



# Rural Review

The Newsletter of Wem Rural Parish Council  
Issue 16 March 2016

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## Rural Review

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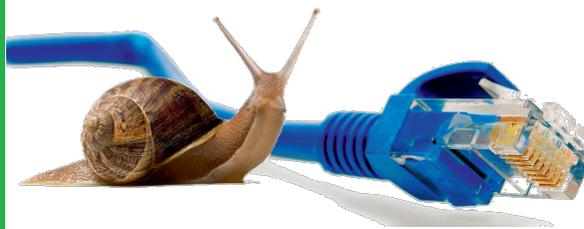
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## WELCOME...

to the sixteenth edition of the Rural Review which contains some interesting and informative articles. There is a wonderful piece all about the history of Edstaston Village Hall which I am sure you will find fascinating. We are working hard to improve the Broadband service in the parish; if you are having problems it would be very helpful if you would supply the information requested in the Broadband article below. Finally and looking forward, on **June 12<sup>th</sup>** we are marking the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and it would be lovely to see you all at the celebrations. Enjoy your read!

Tim Wilton-Morgan  
Chair, Wem Rural Parish Council

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## Broadband in Wem Rural Latest Update

Over the last year a number of residents have responded to articles in the Rural Review regarding the poor broadband supply in the Parish. Thank you to those taking the time to provide your thoughts and comments.

Unsurprisingly, the overwhelming response we received was one of disappointment and frustration at the poor bandwidth and reliability of the broadband supply in the Parish. The Parish Council has been working hard to look at how we can help to improve the broadband in the Parish and ensure that it is 'fit for purpose'. We have had a number of meetings with providers and most recently held a joint meeting with BT (Openreach) and Connecting Shropshire.

We do need your help in moving these conversations forward and are appealing again to residents and businesses in the Parish to ask if you would be prepared to share the

following information with us if you are dissatisfied with your current provision:

1. Your home phone number
2. Your address
3. Your postcode

We can assure you that this information will only be used to help us map the areas of discord with broadband across the parish and help us bring more weight to bear with BT (Openreach).

If you are prepared to share this information we would be grateful if you would email the Clerk or use the form on the Council's website page: [www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk/broadband-speed/](http://www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk/broadband-speed/) and simply confirm the three items detailed above.

Thank you in advance and we welcome any feedback or suggestions.



# WHAT'S IN A NAME?



As some of you will know, Wem Rural Parish is divided into 3 areas, known as wards, with councillors allocated to a ward.

The largest ward, based on electors, is Edstaston and includes the villages and hamlets of Cotonwood, Coton, Prees Station, Quina Brook, Abbey Green, Paddol Green, Poolhead, Ryebank, Foxholes and Creamore. The smallest ward is Newtown and includes the neighbouring village and hamlet of Northwood and Wolverley. The third ward is Wem and includes the surrounding of villages and hamlets surrounding Wem.... *sorry, but isn't that the whole Parish?!*

The name of Wem to the ward has caused confusion for many years so we have taken to calling it Wem Rural ward. Wem ward includes the villages and hamlets of Lacon, Soulton, Aston

Grange, Aston, Palms Hill, Barkers Green, Tilley Green, Trench, Tilley, Ruewood, The Ditches, Horton and Lowe.

A few years ago the Parish Council asked Shropshire Council to review the name under a process called 'Community Governance Review'. This process has now begun and the Parish Council has recommended the new name of Roden Ward. There are several stages of the Review which hopefully will be completed by the end of September.

For more details see Shropshire Council's website:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/democracy/community-governance-reviews/governance-review-wem-rural/>

## ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

**Tuesday 19 April  
Roden Suite**

**Edinburgh House  
7.30pm**

This year's meeting will include a number of presentations on topics of local interest in addition to the Annual Report by the Chair of the Parish Council.

Rod Lake, Traffic Management Advisor Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police will share with us the work carried out by the Safer Roads Partnership. There will updates on Broadband in the Parish, and Future Development both at county and parish level.

If you belong to a Community Group, come along and hear how you could apply for a Grant from the Parish Council through the Community-Led Housing Scheme Grant.

The meeting will conclude with a question and answer session. We look forward to seeing you!

## PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL GRANTS

In the November edition of the Rural Review we publicised this year's Annual Grants and by the deadline of 23 January 4 applications were received. The Council considered the applications at its February meeting and all 4 were successful.

### **The Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery Wem**

A grant of £300 towards to annual grass maintenance costing £2,640.

### **Newtown Community and Recreation Association**

A grant of £250 towards the maintenance, upkeep and insurance of Newtown Park. The insurance premium alone is £408.

### **Newtown Parish Church**

A grant of £300 towards the annual grass maintenance costing approximately £1,181.

