

District agrees 1pc rise in its precept for Alcester and Studley

A ONE per cent increase in its share of the council tax has been approved by Stratford District Council for the year 2018/19 at a full council meeting. It means that for an average band D property in Alcester or Studley the district's take of the tax will rise to \$137.07.

The increase is much less than the

recommended amount and a third of the rate of inflation and equates to an increase of less than 3p per week. Taken together with the increase in take from Warwickshire County Council (4.99 per cent), Policing (6.25 per cent), plus an average of parish/town precepts (1.51 per cent) the council tax bill for a Band D prop-

erty will be \$1,763.96, a 4.69 per cent increase over the 2017/18 figure of \$1,684.92, meaning householders will have to find an extra \$79.04 per year. The authority has also budgeted to support the homeless, earmarked \$100k for an Economic Development Strategy, \$78k for its Planning Policy Unit, cash for extra security at public

events, money to extend broadband reach and \$25k to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War. The good news for Studley is confirmation of \$50,000 for the preparations for Compulsory Purchase Order of Priory Square, a Lib Dem proposal. Where the money goes on a Band D property:

Stratford District Council - \$137.07 - 7.8 per cent of the total.
 Warwickshire County Council - \$1,363.68 - 77.3 per cent of the total.
 Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner - \$203.98 - 11.5 per cent of the total.
 Average parish/town precept - \$59.23 - 3.4 per cent of the total.



Bienvenido a St Augustine's: Teachers Vicente Simon and Maria Martinez from Spain with Mike Dean, the chair of Academy Representatives of Saint Augustine's, Mayor Jenny Wheeler and Executive Principal Tony Quinn.

STAFF and students at St Augustine's Catholic High School have said a warm hoi! to two teachers from Spain who have joined the Music and Technology departments as part of the Erasmus Exchange Programme. Maria Martinez and Vicente Simon from IES Aren School, Tomelloso, south of Madrid, will spend a week observing staff

at this highly successful Redditch teaching school to see good practice in action. Borough Mayor Jenny Wheeler was there to welcome the teachers and then gave an inspirational speech to Year 11 students during their assembly. Mayor Wheeler highlighted the need for students to be flexible and resilient throughout their future careers. The school's Executive Principal Tony

Quinn said he was delighted the school could play a part in the diversification of teaching practice in this cross-border programme. He also left the school could learn from their Spanish counterparts and knew teachers from Saint Augustine's Catholic High School were looking forward to discussing teaching technique with their guests.

Professorship for Ubi-Tech boss

THE co-founder of Redditch-based firm Ubi-Tech has received a professorship in Mobile and Wireless Systems.

Robert Gardiner, who was one of the founder partners of Ubi-Tech with Richard Lee and Mike Harbon has been appointed a Professor at the University of Suffolk.

Ubi-Tech (3R) Ltd, situated off Far Moor Lane, is dedicated to helping people develop their telecommunications skills and careers through industry recognised and University accredited qualifications. It excels in delivering up-to-date academic and practical training with leading industry experts and academic advisers.

Professor Gardiner will sit within the STEM Faculty and is a Professor of Mobile and Wireless Systems. He said: "Ubi-Tech has an enviable reputation throughout the telecoms industry and this link with academia will continue to strengthen its brand."



Academic: Professor Rob Gardiner, co-founder of Redditch-based firm Ubi-Tech.

MAGICAL: THE ArtistsWorkhouse in Studley is launching its inaugural studio and associate member exhibition tonight, Friday, March 2.

The doors on 'I Think This World is Magical' open at 6.30pm and the show continues until Sunday, March 11.

The artists have taken inspiration from a passage by Patrick Heron: "I think this world is magical. Colour, form, space, relationships - these elevate life. They energise. They elevate my whole consciousness. I think art heightens the potential of the actual."

To complement it there will also be a workshop by Maria Boyle on Saturday, March 10 from 11am to 3.30pm. To book, call 07979 706428.

TUDOR HISTORY: THERE aren't that many old buildings in Redditch, but locals can discover a slice of Tudor history if they attend a presentation called 'The Star Yard Story' featuring 15-17 High Street in Droitwich.

Historic Droitwich expert Lyn Bewitt will give a power-point presentation on the information revealed from restoration work, documentary research, scientific investigation and professional surveying of this historic building.

It's at the Olive Branch Community Centre, rear of Droitwich Spa Baptist Church, Umberby Street East/Winnet's Lane, Droitwich, WR9 8XN on Saturday, March 10 at 10am.



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- They are loose or rock side to side
- They keep breaking
- You have had tooth extractions
- Your dentures are heavily stained or feel furry

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Mayor steps in over GKN fight

by **Ross Crawford**
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METRO Mayor Andy Street has intervened in the battle over Redditch-based aerospace and automotive giant GKN.

Mr Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), has written to Greg Clark, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial calling on him to intervene in the bid by turnaround specialists Melrose Industries for the global engineering giant.

He says: "I call on you and your department to review the bid by Melrose Industries, and determine if Government should halt the takeover."

I urge you to ensure that the outcome of your review will:

- Protect GKN workers' jobs in the West Midlands and across the UK
- Protect the pensions of members of

GKN's pension scheme

- Retain vital engineering and manufacturing experience in the West Midlands
- Guarantee long-term research and development investment.

Melrose has been stalking GKN for weeks, offering \$7.4billion for the company and telling shareholders it can add value to the firm by separating its aeronautics and automotive wings, the two most profitable parts of the company.

However GKN says Melrose

has seriously undervalued the company and has promised shareholders increased profitability and the return of up to \$2.5bn over the next three years.

Mayor Street concludes: "Given our shared belief in the importance of Local Industrial Strategy to the West Midlands, I hope you will take every measure necessary to secure the future of this great West Midlands-based business."

Redditch is a non-constituent member of the WMCA.

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