



# Rural Review

The Newsletter of Wem Rural Parish Council  
Issue 10 March 2014

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## Rural Review

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www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk

## WELCOME...

to the 10th edition of Rural Review and again there is a lot to report. We hope you will enjoy the read. The Council aims to issue the newsletter quarterly but the best way of keeping up to date with what is going on in the Parish is through the new website - see details below. We want this site to be a useful reference point for residents, businesses and community groups. If you wish to publicise your event or group or join a local business directory, email the Clerk sooner rather than later!

Peter Broomhall  
Chair, Wem Rural Parish Council

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## NEW WEBSITE

[www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk](http://www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk)

### Wem Rural Parish

HOME NEWS PARISH COUNCIL COMMUNITY INFORMATION CLUBS & SOCIETIES

BUSINESS



Please pay a visit to our brand new website where you will find complete details of Wem Rural Parish Council, councillors in each ward, meeting dates, agendas and minutes, activities, publications, planning applications, etc.

There is also useful public service and community information, including local events and news, together with RSS feeds of up-to-the-minute news from

West Mercia Police, The Met Office, Radio Shropshire and Arriva Trains. You will also find useful emergency telephone numbers and links to many other useful websites, e.g. Shropdoc, Shropshire Wildlife trust, Schools, Police, Shropshire Fire and Rescue to name but a few.

The website will continue to evolve and we welcome any feedback or content suggestions.



# FREE FLOOD SURVEY

Do you live in an area that is prone to flooding? Shropshire Council is working hard to manage flood risk across the county and is busy learning about the flooding issues that affect different areas.

As part of its approach, Shropshire Council is offering free residential property flood protection assessments, where internal flooding has been experienced. Assessments will be carried out by an approved surveyor who is independent of manufacturers of flooding related products. An assessment will be made of the likely routes of ingress for flood water entering your property, and

measures that could be used to prevent or mitigate flood damage to your home will be suggested. After visiting, the surveyor will issue a brief report outlining their findings. You can then use the report to help plan protective measures for your property. Shropshire Council can provide further guidance on the types of products that are available.

**For more information contact:**  
**Flood and Water Management Team,**  
**Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,**  
**Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND**  
**or email [flood@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:flood@shropshire.gov.uk)**

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## CONGRATULATIONS NEWTOWN CE. PRIMARY SCHOOL “OFSTED recognises local school as outstanding”

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Newtown School is celebrating Ofsted success with an outstanding judgement in all areas. During its recent inspection the school was recognised as an outstanding school where pupils across the range of year groups and abilities make outstanding progress, where standards in reading, writing and mathematics are particularly high and where teaching is outstanding and ensures children’s needs are fully met.

Andrew Hodson, Head Teacher of the school said: “We are delighted with this external endorsement of our work and I want to take this opportunity to thank all our exceptionally talented and dedicated teachers and teaching assistants, our wonderful support staff, our brilliant children for their positive attitudes and exemplary behaviour, the governing body for their support and challenge and all parents, carers and families whose belief in Newtown as the best place for their children to come to school has been fully justified.”

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## WemRural Responders

Defibrillator cabinets have now been installed both at Wem Co-Op, and on the side of the Robinson and Young kiosk facing the road.

So far 12 volunteers have undergone full training, but more are needed. Further training sessions will take place so if you would like to volunteer please contact Len Staines on 01939 234415 or [l.staines@virgin.net](mailto:l.staines@virgin.net).

# FREE PARKING DURING GAS MAIN RENEWAL IN WEM

Wales and West Utilities is well into a £100,000 gas mains replacement scheme in Wem to update the existing gas network. This involves replacing around 450m of old metal gas mains together with approximately 50 service connections supplying residential and business premises in High Street, Market Street, Leek Street and Aston Street. The works started on 3 February and are expected to take 8 weeks to complete.

To minimise what could be substantial disruption to residents and businesses of both Wem and Wem Rural, WWU has said that the preferred method of working is insertion (to insert the new plastic pipes within the existing old metal mains). 60meters of pipe in the High Street and 66meters in Leek Street however will require "open cutting" because the new pipe size will be increased.