### **1st Wem Scout Group**

A grant of £300 towards a climbing wall, football goals, footballs and cones costing £560.

# COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

Do you want to help get things done in your neighbourhood? Are you already active in your community? As a councillor, you can make a difference. There are currently 2 vacancies for parish councillors in the Edstaston Ward so what is involved in being a councillor?

Being a councillor is a rewarding form of public service that puts you in a unique position where you can make decisions about local issues and improve the quality of life for people within Wem Rural Parish. It gives you the opportunity to help your local community and be part of a dedicated team influencing and providing key services for your area.

The councillor's role takes in:

- Representing the parish ward
- Decision making
- Policy and strategy review and development
- Community leadership and engagement

Being an effective councillor requires some work. The primary role of a councillor is to represent their ward and the people who live in it. Community Leadership is at the heart of modern local government and councils are taking on new responsibilities for working in partnership with other organisations, including Shropshire Council and the voluntary and community sector, to improve services and the quality of life for citizens.

The amount of time you will need to devote to council work will depend on the extent of your council activities and responsibilities. However, at a parish council level most councillors are able to combine both council and work commitments without any undue problem.

**For more information please contact any of the Councillors or the Clerk. Contact details are on the back page.**

## BUDGET 2016/2017

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 will have noticed that the Parish Council has increased its 'precept' (the official name for the amount of tax paid through the Council Tax). Raising the precept is never an easy decision but having discussed plans for the next financial year over several meetings the Council considered that to fulfil its role it had to raise the precept by £1,700. This equates to the average Band D tax payer having an increase of 2p to 65p per week.

During the next financial year the Council will implement projects identified through the Community Plan, improve communication through the website and newsletter and support local community groups. The Council continues to contribute towards the Vehicle Activated Sign in Northwood and ensures Councillors are fully trained to fulfil their roles.

Looking ahead, the Parish Council is aware Shropshire Council is planning to reduce the services it currently offers during the financial year of 2017/18. Collaboration between Town and Parish Council both practically and financially may be required to keep services which residents consider key to the community and their own well-being.

## MAPPING OUR RIGHTS OF WAY

One of the areas identified by the Community Plan was the interest of local residents in the many Rights of Way in the Parish.

The Council is now looking for volunteers to join a Mapping Project - you can be a regular rambler, horse rider, dog walker or just have a common desire to see our local network of Public Rights of Way, bridleways and footpaths open and useable.

You do not have to commit to hours of walking but if you wish to that's great! It might be you walk a footpath on a regular basis can report the route is clear. What we are aiming for is an up to date map of the condition of our Right of Ways.

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.

Once we know which routes within the network are 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 also be produced to advertise the locality.

If you are interesting in helping please contact the Parish Clerk for more information.

# Everybody Active, Everyday

We often hear of the need to keep healthy, and ways in which we can do so. One way which is currently being highlighted is that of physical activity. Since the 1960's people in the UK have become 25% less active, and it has been shown that reduction in activity increases the risk of depression, dementia, obesity, heart disease, type II diabetes, cancer, and more. For example, only 55% of women aged 55-64 meet recommendations of the amount of physical activity per week.

And amongst many simple facts about inactivity, they include:

- \* Just one week of bed rest reduces your muscle strength by 20%
- \* Physical inactivity directly contributes to 1 in 6 deaths
- \* Around a quarter of people are inactive
- \* Physical activity can prevent or help manage over 20 common conditions
- \* Reducing inactivity could prevent up to 40% of many long term conditions, eg, diabetes
- \* Inactivity creates costs for families and services
- \* The aim is to have more adults taking at least 150 minutes activity a week, and fewer taking less than 30 minutes

Public Health England via Shropshire Public Health have set up an initiative to address physical inactivity in four Shropshire communities - Whitchurch, Wem, Craven Arms, and Broseley. One-off funding will be available for suitable projects to encourage physical activity – but not for those who are already active and/or sporty! The aim is to involve everyone in the local community, with the emphasis on fun and enjoyment. Proposals will be judged in a novel way, by residents themselves choosing projects.

The maximum amount available to each of the four communities is £30,000, but will be adjusted according to community response and to ensure a genuine competition can take place. An Everybody Active Wem working group is being set up to launch the scheme in the town. Anyone interested in joining the working group or wanting to know more about the funding can contact Sue Thomas, Community Enablement Officer on 01939 237453 or email [sue.j.thomas@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:sue.j.thomas@shropshire.gov.uk).

For those who can access the internet, there is a leaflet that explains the scheme in detail:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/374914/Framework\\_13.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374914/Framework_13.pdf)



## RURAL CRIME UPDATE

**Melissa Bebb** has been appointed Rural, Business and Cyber Crime Coordinator for Shropshire. The purpose of this role is crime prevention – to stop crimes happening, to make people aware how to prevent themselves being victims of crime, either businesses or rural communities.

