

Parking Enforcement Imminent

The introduction of parking enforcement (as opposed to the police version of non-enforcement!) looks set to be introduced to the Town on August 6th as planned. Yellow lines are being painted and the pavements will soon be blighted by parking meters and other unsightly bureaucratic clutter.

Misplaced 'Confidence'?!

Despite the prospect of traffic chaos caused by roadworks due to be implemented at the same time (*see article Roadwork Chaos Ahead - page 2*), county council officers remain "confident" that the huge number of traffic diversions in the town centre will have no effect on parking and therefore cannot be allowed to delay things. But these are the same workers who were "confident" that there would be no problems with parking enforcement in Stratford (the catalogue of problems is legend), and who were "confident" that there would be no problems in Rugby, of which more in a moment. So all in all no problem then. If only! The truth is that the scheme is being rushed in with inadequate preparation, inadequate consultation, ill-judged time banding and wholesale disregard of the many valuable and helpful suggestions made by many organisations in the town. So nothing new there then and why did they waste our money with a 'consultation period'?

Money-making exercise

It is already clear that this is all about making money, and if the businesses suffer, well we'll probably get over it won't we? The Chamber has acquired the Warwick area business plan for the scheme (but **only** after requesting it under the Freedom of Information Act, and prior to this, according to workers, it didn't even exist!) and this shows that the scheme will make in excess of £500,000 per annum in the Warwick district alone. This will be achieved by issuing over £700,000 per annum in fines (i.e. 25,000 fines per annum). By year five the cumulative net surplus projected will be in excess of £2 million, and the scheme will have paid almost £500,000 to the treasury in VAT! Over this time over £3 million is assumed to have been earned as fines. We repeat, this is in Warwick district alone. So, simple maths, the scheme is not sustainable if enforcement is actually achieved, which is supposed to be the object of the scheme! This plan also assumes that no time is spent by wardens on other duties. You may recall that WCC made much of

the "other duties" that wardens would undertake on behalf of the community when persuading us, during the so called 'consultation period', that this scheme would benefit the wider community. Did WCC really think that this stealth-tax would not be spotted?

Rugby - not a success

In Rugby, where the scheme was implemented late last year, the problems are already apparent and we understand that wholesale changes to the time banding to allow 2 hours parking are underway. In addition we also understand that the financial returns are not being achieved, not least due to a **10% drop in footfall and sales** in the parking enforcement zone. During the 'consultation' we were promised that time banding would also be changed in Warwick to 2 hours but because it might have delayed things by a couple of months this commitment has also been ignored.

Refund scheme?

We will, as always, make the best of a bad job and we are looking at the possibility of a parking charge refund scheme and hoping to persuade WCC to extend the warning period as result of roadworks. We are planning to form a liaison group with Leamington and Kenilworth Chambers to learn from the experience of other Towns. We will hold WCC to account for the promises made and will seek an early review of the scheme after implementation so the teething problems can be speedily resolved. However we have no illusions and will continue to criticise the most damaging aspects of this scheme.

Tell Your Customers!

It is vital that we do discourage our customers from using the town with the horror stories that will emerge, and it is equally important that we inform them of the parking changes - not least because we do not want them to get parking tickets, which **WOULD** put them off from returning! We also don't want them to add to the council coffers by one penny more than is necessary!

We suggest that in the month leading up to the changes (on August 6th) we inform each and every customer of what will happen, the time-bands on the various streets - and the penalties if they ignore the officialdom that will be crawling the streets.

At least we might prevent a repeat of the disasters in Stratford and Rugby!

A simple suggested leaflet is at the end of this Campaign (page 6), which could be copied, displayed and given to your customers.

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Warwick Chamber
of Trade
June 2007

Road Chaos Ahead

We have been advised that major road closures will be implemented in the Town from 5th August, stupidly timed to coincide with parking enforcement. This will result in a section of Market Street by the Museum being closed to all traffic. These roadworks by Severn Trent are necessary to repair the main sewers on this section. As a consequence there will be wholesale diversions around the Town with a number of streets being re-routed the "wrong" way, including New Street, Brook Street, and Market Place. Full details will be issued nearer the time. The works are 'scheduled' to last a total of 10 days and will be gone(?) before the important August bank Holiday, but in the meantime we can expect some degree of chaos.

