Spud Club. A feather in the cap of the village I would suggest.

*Cllr Steve Stuart
Borough Councillor for Water Orton
May 2025.*