## **Phase One - High Street to Mill Street junction - COMPLETE**

## **Phase Two - started 22 February and lasting approximately 5 weeks**

WWU promises that as the work progresses, they will continually review to ensure they are working as efficiently and with as little inconvenience as possible. They are keen to receive local feedback so if you have ANY concerns or questions you can contact our customer enquiries team on 02920 270653 or [customer.enquiry@wwutilities.co.uk](mailto:customer.enquiry@wwutilities.co.uk). The Project Manager is Peter Hughes and he can be contacted on 01978 782909.

**IN THE MEANTIME, IT IS BUSINESS AS USUAL IN WEM! PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SHOPS.**

# BUDGET 2014/2015

By now you will have received the Council Tax Demand from Shropshire Council which includes elements destined for other public bodies including the Parish Council. You may also be wondering why the Parish Council has increased its 'precept' (the official name for the amount of tax paid through the Council Tax).

Raising the precept was not an easy decision but having discussed plans for the next financial year over several meetings the Council felt that to fulfil its role of improving the quality of life in the community and delivering local services it had no alternative but to raise the precept. During the next financial year the Council is planning to implement a number of the projects identified through the Community Plan, improve communication through the website and newsletter, support local community groups and contribute to the World War One commemoration event in Wem.

These plans mean the average Band D tax payer will see an increase of 7p per week to 55p per week on the Council Tax Demand. Even with this increase it is under 2% of the total Council Tax demand.

The Parish Council also continues to contribute towards the Vehicle Activated Sign in Northwood and ensures Councillors are fully trained to fulfil their roles.

## **PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP WALKING GROUP**

The Parish Paths Partnership (P3) scheme has been running in Shropshire for over 10 years.

Voluntary groups in the scheme are made up of ramblers, horse riders, dog walkers - and anyone who has a common desire to see their local network of Public Rights of Way, bridleways and footpaths open and useable.

Leading on from our Community Plan these public routes are essential to access historic sites, viewpoints, safe routes to village amenities and to provide circular walks for both 'casual' and 'serious' walkers. As a result there is frequently a benefit to the local economy in the form of shops, pubs and B&Bs.

Depending on the groups' ability, age and commitment, P3 groups can perform tasks ranging from simply walking and surveying paths and producing a condition report, to practical improvements such as clearance, installing new stiles, gates, bridges and way marking.

Once the network is in a useable condition, there is the scope for guided themed walks based around local history or archaeology, flora and fauna, local legends and basic healthy living pursuits. Promotional leaflets could be produced to advertise the locality and there is the possibility for the groups to access grants for local projects.

If you are interesting in joining or starting a walking group please contact the Parish Clerk for more information.



# Ageing Well Community Hub

## Thursday Drop-in sessions

### at Wem Town Hall

**Providing information and support to help you live independently, actively and healthier for longer**



#### 20th March - HOUSING

A drop-in session for any housing-related queries you might have e.g. support in your home, issues with your social landlord with Shropshire Council and STAR housing

#### 3rd April - BENEFITS

Make sure you are receiving the right benefit and entitlement with our Age UK benefits team

#### 17th April - BENEFITS AND FIRE SAFETY AT HOME

Benefits advice and meet your local Safety at Home team from Shropshire Fire Service

#### 24th April - OSCA AND FIRE SAFETY AT HOME

Find out more about OSCA, an independent charity which provides support and advocacy to those with Learning Disabilities. Shropshire Fire Service will also be present.

#### 1st May - PHYSIOTHERAPIST & ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Advice and guidance from one of the local Community Health physiotherapist specialists. Find out what services and support the RVS can offer and about their volunteering opportunities.

#### 8th May - HOUSING

See 20th March description above.

#### 15th May - SHROPSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL/OSCA

Find out about Shropshire RCC's carer support services, their "Good Neighbour" and "Gusto" schemes. Find out more about OSCA.

#### 22 May - PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Another opportunity to meet and receive advice from the Community Health Team.



The Community Hub is part of Ageing Well, a project launched by Shropshire Council, Age UK, Shropshire Community Health Trust, Shropshire RCC, Royal Voluntary Service, Shropshire Housing Group and Sustain Consortium

## WEM LEVEL CROSSING

Since Network Rail announced the introduction of a modular signalling system on the Shrewsbury to Crewe line, representatives from Wem Rural Parish Council, Wem Town Council and Shropshire Council have had regular meetings with Network Rail, the Office of Rail Regulation and Highways to understand the scheme and its implications for user safety, traffic issues around Wem station and the efficiency of the system for both passengers and motorists.