Obviously the Highways Engineers of WCC are no doubt "confident" that their plans to mitigate the worst effects will be successful, and the Town will be littered with diversion signs, one way signs, fences, bollards dug up, no waiting signs etc to be mixed in with the new parking signs, parking meters and an army of parking enforcers who have 25,000 tickets to issue. In view of the short duration of the works it is unlikely that the traffic lights will be re-phased to take account of the required traffic flows adding further pressure to our streets. Welcome to Warwick!

Publicity and Guides

As you may be aware, the Chamber is supporting a new publication which brings together our Shopping Guide with the highly successful Eating Out Guide produced by Warwick Town Centre Management.

The combined publication is aimed at increasing dwell time in the town centre and will be in a booklet which people will hopefully use as a reference manual. 25,000 copies are being designed and printed by Warwick based Watermark Design and if you have not already received it, a letter will be sent to traders shortly outlining the details of how to advertise in it. Carrying the new Warwick brand, the Warwick Shopping and Eating Out Guide will be an annual production which will be distributed locally, regionally and nationally and we would recommend that you take part in helping to increase footfall and spend in the town.

Andersons of Warwick

With great regret we hear of the retirement of Christine Anderson of Andersons of Warwick.

A 'veteran' of 20 years trading in Warwick, Christine and her son, Edward, have been stalwart supporters of the Chamber and the town.

We are relieved to learn that her shop is to be taken over and retained as a jewellers.

We would like to thank Christine for her support and wish her a very long and happy 'retirement' and wish her well for the future.

Business Improvement Districts (BID's)

The first meeting of the BID's Feasibility Group took place on 8th May with 12 Warwick businesses invited to discuss what projects they would wish to see in Warwick with the income generated from a BID. The Chamber have helped to finance the feasibility study by contributing £1,000 of the £10,000 required and feedback on the initial meeting has been positive. For those businesses who would like to see a DVD on what a BID is and how it is working in Rugby, please contact Adrian Field for your free copy (410815).

Warwick Folk Festival

27 – 29 July 2007

Warwick is one of the country's leading Folk Festivals which offers a unique experience which enriches the town of Warwick



Plans for Warwick Folk Festival 2007 are well under way with an explosion of music and dance which will make 2007 the biggest and best folk festival Warwick has ever experienced!

Warwick Folk Festival has become a major highlight on the British music calendar attracting people from all over the country and beyond. One of the attractions of the Festival is the live music and dance which is programmed around the town centre including hotels and public houses. This year we are introducing the very first **Street Festival** which will include; two free concerts, events, Family Ceilidhs, free workshops, storytelling, live music and dance events for the people of Warwick during the Folk Festival weekend 27-29 July.

Best Dressed Festival Shop Window

We are launching a new competition for shops and businesses in Warwick Town Centre to find the best dressed Festival Window.

We will be asking shop keepers to design their shop windows around the theme of **FESTIVALS**. Window displays need to be ready by 20 July when they will be judged by a panel of judges. We hope to arrange a photo call on Monday 23 July with the winner and the judges. The Festival will be held during the weekend of 27-29 July.

The winner will receive a certificate, trophy and Festival weekend tickets.

Get involved and be a part of Warwick Folk Festival 2007!

Application forms will be available shortly from Helen Meeke. If you are interested in participating in the competition please contact Helen on 01926 427056 or email helenmeeke@helenmeeke.co.uk www.warwickfolkfestival.co.uk

Westmede Furnishers

And yet another 'retirement' but this one enforced by Warwick District Council.

Westmede Furnishers, long-standing supporters of the Chamber, traded in Smith Street for many years until forced out by increasing rent and rates. They relocated to a nearby industrial park in Warwick and continued with their successful business. Now the planning department at WDC have decreed that the company does not 'manufacture' goods and therefore cannot operate a retail operation from an industrial site.