This is a new role, and although employed by Shropshire Council the position is funded by the PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner). Melissa is based between Shirehall and Monkmoor police station and her usual working week is Tuesday-Thursday.

If you believe Melissa can help you please contact her on  
Tel: 01743 253983 or  
Email  
[melissa.bebb@westmercia.pnn.police.uk](mailto:melissa.bebb@westmercia.pnn.police.uk) or  
[Melissa.Bebb@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Melissa.Bebb@shropshire.gov.uk)

### WEM REGISTRY OFFICE CHANGES

Although remaining in Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem from 1 April the opening times will change.

The registrar will attend by appointment only on Thursday morning between 10am and 12:30pm.

For appointments phone Shropshire Council on:  
0345 678 9016

## The Queen's 90th birthday Celebrations

### 'A Royal Picnic in the Park'

The Steering Group is busy working on a range of activities to take place on Sunday 12 June 2016 in Wem.

Full programme to be published soon.

See notice boards and Parish Council website for details.

# NEWTOWN SCHOOL FEDERATION PROPOSAL

Newtown Church of England Primary School has recently announced its intention with Welshampton Church of England Primary School to join together under a Federation. Although working together under a formal arrangement both schools will continue to operate separately and retain their own identity.

A series of consultation meetings have been carried out and the consultation period will end on 15 April.

Full details are available on the School's website:  
<http://www.newtown.shropshire.sch.uk/public/newtown039.html.nc>

## THE BIG CONVERSATION

By now you will have realised there is a Government initiative to reduce expenditure. As a result, Shropshire Council have had to make substantial savings, already they have had to save £140M, with around half as much again by 2020. The combined impact of reduction in Government grants and the Revenue Support Grant will lead to a 75% reduction in budgets.

To reduce the impact, there has been a 2% increase in Council Tax, with similar increases in Fire and Rescue, and Policing. Because Shropshire Council has not been able to allocate as much funding to Town and Parish Councils, Wem Rural along with other Parish Councils has had to increase its precept as well.

In order to involve Council Tax payers on the best ways to reduce expenditure, Shropshire Council has launched an initiative – the **Big Conversation**. You will have seen a reference to this on the Council Tax demand envelope you recently received.

Most of the first phase has already taken place. There has been consultation with interested parties across the County, with 2,271 responses to a survey. Interestingly, Salopians have some appreciation of the County and national needs to cut budgets, and more than 55% agreed with increasing fees and charges. Roughly half of all respondents agreed with increasing Council Tax. Ways in which the Council could make further savings included avoiding duplication of services, setting up commercial partnerships, selling

redundant assets, and increasing efficiencies and operating more like a business.

It is understandable that these changes have caused genuine hardship and dismay, but there is a positive side to it. In the survey, 71% of respondents agreed with communities and individuals being enabled to do more for themselves. 61% agreed that more use should be made of local residents and volunteers. And only 15% of respondents indicated they were not willing to participate or volunteer. This shows a willingness for people to become more involved in the community, which is at least one positive outcome from the consultation .

Phase 1 will be concluding by the end of March, with feedback from events that included workshops and ongoing focus groups, culminating in a Final Report. Phase 2 will follow by the implementation of the findings, by the Council engaging with its partners and the community There will be the development of guidance to support this, and looking for innovative solutions to the Phase 1 findings.

As it said on your Council Tax Notice, "Get involved in the next phase of the **Big Conversation** [www.shropshire.gov.uk/bigconversation](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/bigconversation)". It's well worth doing this if you can access the internet, there is a lot more interesting information available, including a video.

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# FOCUS ON:

## Edstaston Village Hall Links to the First World War

by Cllr Liz Vernon



Who would think that Edstaston Village Hall's history started in the First World War? Does anyone remember 'The Hut'? If you do then you are probably over 60 years old! The building was on the same site as today's village hall. 'The Hut' started as a meeting place in Edstaston in 1922 but it had been 'upcycled' from the World War I Army Camp at Prees Heath. The villagers of Edstaston had a collection to buy the wooden building and the land where it was erected was donated by the Cholmondeley family who lived at Edstaston House (demolished in 1970s). A Mr Frank Bell, who was agent to General Cholmondeley, organised the hut's removal and local people helped with the re erection. The Hut became a local meeting place. During World War II many local dances were held and land girls met their future husbands. Apparently there was a sloping floor so dancing was interesting! Hold on tight!

Later 'The Hut' was used by St Mary's Church for Sunday School, for parties and meetings, used by Edstaston School for concerts and regular Whist Drives were held.

