



# Rural Review

The Newsletter of Wem Rural Parish Council  
Issue 14 June 2015

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## Rural Review

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## WELCOME...

to this fourteenth edition of the Rural Review, which I hope you will find is packed with interesting articles.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Trevor Hayward to the Parish Council and I am sure with his experience he will be a great asset to the council.

Enclosed with the Rural Review is a document on the Future Development in the parish. We would be very grateful if you would forward your views on this issue so they can be taken into account when we are discussing future planning policy.

Tim Wilton Morgan, Chair, Wem Rural Parish Council

## Broadband in Wem Rural



You will be aware from recent articles in the 'Rural Review' that the parish council has been following with interest the rollout of fibre broadband. At our APM in April Chris Taylor from 'Connecting Shropshire' provided an update on the work being carried out in conjunction with BT.

Whilst it is possible that a limited number of homes and business premises located in Wem Rural Parish, and close to the fibre enabled cabinets, will see some improvement in the speed of their broadband, it has become clear that the current phased rollout of fibre broadband in the Wem area will **not** provide any noticeable improvement in broadband speeds to the majority of our parishioners. At this point the parish council is unsure of how or when an upgrade of the broadband provision will be available to the whole of our parish.

We believe that in view of the above, and the importance of this issue, we should

investigate alternative technologies and suppliers to establish whether a community-led broadband solution could be delivered. Before we engage in this we would like to find out the level of demand from parishioners wanting to see improvements in broadband speeds in the parish. We have set up a link on our website to enable those who support this approach to register an interest. This is not a commitment to use any future delivered service just simply a way for us to gauge support for the work we plan to do.

So if you live or work in the parish and are keen to see improvements in our broadband service please take the time to register your support at [www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk/broadband-speed/](http://www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk/broadband-speed/)

If sufficient support is shown we plan to start investigating options over the summer months and will provide regular feedback in the Rural Review and also via our website.



## Does Wem Rural Parish need a Community Speed Watch Scheme?

It is well documented that excessive or inappropriate speeding is dangerous and responsible for many unnecessary injuries and collisions. It is a serious traffic offence which affects the quality of life of many communities.

Over the last couple of months the Council has met with Shropshire Council and West Mercia Police to discuss 3 areas known for speeding: Quina Brook and Pepper Street, Soulton Road and Barkers Green/Tilley Green (B5053) crossroads. New additional measures eg signage, have been agreed in principle with Shropshire Council but Shropshire Council budgets will dictate when they are implemented. It was unfortunate that an accident occurred at the Barkers Green/Tilley Green crossroads just a couple of weeks following a site meeting to discuss new measures.

The Police use a variety of schemes, education and enforcement to address speeding and West Mercia Police has recently re-launched its Community Speed Watch (CSW) scheme.

### What is CSW?

CSW schemes are coordinated by the Police but managed and run by volunteers in the community. The aim of CSW is **not** to catch as many speeding drivers as possible. It aims to encourage motorists to drive at a safe appropriate speed and to reduce speed in areas of concern, to re-educate drivers about the dangers of speeding and address concerns from local residents about cars speeding through their communities.

### How does CSW work?

At specified safe locations, volunteers monitor the speed of passing vehicles with a hand-held speed detection device. Offending vehicles' details are recorded on a log sheet, including the names and signatures of the volunteers witnessing the offence and other key information.

### Will Wem Rural Parish have a CSW scheme?

For many years the Parish Council and residents have been concerned about the speed of traffic. Together with the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, the Parish Council will help set up a scheme if enough volunteers come forward.

### Can anyone become a volunteer?

Schemes are open to anyone aged 18 or over. Volunteers will only be accepted onto a scheme once appropriate checks have been carried out. Volunteers must be able to make a regular commitment to carry out 'speed watch' and must adhere to the scheme's safety rules at all times. Although reasonable adjustments can be made, volunteers should be mindful of the physical nature of the role. Training will be provided, covering areas such as health and safety, legislation and how to use the speed detection equipment. West Mercia Police reserve the right to withdraw permission for an individual to participate in a local scheme.

### What do I do now?

If you are interested please contact any one of the Parish Councillors or the Parish Clerk.

# COUNCIL NEWS AND VIEWS

## NEW COUNCILLOR FOR NEWTOWN WARD

The Parish Council would like to extend a very warm welcome to Trevor Hayward, our newest co-opted councillor. Trevor has lived in the area all of his life and is looking forward to representing our Newtown Ward.