Quite understandably the owner of Westmede, Trevor Colgate, has had enough of battling with petty bureaucracy and so, after 37 years, he has decided to call it a day.

It is dreadfully sad, but not surprising, that local government can be allowed to have such a negative effect on people trying to earn a living and offer a service.

We wish Trevor all the best for the future and hope that his misfortune will be the start of a rethink by WDC. We're not holding our breath!

Victorian Evening 2007

Thursday
29th November



This popular event takes place on Thursday 29th November between 5.30pm and 9pm and many plans have already been made. Stall bookings have also been made which is superb as the aim is to increase last year's figure of 43 to 65.

Sponsors Needed

The Christmas Committee are on the lookout for sponsors this year. The Warwick Arms Hotel were the principal sponsors for last year's event and Business Development Manager, Tom Swindells said *'that the event provided us with excellent coverage and brand identity at a time where we were promoting our refurbishment. We would be happy to speak to any potential sponsors to tell them how happy we were with our involvement'*.

Financial contributions can vary according to your budget and in return there are a number of opportunities to promote your business:

- Pre and post event publicity in the Warwick Courier, Warwick Times, Warwick Observer, Stratford Herald, Coventry Telegraph and on BBC Coventry and Warwickshire as well as on flyers and websites.
- Your company brand/logo on 6000 raffle tickets.
- A judge on the Best Victorian Costume Competition.
- Free entry to the post event party
- Branded signs on lampposts and stalls indicating that you are sponsoring the craft and/or charity stalls on the night
- Allowance to distribute flyers on the night for your business

The Chamber of Trade contributes £500 to the event with the Town and District Councils each providing £1000.

If you are interested in being a sponsor, please contact Adrian Field on 410815 or this year's lead organiser Helen Wild on 07979 506375.

MOP Charged More

One of the benefits of the introduction of parking enforcement and on-street charging will be the requirement for the MOP organisers to pay more for the privilege of taking over the town for 5 days a year.

At the moment the MOP does compensate the council for the lost revenue from car parks, but the loss of revenue from the street meters will be an additional charge that the MOP will need to pay.

It clearly would be a breach of the Council's financial duty to its tax-payers should such charges be waived, and nearer the time will be seeking confirmation of the precise arrangements that have been put in place, and will report back on the amounts to be paid for both on- and off-street loss of parking revenue.

In the meantime we are sure that this will be the subject of discussion between the respective organisations and we look forward to an announcement clarifying the amount of compensation that will be re-paid to tax-payers. It will also be interesting to learn if WDC intend to waive car park charges during the mop - it would be fair!

A Message from our Local Police

Town Crime

Thanks to the support from local shop keepers and market traders, we have dramatically reduced the amount of purse thefts and counterfeit money scams in the town centre which we feel is great news thank you for all the support you have given us in doing this. Lets keep up the great work.



W.R.C.I

We have been busy trying to set up WRCI group for the Warwick town centre. Our first meeting took place on 31st May when we elected a chair person Dan Weston (Warwick Castle Security) and discussed the aims of the group. WRCI is a great scheme that can reduce crime in town centres. Its primary use is that it will help shopkeepers be aware of known offenders that operate in the area, how they operate and any dangers they may present to you. The scheme is owned and run by shopkeepers and Warwickshire Police fully support it.

If you would like to find out more about the scheme or sign up to it please don't hesitate to call me into your shop or email me and I shall drop a info/sign up leaflet your way.

New Town Centre Officer

Some more great news, the town centre now has its own dedicated police officer, Neil Ward.

He is training a new recruit at the moment but you will be seeing more of him very shortly!

Till Snatch

You may be aware that a town centre shop suffered a till snatch recently. It was the usual scenario of one person distracting the shop assistant whilst another emptied the till.

We must emphasise the need for vigilance and also the need to keep the amounts of money kept in the till to an absolute minimum. For a fairly small amount a counter-cache or small safe can be purchased to put surplus cash away safely. Please contact the police if you have any information about this incident.