In the early 1970s, concerns were raised about the Hut's maintenance. Some think that 'the Big

Society' and match funding are new concepts!! Well here at Edstaston, these were invented. It was the strong local community spirit and funding raising ability of the Village Hall Committee that led to the plans for a new hall. Events of all sorts were held including a sale of bric a brac at a white elephant shop ( a bit like today's car boot sales!) at the empty Peakes shop in Wem. This is where Barclays Bank is today! Also the Buy a Brick organised by Mrs Iris Brown from Edstaston Garage raised a sum of £198. Bricks were sold for 50 pence each and the draw was won by Mr TH Goodwin, Parkley Farm, Iscoed. He won £25 but donated back £20 which was very generous and kind.

The hall's plans were drawn up by local man, Norman Ward. The organisation of the planning application was by Mr Don Gregory in June 1975 ( Don is still a Village Hall Committee member), the hall was built by Mr Phil Wheeler, who ran a local construction company and overseen by Mr Harold Ward – both residents of Edstaston. The cost of the hall was £20,000 and contribution to the fund was £15,000 by the Shropshire Community Council and North Shropshire Council. The old wooden hut was demolished and building started in 1976. In April 1977, the new hall was opened by Councillor Tom Groom (from Quina Brook). He is

quoted in a newspaper article as saying ‘ *It is through self help and sheer tenacity that the balance has been raised to build the new hall*’. The brick hall consisted of a central area for events, a kitchen, a bar, toilets, entrance and car park for 20 cars (stated in newspaper article in 1976 that described the plans).

Well nothing new now – Edstaston Village Hall still has a Committee with the same spirit! Two or three fund raising events each year have kept the hall in good order but now we are planning some refurbishments to give it a more modern look so will need to step up the fund raising. Wem Rural Parish Council has already provided match funding for new tables and for painting the doors. Our next priority , the lighting in the hall needs renewal with LED lights. Hopefully we will be able to replace windows in the future with double glazing to ensure greater energy efficiency. At the Wem Rural Parish Council meeting in February 2016, a grant of £2,150 was approved from the Community-Led Housing Scheme Grant. This will be match funded by Edstaston Village Hall. We are sure the users of the hall will appreciate the new lights instead of the old ones, some of which haven’t worked for over a year!

The types of events in the hall are dances, quizzes, coffee mornings, talks, casino evenings, treasure hunts. Added to this St Mary’s Church also holds an interesting event calendar each year, Edstaston Women’s Institute meet twice a month, elections are held here, Wem Young Farmers hold dances and meetings in the hall, live bands play , children have parties and there are various keep fit classes in the annual programme. A special

mention should be made of Bev Horsley and Elaine Brown for their hard work as co - Chairpersons and Pat and Billy Holt, local residents of Edstaston, who have cleaned the hall for many years now and the Committee very much appreciate their hard work.

Edstaston Village Hall is the only village hall in Wem Rural Parish area ie within the three wards. The Committee would welcome new members and even just offer of help and support would be good. Our meetings are very informal and fun evenings in themselves. We know how to put on a ‘good do’ and the food is always excellent.

Our next events will be a joint venture with St Mary’s Church Edstaston, a Beer Fest in October and in November there will be a sparkling talk on Diamonds and Rubies. Contact Bev Horsley 01939 232956 or Liz Vernon (Secretary) 01939 234896. Also visit Edstaston Village hall on Facebook [www.facebook.com/Edstaston-Village-Hall-522954747846862/?fref=ts](https://www.facebook.com/Edstaston-Village-Hall-522954747846862/?fref=ts)

If you are planning an event of your own, the rates for hire are very reasonable. Contact the Bookings Secretary Sandra Price 01939 232590. Elaine Brown is the Keyholder and Bev Gee is the Treasurer. Many thanks to all on the Committee for their hard work.

We would like to thank **Mrs Iris Brown** for access to the file of newspaper cuttings kept over many years and the interesting photographs within the articles.





# 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
Vacancy		
Jon Murgatroyd	01939 234384	Grange Farm, Poolhead, Wem, SY4 5QY
Vacancy		
Pete Slack	01939 236990	Fairview, 7 Paddol Green, Wem, SY4 5QZ

### NEWTOWN

Geoff Glover	01939 233357	The Old Stables, 1 The Barns, The Lowe, Wem, SY4 5UE
Trevor Hayward	01939 233400	Oakhurst, The Lowe, Wem, SY4 5UE

### 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

Tuesday  
5 April 2016

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
19 April 2016

Tuesday  
10 May 2016  
*Please note 2nd Tuesday*

Tuesday  
7 June 2016

Tuesday  
5 July 2016

Tuesday  
2 August 2016

## 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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