The project went "live" in September 2013 and there have been considerable frustrations for users since then, primarily with level crossing down times and resulting long traffic queues. Councillors have stressed to Network Rail that communication with the community and users was of vital importance and have been somewhat disappointed at the lack of information offered to the public. However,

Network Rail have now promised a joint press release and posters to include the helpline number 0845 711 4141. An "awareness" day is also planned with a Network Rail communications team talking to users.

At the latest meeting with the Scheme Project Engineer from Network Rail councillors were told that fresh data has been collected and once this is installed into the system the barrier downtimes will reduce at every level crossing along the route.

Sadly as part of the same automation initiative by Network Rail, Wem Rural Parish is to lose its signal box at Prees Station. Despite councillors suggesting alternative venues for this iconic building, the cost of moving it would be too high.



# **FREE**

## **Home Fire Safety Visits and Smoke Alarms**

(conditions apply)

The main cause of accidental house fires is cooking (usually when left unattended). Other causes include electrical appliances, candles, heaters, chimneys and smoking.

The Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service offers Free Home Fire Safety Visits from your local fire station to Shropshire residents. Here is a list of their top ten tips to help reduce the risk in your home:

- Never leave cooking unattended, especially if cooking with oil
- Don't overload electrical adaptors (one plug per socket is best)
- Only use your washing machine or tumble drier during the day while you are at home
- Turn the TV and other unnecessary appliances off at night.
- Be careful with candles, use proper holders and be sure to snuff out when you go out or to bed
- Take care if you have been drinking alcohol... don't try cooking!
- Use solid ashtrays and empty the morning after
- Close internal doors when you leave the house or go to bed
- Have a fire escape plan and make sure to practise it especially if you have children
- Finally, test your smoke alarms regularly. You should have at least one per floor, usually in the hall and landing areas.

Free smoke alarms are also offered to the over 75s, disabled, anyone with a long term illness or anyone physically unable to fit an alarm themselves.

To arrange a free visit phone 01743 260260.

For more information check the website [www.shropshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk)



## **The National Planning Policy Framework and how it affects planning in Wem Rural Parish**

Most people may not have heard of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the document in which, in 2012, the Government set out its reform of the planning system. In a nutshell it reduced 1500 pages of planning policy and guidance to just 50. The broad brush policies contained in the NPPF are generally pro sustainable development. However, the NPPF recognises that local communities should have a say in the development of their areas and stipulates that Planning Authorities (in our case, Shropshire Council) must produce a 'Local Plan' to outline the policies and levels of development for their area. The NPPF is pro-development and if adequate land for development is not available in a Planning Authority's area then the NPPF is the overriding consideration for approving planning applications and not the Local Plan.

Shropshire Council embraced the localism approach to produce a Local Plan and actively involved all town and parish councils to agree the level of development within each town and parish boundary. With 167 town and parish councils in the Local Plan area you will understand this has not been a quick process. Some crucial policies, including where development can or cannot take place, are still to be made legally binding. This is not a problem in its own right but late last year Shropshire Council reviewed the land available for development and found it was enough for a county average of 4.95 years — just short of the 5 year figure required by the Government. This means planning applications are now required to be determined by reference to the NPPF and not the local policies developed by Shropshire Council.

Over the last few months you may have read in the local papers about sites of up to 50 houses and more being agreed by Shropshire Council or by developers going to the Planning Inspectorate to appeal against decisions to refuse an application. It is because of the lack of a 5 year land supply and NPPF policies taking precedence that development is taking place against the wishes of local communities.

As part of the Local Plan consultation process Wem Rural Parish Council opted for 'Countryside' status. This means that new open market housing is not required in the parish for the Local Plan period up to 2026. Under the current situation this decision is at risk of not being adhered to by developers. Unless Shropshire Council, with the help of the Parish Council, can prove that a development is "not sustainable" there is the real likelihood that open market development will take place in the parish.

The Parish Council considers local communities in Shropshire are being unfairly penalised by the NPPF taking precedence and has written a letter to our MP, Rt. Hon. Owen Paterson asking him to address the situation with the Housing Minister. The Parish Council is also supporting Shropshire Council in its actions with Government to have the planning process return to respecting local communities views and stop being taken advantage of by speculative developers.