## BY-ELECTION CALLED IN NEWTOWN WARD

A BY-ELECTION has been called to fill the councillor vacancy in the Newtown ward of Wem Rural following the resignation of Cllr Bev Gee.

Details of the election date have not yet been published but if you are interested in standing as a candidate further information on the election process can be found on the website or contact the Parish Clerk on 01948 710672 or email [clerk@wemrural-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@wemrural-pc.gov.uk).

## PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Parish Councillors encourage parishioners to contact them with any concerns either individually or by coming to a council meeting. Time is set aside for a public session at the beginning of every meeting.

It is important that parishioners understand the procedures the Council has to abide by:

Council meetings have a clear purpose which is outlined in the agenda. The agenda has to be circulated to Councillors and publicised on notice boards at least 3 clear days before the meeting. This period allows both Councillors and members of the public time to see what items are to be discussed and carry out any necessary research. Only discussing what is on the agenda avoids councillors making snap decisions without having key information.

This can sometimes disappoint residents who come to a meeting and find the Council cannot respond immediately. If you wish to raise an issue your best course of action is to contact one of your local

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Nearly 30 people attended the Annual Parish Meeting on 21 April at Edinburgh House. If you were unable to attend here is a brief summary of events:

Following the Chairman's report on the parish council's activities in the past year, Sgt Claire Greenaway gave a presentation on recent initiatives regarding preventing rural crime. She offered the services of the Crime Risk Manager and Neighbourhood Policing Team who would visit homes and premises to give advice on crime prevention, and encouraged residents to sign up for the relaunched Rural and Farm Watch schemes either through the West Mercia Police website or paper forms that she left.

This was followed by an update on Broadband in the Parish from Mr Chris Taylor from Connecting Shropshire, who faced several questions on exactly who would benefit from faster broadband speeds in the parish.

A question and answer session covered a wide range of topics from the state of the roads and speeding, planning and development in the parish.

Remember, you don't have to wait until next year if you want to raise an issue with the Parish Council, see below how you can make your voice heard at any meeting.

Councillors. They will do their best to help straight away and more than likely ask the Clerk to place the matter on the next agenda. This can save weeks.

Time allowed for the public session is 15 minutes and until the meeting starts no-one knows how many residents will wish to speak to the council. The council's own rules state that each person should not speak longer than 3 minutes. The Chair will ask whether Councillors have clearly understood the point being made and if they have any questions. Clearly if there are more than 3 or 4 speakers the public session may overrun. The Chair has discretion to extend the 15 minutes but in reality not for much longer so please be prepared to summarise your points. If there are a number of speakers wishing to speak on the same matter, a good idea is to appoint a spokesperson who will cover all the points.

We hope this has explained the process and maybe encouraged you to attend a meeting. Don't think you have to speak, you are welcome to just come along and see first hand what goes on.

# GRANTSfeedback

## The Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery

The aim of our group is to improve and maintain the previously neglected and historically important Whitchurch Road Cemetery in Wem. Our hard working voluntary group has vastly improved the overall appearance of the site, including the chapel of rest in the centre of the site.

Our maintenance work ensures that the cemetery is in good order, and regular grass cutting is an essential part of this. Your grant of £228 for 2014 has been used towards six full grass cuts during 2014, at a cost of £404 per cut. (We are also supported by Wem Town Council and Wem Parish Church). Not only is the cemetery used by people visiting relatives' graves, it is also used as a quiet green space for people to enjoy (we have provided additional seating and information on the history of the site). In the period since 1892, when burials commenced, to 1975, when new burials ceased, there were 253 Wem Rural graves. We are extremely grateful to Wem Rural Council for continuing to support us in our work.

New volunteers are always welcome.

## The Parish Church of King Charles the Martyr, Newtown

The community funding has been used to help pay for the lawn mowing and maintenance of the churchyard, the former costing £1181 last year. A great deal has been done, especially by Clive and Debbie Payne, to improve the landscaping and planting of the churchyard which meant it was awarded a bronze award in 2014.

## Wem Rural Responders

The grant payment of £76 was used to contribute towards the annual charge of the Numbers Plus calling system, which was £118.80 in total. The balance was paid from grants from The Wemian and Wem Churches.

The AED (Automated External Defibrillator) unit remains installed at Robinson & Young. Training of volunteers has continued, delivered free of charge by West Midlands Ambulance Service. As well as being in the calling system, the AED unit is available to staff and customers of Robinson & Young, two of their staff having had training in its use. If **you** would like to volunteer please contact Cllr. Len Staines.