PCSO Seb Apostol

Sebastian.Apostol@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

Radio Network

The radio network continues to prove its worth with a number of arrests since our last Campaign. In one case illegal immigrants attempting a credit card scam were arrested and are awaiting deportation. The long periods of silence on the network also attest to its success in persuading local shoplifters that there are easier places to go to steal, with a consequent reduction in the number of reported shoplifting incidents. However we need to remain vigilant.

New Cheaper Radios

The Chamber is currently looking at ways to further develop the network, and considering a number of options to replace the current generation of radios. It now seems likely that we can buy smaller and less expensive units whilst at the same time improving the functionality.

The new radios will cost less than £200 and, as in the past, an upgrade will include the first years membership free, effectively giving a discount of 30%. More on this option in our next edition, but contact us if you are interested in joining the ever-expanding network.

Warwick Words – Be a part of it!



4-7 October 2007

Warwick Words is fast becoming a highlight on the Literature Festival's calendar attracting people from all over the West Midlands and beyond. **Warwick Words** offers a unique experience which enriches the town of Warwick.

Plans for Warwick Words 2007 are well under way and we can guarantee you a weekend bursting with writers, poets, illustrators, storytellers and performance poets from around the country during the sixth literary festival which promises an exciting selection of events from over fifty writers and poets.

Special guests this year include: **Roy Hattersley, Anne Diamond, Nigel Rees, Michael Wood, Harry Mount, Sophie Hannah, Pauline Prior-Pitt, Will Hutton, Zoe Brigley, David Morley and many more**

Our younger audiences are in for a real treat at **The Children's Book Fair** with workshops, storytelling and activities.

Warwick Poet Laureate, Helen Yendall, will be hosting a Poetry Tea Room for local writers groups from across the west Midlands.

Warwick Words will present its fourth poetry competition to appoint **Warwick Poet Laureate 2007/2008**. The competition is open to anyone aged 18 and over and living in Warwickshire.

Application forms are available on our web site www.warwickwords.co.uk/getinvolved/poetrycomp

There are many ways to enjoy **Warwick Words**, with workshops, free events, performances, education projects and walks and talks around the town.

The development and sustainability of Warwick Words depends on creating new partnerships with local companies and organisations; these partnerships will allow everyone to benefit from the Festival's success and the promotion of Warwick as a place to visit. **Your company** can become a **Festival Partner** from as little as **£50**.

Warwick Words would be delighted if you and your company would be interested in becoming a partner of this unique and vibrant Festival.

For further information about sponsorship opportunities and Festival Partners please do not hesitate to contact me, Helen Meeke, on 01926 427056 or email me at helenmeeke@helenmeeke.co.uk.

01926 427 056 or 07944 768607

Revised Market Layout

The revised layout that was successfully tested last year has been re-introduced this year. This layout allows the market stalls to "spread" towards the junction of New Street and Old Square with the closure of vehicle access to the Market Place past the front of Shire Hall. This layout allows the pubs on Market Place to retain some seating outside over the Summer months (improving dwell time), and provides obvious activity for curious visitors to St Mary's and from the Castle via Church Street.

Market traders and businesses around the Market Place are reporting improved footfall as a result.

All we need now is more good weather!

AGM Report

The AGM of the Chamber of Trade was held on March 29th at Jurys Restaurant (now Merchants), and we thank Jason and Brandon for their hospitality. There were approx 30 in attendance a major increase in numbers from previous years and a testament to the resurgence of the Chamber of Trade over the last year. The Chairman, Sue Butcher, highlighted this in her report which reviewed the past years activities notably the change in the membership structure and the investment in our brand new website and she thanked David Way for all his hard work in helping to set up the website.

Sue reported on the significant input that the Chamber had made to the consultation exercise on Decriminalisation of Parking, of which little note had been taken apart from bringing the date of implementation forward.

Sue also outlined her work as part of the Town Centre Forum which is working towards making Warwick a better place to live in, work in and visit.