# BROADBAND

## Broadband roll out comes to Wem!

by Shropshire Councillor Chris Mellings

Connecting Shropshire is a £24.6 million programme to deliver improved access to broadband access across the county. The aim is to ensure that 93% of homes and businesses in Shropshire will have access to faster fibre broadband by the end of spring 2016.

Shropshire recently announced that work to connect the Wem & Whixall exchange areas will begin later this year with most of it being completed by the spring of 2015.

Whilst this is good news for our area – we are concerned to ensure that as many homes and businesses as possible can benefit from the rollout of faster broadband. For this reason Councillor Len Staines and I recently met with Chris Taylor Programme Manager, Connecting Shropshire to press the issue.

He was able to explain the approach being adopted to connect as many properties as possible and to provide solutions to those where it may be difficult to do so. The Council is trying to access additional financial support to achieve this. Chris will be attending a future meeting of the Parish Council to give an update on the roll out of the programme across our area.

Further details on the programme can be viewed at [connectingshropshire.co.uk](http://connectingshropshire.co.uk) or you can email [connecting.shropshire@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:connecting.shropshire@shropshire.gov.uk).

The Shropshire & Marches Campaign for Better Broadband in Rural Areas has also recently been set up and we will be looking to support this campaign in our area.

Patrick Cosgrove from the Campaign said: "Experience elsewhere has shown that the involvement of residents can deliver high speed broadband very effectively. I hope that many communities in Shropshire will work with Shropshire Council to devise technological and financial solutions that give priority to those who are currently in danger of missing out."

# Annual Parish Meeting

at 7.30pm  
Tuesday 20 May 2014  
Edinburgh House, Wem

Your opportunity to hear what the parish council has been doing on your behalf this year.

## ASTON BRIDGE REPAIRS

Work to repair the bridge is scheduled to start on 6 May 2014 and is expected to take 8 weeks.

This will involve taking down and rebuilding the bridge's eastern parapet and spandrel walls which are currently leaning heavily. At the same time the bridge's western parapet wall will also be taken down and rebuilt and masonry repairs carried out to the riverside walls which support the bridge.

Because of the narrow nature of the bridge, it will be necessary to close the bridge to traffic for the duration of the work and an alternative traffic route will be signposted. Access over the bridge will continue to be available for pedestrians and dismounted cyclists.

## POWER OUTAGES IN FEBRUARY STORMS

Like the rest of the county our parish experienced a fair amount of damage from fallen trees and damaged buildings during the fierce storms in February.

The majority of households experience power cuts, most of which lasted around 1 - 10 hours. However, some residents had no power for up to 5 days. The level of communication from Scottish Power has been called into question with residents being given no indication when their power would be restored. The planning of the work force carrying out repairs was also commented on with teams seemingly directed all over the county without finishing in one area before moving on. Wem Rural Parish Council has written to Scottish Power to question its performance.



## Keep our parish beautiful

The Parish Council is committed to ensuring that our rural community remains a tranquil, pleasant and enjoyable place to live. Unfortunately over the winter months we have been made aware that a number of areas in the parish have, and in some cases continue to suffer from, issues with littering. This illegal activity is unsightly, potentially dangerous to people or animals, and is a criminal offence which affects us all. The Parish Council is keen to stop this and have been liaising with West Mercia Police to ensure that where appropriate they enforce any fines (ranging from £95 up to £2500) for instances of littering. The police have also agreed to visit 'hot spots' on a regular basis to try and reduce instances of this type of crime.

To help us improve the situation we do also need your help. Should you notice any areas where litter is being dropped we would ask you to report this either directly to Shropshire Council on 0345 678 9006 (or at [shropshire.gov.uk/environmental-maintenance/streetcleaning/littering](http://shropshire.gov.uk/environmental-maintenance/streetcleaning/littering)) or via Carole Warner our Parish Clerk on 01948 710672. We are also looking for volunteers to help with litter picking. If you could lend a hand please speak to Carole.

We hope that by working together we can protect our rural community for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife.

## REMEMBER THEM

### WWI Commemoration Exhibition

A reminder that artefacts, photos, letters are being sought for the exhibition to be run at Wem Town Hall during July and August this year. If you have an interesting family or local story you are happy to share please contact the Wem Civic Society on 01939 235443. Photos and letters will be scanned for display and originals not used.