## Newtown Community and Recreation Association (NCRA)

The community grant funding has been used to help pay for the installation of new fence posts on the north side of the playground, which were damaged in the storm of 12th February 2014. The work was carried out by local building contractor Roy Benbow at a cost of £202.84.

## Edstaston Village Hall

The committee is very grateful to Wem Rural Parish Council for their grant of £417 towards much-needed repairs at Edstaston Village Hall. All the internal doors have been refaced and strengthened by talented Wem carpenter Matt Peate and now that they have been painted and new door furniture fitted are a huge improvement. (The remainder of the cost was funded by profits from events held at the hall). You can find details of our next fundraising event opposite: "Jazz in a Summer Evening"

## 1st Wem Scout Group

Many thanks to Councillors for their kind support of the 1<sup>st</sup> Wem Scout Group again this year. We're absolutely delighted to report that scouting continues to go from strength to strength in Wem, and we have full beaver and cub colonies and a really healthy scout group too. In fact, we have waiting lists for beaver and club colonies and are likely to expand into an Explorer group later this year too.

So, what have we been able to do with the grant from WRPC? We have used  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the grant to purchase a new toilet tent (complete with built in ventilation!!) – and the balance of the money will go towards the power and lighting facilities for the tent.

Your grant has directly helped us enrich the experiences of the young people of Wem & Wem Rural!

## **Wem Youth Club YOUTH WORK LEADER VACANCY**

Wem Youth Club has served the young people of Wem for many years and needs a new Leader!

The club has its own building, well placed in the middle of town and is looking to re-energise its offering to young people in Wem and the surrounding areas.

It has as its motto "Where Everyone Matters" because that's what the Committee and Trustees believe.

If you have a suitable youth work qualification and want to take on the leadership of this club, build its volunteer base and offer young people interesting and useful things to do then you could be just what we are looking for. There are exciting opportunities to work closely with other clubs, and it is hoped that a strong relationship can be developed with Shawbury to enable a commission, bringing extra funding, to be won from Shropshire Council.

We are looking to put on a variety of activities, e.g. music, cookery, sport, craft or any other activity by agreement with young people involved and the committee. We hope to open at least one night a week and the club pays its youth leader for 2.5 hours per week at £12.60 per hour.

The club is also keen to hear from potential volunteers who can spare a few hours a week to work with the leader to provide the activities and to help young people in Wem have an exciting and rewarding experience at the Youth Club.

Contact for further information:  
Mr Ian Cruise-Taylor  
c/o Stable Barn  
Kenstone  
Nr Hodnet  
Shropshire  
TF9 3LJ  
07866 494411  
lfct15@live.co.uk

# **Jazz on a Summer evening**



### **LIVE MUSIC**

**Sunday 5th July 2015  
from 6pm**

**Ryebank Grange SY4 5QX**  
(with kind permission of  
Neil and Carolyn Shingler)

**Tickets £8 (Family ticket £20)**  
**includes pork baps and salads**

### **BAR**

**Bouncy castle for the children**

By ticket only - from Bev Horsley bev@ryebank.co.uk 01939 232956 Elaine Brown  
elb@thomasadams.net 01939 233891 Carolyn Shingler 01939 235225  
or any other committee member (Sandra Price, Don Gregory, Pippa Brown, Bev Gee or Liz Vernon)

**Proceeds shared between Edstaston Village Hall and Edstaston Church**

## **ROUND MEADOW UPDATE**

By the time you read this all properties should have been completed with the majority of homes occupied and the residents settling into their new homes.

Members of the Steering Group and Parish Councillors viewed the properties prior to occupation and were very impressed with the size of the homes and high standard of the fittings and finish.

