

Outside Bodies – Progress Report Form

Name:	Cllr Gill Cleeve
Name of Organisation	WALC AGM (12 November 2025)
Progress report since last Town Council meeting:	I attended the Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC) Annual General Meeting, held online on 12 November. The meeting opened with remarks from the Chair, Rosie Weaver BEM, followed by a detailed presentation from the NALC Chief Executive, Jonathan Owen. He spoke about the pivotal role parish and town councils have within the evolving national planning landscape, noting that councils collectively represent 35 million people across 92% of England. He encouraged councils to be proactive in planning and development processes, particularly given the scale of upcoming housing and infrastructure changes. Jonathan outlined NALC's lobbying on the new Planning and Infrastructure Bill introduced in March 2025. Key priorities include: • strengthening neighbourhood planning and ensuring communities retain genuine influence over local development; • securing a fair allocation of the new infrastructure levy for parish and town councils; • protecting local discretion in planning decisions; • ensuring planning authorities receive adequate resources to carry out their duties; and • defending the sector's ability to hold remote meetings.

	He also highlighted NALC's recent achievements, including securing more than £7.5 million in government funding for parish-led neighbourhood planning and community asset projects, improved standards support, and new national resources such as <i>The Good Councillor's Guide to Neighbourhood Planning</i> and the joint NALC/CPRE guide on responding to planning applications. Members were encouraged to engage early with developers and principal authorities to help shape place-making, infrastructure, and environmental protections. We then heard an update from WALC CEO Ja'Neen Day, who reported on the continued expansion of member support through training, buddy groups, direct advice sessions, and strengthened governance resources. The keynote speaker, Derek Kemp (DCK Accounting Solutions), was unable to present due to technical issues; a transcript will follow. During the AGM business, members approved the minutes from 2024 and noted the audited accounts. WALC proposed a 5% subscription increase for 2026–27 to maintain service quality and meet rising operational costs. For Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council, this results in a £37.05 increase, bringing the total subscription for 2026/27 to £778.05. The meeting concluded with a Q&A session for member councils.
Date provided to Town Clerk:	13/11/25