Sue also outlined the challenges to come for the Chamber including monitoring the Implementation and ongoing effects of Decriminalisation of Parking, the future of Shire Hall and the Courts buildings and the Warwick Renaissance Project. She thanked the members of the committee for their hard work and support and also thanked Julie Vallance, our secretary, for all her assistance.

Police

Following the official business Inspector Richard Woodcock gave a presentation of the role and structure of the police with particular regard to the introduction of the safer Neighbourhood Scheme and he introduced Sgt Johal, the new Sgt for Warwick.

BID's

Adrian Field, Warwick Town Centre Business Development Manager, then gave a brief presentation on the Warwick Renaissance Project and the changes coming to Warwick over the next few years before introducing Sue Ashley from WCC and Mo Aswat who gave a presentation on BID's which provoked a lively discussion which you can read more about elsewhere in this newsletter.

It was a stimulating evening and as a result your committee have committed to putting on more events for the members throughout the year the first of which **is on July 3rd on security issues** details of which are outlined in the newsletter.

If you have any ideas for events or presentations or would like to get involved please contact Sue on 492249 or email us.

More Events

Ooh La La!

The French Market returns to Warwick on Friday 15th June and will be running alongside the monthly Farmers' Market. The Square will be used for this event so there will not be any road closures. Note that this is a change to the date given in the Diary of Events leaflet due to the French Market operators' logistical problems.

Thai Festival

There is also a change in the published date for the Warwick Thai Festival. The 2nd year of this popular event will now be held on Sunday 22nd July from 10am until 4pm. All of the activities take place in Market Place with up to 40 stalls, performances and Buddhist monks. Large crowds are expected so some businesses may wish to consider opening on this Sunday, particularly as it is the first Sunday of the school holidays.

RST Closure

The decision to redevelop the main theatre in Stratford will improve tourism to the area considerably from 2010 when it is scheduled to re-open.

In the meantime footfall in Stratford will be down as a consequence of the loss of this substantial tourism asset. Inevitably some of the businesses in Stratford will suffer whilst the work is underway. By contrast this may well work to the advantage of Warwick. It has long been recognised that the M40 acts like a moat between Warwick and Stratford with the visitors choosing to turn right or left at the Longbridge roundabout, and rarely crossing the motorway back to the other side. For the next few years our relative position to Stratford will be improved and we may be more successful in persuading tourists to visit from Stratford, and also stay overnight or longer in Warwick.

Re-invigorated Tourism Strategy

We are encouraged in this judgement by a new emphasis from South Warwickshire Tourism on a shift from attractions to the region as a whole, and in light of the great historic appeal of the Town we have the basis of a re-invigorated tourism strategy. With luck there will be a Warwick silver lining to the Stratford black cloud.

Web Site Stats

Use of the Web Site continues to improve with almost 8000 sessions hosted in May. These sessions resulted in over 54,000 hits, and over 20,000 page hits. 85% of visitors to the site looked at more than 1 page, with 25% visiting 2 or more pages.

More than 20% stayed on the site for more than 1 minute, with an astonishing 12% staying on for more than 6 minutes.

Shoppers/Eating Out Guide

The site continues to be updated, and in this respect anyone taking advertising space in the Shoppers/Eating Out Guide will be listed on the site FREE. This will only apply to new listing not already listed on the site.

As always we will consider any suggestions to improve the site, and will look shortly at the possibility of hosting advertising for members; given the traffic we are now enjoying this may make sense.

Please continue to let David know of any changes or additions to your data (eg web site links) via info@warwickchamberoftrade.co.uk and use the same link for info on your business if not listed. Please note that the hosting charges of £10 per year or part must be paid BEFORE data will be entered.

Parks and Gardens Leaflet

A new Warwick Parks and Gardens leaflet is almost ready with the previous version almost out of stock. Funded by Warwick Town Council, the leaflet will complement the Shopping and Eating Out Guide and the Diary of Events leaflets all of which proudly display the new Warwick brand.

What a load of rubbish!