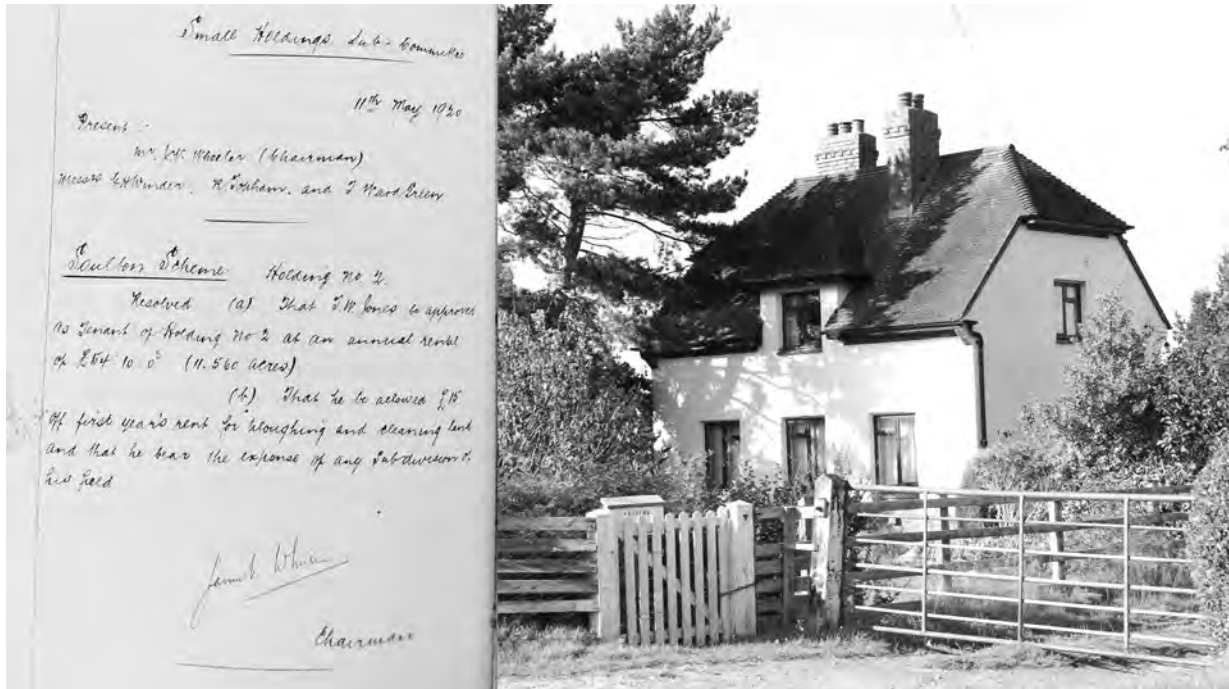
The last properties to be completed are the shared ownership properties so if you are interested in these please contact Monks Estate Agents on 01939 234368 or call in to their Wem office.

The Steering Group will shortly be disbanding having completed its purpose of delivering the homes. The Parish Council would like to thank all members who served on the Steering Group since its inception in February 2013.

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# FOCUS ON: Smallholdings in Wem Rural

by Dr Len Staines



When I moved to Barkers Green in 1986 a Shropshire Council Smallholding of 37 acres and a cottage was also sold. I was led to believe at the time that this holding was one of those set up for servicemen returning from the First World War. The recent commemorations reminded me of this, and so I thought to find out more about them in Wem Rural Parish.

As a result of the 1887/90 Allotments Acts, Shropshire Council set up a number of smallholdings schemes across the county, managed by the Smallholdings and Allotments Committee, and most of the information that follows has been gleaned from the minutes of that committee, held in Shropshire Archives, Shrewsbury.

At first there was little demand in the County for smallholdings to rent, but in the early 1900's this increased. In fact, the holding at Barkers Green was one of the earliest in Shropshire to be set up, No 7 Holding. It consisted of 37 acres of grassland purchased from Sir William Corbet for £1658 (although another later minute states £1498) in 1909 – long before WW1. The cottage was erected by W Griffiths & Sons of Ellesmere for £330.10s (10 shillings now equal 50p!). It is interesting to note that, unlike some other subsequent holdings, No 7

Holding stayed in the same family until 1986, when it was sold to private ownership. Also noteworthy is that a relative of a descendant of the original family is living in Aston, less than 2 miles away.

Quite a few of the farmhouses that were part of the holdings in Wem Rural and elsewhere in Shropshire have a characteristic attractive design of white rendering and a sloping roof with a central gable window facing the road (see photograph above) – almost a thatched cottage look, but of brick and tile. Some have retained their original appearance, as is the case in Lacon, while others in private ownership, such as No 7 Holding, have undergone alterations. It isn't clear whether the house design was original from the establishment of the holdings, or whether the property was rebuilt from the 1930's or so, which is the impression gained from talking to some residents.