## SOULTON ROAD COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING PROJECT

Since the last newsletter in November the developers and Severnside Housing have been working on satisfying the planning and legal conditions set by Shropshire Council before any building work starts on site. It is hoped work will commence this March.

The Steering Group, which is overseeing the project on behalf of the community, has met several times to prepare for the next important stage of publicising the development. It will be arranging awareness events to ensure local people understand how they can apply to rent or buy the properties. There will be 23 new houses:

Discounted rent: 3 x 2 bed/3 person bungalows (63.3m<sup>2</sup>), 9 x 2 bed/4 person houses (81.6m<sup>2</sup>) and 5 x 3 bed/5 person houses (91.4m<sup>2</sup>)  
Shared ownership: 2 x 2 bed/4 person houses (74.5m<sup>2</sup>), 2 x 3 bed/5 person houses (85m<sup>2</sup>) and 2 x 3 bed/5 person houses (91.4m<sup>2</sup>).

The site will have its own play area. The Parish Council has been successful in its grant application linked to this project and will be consulting with the Steering Group to agree the design and ongoing maintenance plan for this area. Parish residents are invited to join the Steering Group. Please contact the Parish Clerk for more information.

## CONTACTS

Shropshire Council customer services  
Telephone 0345 678 9006  
Email  
[customer.service@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.service@shropshire.gov.uk)

Potholes  
Litter problems  
Fly tipping  
Dead animal on road  
Fly posting or graffiti  
Vandalism or Anti-Social behaviour  
Damage to Street Furniture  
Discarded Syringes and/or needles  
Dog Fouling  
Dog Warden  
Overgrown verges and hedges



# Wem Rural Parish Council

[www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk](http://www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk)

## PARISH COUNCILLORS

12 Councillors represent the 3 wards

### EDSTASTON

Liz Vernon	01939 234896	The Park, Edstaston, Wem SY4 5RF
Lorraine Pugh	01948 710280	Oakwood Grange, Northwood SY4 5NP
Jon Murgatroyd	01939 234384	Grange Farm, Poolhead, Wem SY4 5QY
Bev Horsley	01939 232956	Ryebank Farmhouse, near Wem SY4 5RA
Pete Slack	01939 236990	Fairview, 7 Paddol Green, Wem SY4 5QZ

### NEWTOWN

Bob Parsons	01939 234434	The Chapel, Poolhead, Wem SY4 5UH
Bev Gee	01939 233120	Holly Bank, Foxholes, Wem SY4 5UJ

### WEM

Peter Broomhall	01939 232573	3 Swains Close, Wem SY4 5NZ
Peter Marsh	01939 232498	Aston Hall, Wem SY4 5JQ
Fiona Ford	01939 234358	Gwiwer Barn, Woodhouse Farm, Shawbury Road, Wem SY4 5PF
Len Staines	01939 234415	The Hawthorns, Barkers Green, Wem SY4 5JW
Tim Wilton-Morgan	01939 235703	Palms Hill House, Palms Hill, Wem SY4 5PQ

Councillors invite members of their ward to contact them to discuss any issues or matters of concern.

You can also contact the Parish Clerk, Carole Warner, Orchard Cottage, Rowe Lane, Welshampton, SY12 0QB 01948 710672 or email [clerk@wemrural-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wemrural-pc.gov.uk)

### SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Please check website and notice boards for venue. Meetings may be held in Edstaston Village Hall during building work at Edinburgh House

Tuesday  
1 April 2014

Tuesday  
6 May 2014

Tuesday  
3 June 2014

Tuesday  
1 July 2014

Tuesday  
5 August 2014

## M E E T I N G S

Wem Rural Parish Council meetings are normally held at 7pm on the first Tuesday of the month in the Council Chamber, Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem. Occasionally there may be a guest speaker in which case the meeting will start at an earlier time to allow time before public statements at 7pm.

The Parish Council occasionally holds Planning Meetings to consider planning applications when the time stipulated for response to Shropshire Council (21 days) does not allow them to be held over to the monthly Council meeting.

Agendas for all meetings are available on the website and are placed on notice boards around the Parish at least 3 days before the meeting.

Members of the community are welcome to attend all meetings and there is time set by at the start to allow you to address the Council.

This newsletter can be made available in large print and audio tape. Please call 01948 710672 for further details.



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