Business Waste Re-cycling

The Government continues to put out proposals for all kinds of waste disposal initiatives and penalties for the domestic sector but remains scandalously silent on the question of business waste. It is of course one of life's stupidities that the government imposes stringent waste disposal taxes on us but does not require local authorities to collect and recycle business waste. Presumably yet another 'stealth-tax' - with a Brown paper bag over it!

But there is an answer!

However, the Chamber's initiative for the businesses of Warwick will continue so that we, at least, can play our part. A number of waste disposal agencies have been contacted and we are pleased to confirm that Fortress have a collection scheme for Paper and Cardboard via various dedicated containers on site (240litre up to 1100litre). These containers are collected on a scheduled weekly basis, and costs are dependant upon the size of the container but are similar, or the same, as present rates. Contact Steve Ramus on 01926 493414 or email him at steve.ramus@fortressrecycling.com

Ban Plastic Bags?

In May the shops in Modbury, Devon became the first town in Britain to ban plastic bags. See the link:

www.modburydevoninfo.co.uk/news_article.asp?Article_ID=13

Collectively they have achieved the buying power to purchase quantities of Jute and Cotton 'bags-for-life' which they are either selling at cost or giving away. Thus far the scheme is working remarkably well and they have received massive national press coverage.

This is an initiative we are looking at. It is unlikely that it would be suitable for every business in Warwick but if enough people expressed an interest we would pursue it further.

If you are interested in this initiative, or have other constructive ideas or suggestions, please contact us.

WARWICK INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL



**Saturday 23 June –
Sunday 8 July**

www.warwickinternationalfestival.com

Warwick International Festival bursts into life on 23 June 2007, with a host of world class artists descending on Warwick for two weeks of unforgettable arts experiences. Warwick International Festival believes that a festival should be about celebration, discovery, surprise and enjoyment, so in 2007, there will be fantastic arts and entertainment to experience in and around Warwick, including salsa music and dancing in the Market Square, string quartets and jazz in St Nicholas Park, colourful Can Can in the Market Square and wacky circus skills throughout Warwick town centre. The Festival has 51 events, of which 21 are free to the public, ensuring that everyone can enjoy a part of the Festival entertainment.

Free Tickets

The Festival aims to bring new visitors to the town of Warwick, bringing potential new customers to businesses and industries throughout Warwickshire. The Festival believes that the arts and business can work together to enhance life in Warwick both artistically and economically. Warwick International Festival would love to hear from businesses around Warwick who would be prepared to put up a poster or two, or are willing to take some Festival leaflets. If businesses could put up a Festival display, we would be really grateful, and would be very happy to give each business a pair of tickets to the event of their choice (Festival's own promotions. All tickets subject to availability).

Please contact Esther Blaine, Festival Director on 07910 487 856 or email: estherbmarketing@aol.com

STOP PRESS - IMPORTANT - STOP PRESS

Tuesday July 3rd at 6pm

BUSINESS SECURITY MEETING

at Merchants, Swan Street, Warwick

Please bring yourselves and your staff to this important meeting covering all aspects of security within the town. Your local police officer will be there to answer all your questions and concerns and there will be a presentation on W.R.C.I. These issues affect us all.

rsvp to info@warwickchamberoftrade.co.uk

or phone Sue on 492249 or David on 494927

STOP PRESS - IMPORTANT - STOP PRESS

NEW PARKING ARRANGEMENTS

Below is a suggested leaflet to display and copy to give to customers warning of the new parking charges.

We want to keep our customers and hope that by warning them of the changes they will not get fined - and will return!

Don't let them feed the council coffers!

**NEW
PARKING
ARRANGEMENTS**

August 6th

On 6th August new on-street parking arrangements come in to force in Warwick (and in Leamington and Kenilworth.)

This will mean that there will be charges for parking.

It also means being fined if you either don't pay or if you overstay your time.

- DO Check the boards for time-band information
- DO Pay the correct fee
- DON'T Overstay and get fined
- If you are planning a long stay it is cheaper to use a Car Park

Issued by Warwick Chamber of Trade