

# Bearley and Moreton Morrell Parish Councils

March 2026

Report by Councillor George Cowcher

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1. **Control of the Council** On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March The Greens have registered a Notice of Motion to remove the current Leader of the Council. I expect the notice to be rejected as the Conservatives are reported to be supporting the existing leader.
2. **Local Government Reorganisation** The Governments consultation on Local Government Reorganisation remains open for comment until 26<sup>th</sup> March. The Government have also asked for our views on Strategic Authorities and Authorities to produce a new spatial strategy (like structure plans of old). The option of joining the West Midlands Combined Authority does not seem to be available, and Warwickshire with two Unitary Authorities is probably too small. Warwickshire is one of five authorities where there is not an obvious partnership. Northamptonshire is in a similar position in the East Midlands however we see no advantage in a partnership with Northamptonshire. This leaves Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire to be considered. Responses to Government consultations have to be submitted by 26<sup>th</sup> March too.
3. **County Council Budget** The Administration with Conservative support set a budget on 17<sup>th</sup> February. The Council Tax will rise by 4.44% (2% designed to cover social care, the remaining 2.44% to cater for inflation and increased pressures). The budget does include cuts in expenditure and the need to make substantial savings
4. **SEND Statutory Override** The Government have announced that they will fund 90% of this deficit. This has reduced the amount of interest the Council would have to find to fund borrowing. A Government White Paper has been published on the future of SEND provision but as yet it is still unclear how this is to be funded
5. **Growth Hub** Business Support is going to become ever more important with the rise in unemployment and global challenges. I am concerned that the winding up of the Growth Hub at this time may be a serious mistake.
6. **Highway Matters** I will give a verbal report at the meeting