By 1914 across the county there is a record of 15 schemes with 89 holdings totalling around 2000 acres administered by the Smallholdings Committee. At that time, rentals were somewhere in the range of £1.5 - £3 per acre per annum (!) although some tenants also had loans to repay. However, there was still only the one holding in Wem Rural.

cont. overleaf

## Smallholding in Wem Rural (cont.)

The next holdings to be established in our parish were the Lacon Holdings under the Soulton Scheme, when by March 1920, 42.5 acres were obtained from the Ashton Brothers for £2042, and divided up into four Holdings numbered 171 - 174 (although in one set of minutes they were numbered 170 - 173). Also, at the same time, although less clearly documented, a Newtown Scheme is set up, of 76 acres divided into 3 holdings at Moat Farm, numbered 175 - 177. It is reported in 1919/1920 that tenders accepted for the erection of cottages were from E & J Tommy £1032.10s for a "Type 2 cottage" and from J Jarvis £1508.0s for "Types 2 and 3" but unfortunately the minutes do not contain plans of the cottages. Note that the cost of house building had gone up considerably over 10 years compared with No 7 Holding in 1909 at £330.10s!

So was there a connection with these holdings in Wem Rural and returning servicemen? The Acquisition of Land Act 1919 required Councils nationally for the next two years to give preference to ex-service men and women and to invite landowners to submit land, and across the county a further 3500 acres were purchased for ex-servicemen to rent. Certainly, it was recorded in the Committee minutes that two WW1 veterans applied for holdings in the Newtown Scheme, and one for the Soulton Scheme. However, it seems from subsequent minutes that the allocations to veterans was not systematically recorded. Perhaps this information would be held by Shropshire County Council.

By the mid-1920's, for tenants' generally their success varied, some thrived, other holdings changed hands on a number of occasions, as a result of poor agricultural prices, unhelpful seasons, and personal circumstances or capabilities of some tenants. In June 1923 the

committee reported that over the county, 137 ex-servicemen were managing a total acreage of 2491, and only 8 (6%) were stated as 'failures' - "a large proportion are cultivating their holdings well and increasing their head of stock".

One other point of interest is that in the Smallholdings Committee minutes, which you will recall are public documents available for view in Shropshire Archives, prospective and actual tenants are clearly named, and on some occasions reasons for their ejection stated, such as debt, or poor maintenance of the land. In present times, such recording of information at that level would be a serious breach of confidentiality!

This account brings us up to the beginning of the 1930's, when the Smallholdings Committee was split into sub-committees, its last meeting being recorded as 24 November 1931. Prior to that there had been no recorded substantial changes or additions to the Wem Rural Holdings. Fast forward to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and at the end of 2014 Shropshire Council held 1014 acres subdivided into 24 holdings of various sizes, at which time they held a consultation to consider the future of the remaining holdings.

Shropshire tenants have been given the option of surrendering their tenancies, with compensation, or purchasing their holding, but consultation continues for a further six months.

We would very much like to hear from current or former residents of smallholdings in Wem Rural; there must be many interesting facts and stories to share with readers in a future edition. Also please draw our attention to any inaccuracies, it is sometimes difficult to interpret the exact information from the handwritten minutes.

Please contact Cllr Len Staines if you have any further information (contact details on the back page)

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## ROAD WORKS REVIEW

A number of major road works have been carried out in the Parish recently. The main project was along Soulton Road and this caused disruption to local residents and businesses, especially as it overran. Parish Cllr Len Staines and Shropshire Cllr Chris Mellings worked hard to ensure

updates were given to those affected by the repairs but some aspects were outside their control. Other repairs have been carried out in Edstaston and Ossage Lane.

The standard of repairs, timings and lack of general routine maintenance are of concern to many parishioners and have been the subject of many discussions at Parish Council meetings. The Parish Council has requested a meeting with Shropshire Council's Highways Managers to review these matters. A report will follow in a future edition of the newsletter.



# Wem Rural Parish Council

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



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

Tuesday  
2 June 2015

Tuesday  
7 July 2015

Tuesday  
4 August 2015

Tuesday  
1 September 2015

Tuesday  
6 October 2015

## PARISH COUNCILLORS

12 Councillors represent the 3 wards

### EDSTASTON

Liz Vernon	01939 234896	The Park, Edstaston, Wem SY4 5RF
Cath Coppinger	07946 495775	The Moorhead, Edstaston SY4 5RG
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

#### VACANCY

Trevor Hayward	01939 233400	Oakhurst, The Lowe, nr Wem SY4 5UE
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### WEM

Peter Broomhall	01939 232573	3 Swain 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

## M E E T I N G S

Wem Rural Parish Council meetings are held at 7pm on the first Tuesday of the month in the Roden Suite, 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 Extraordinary 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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