



Wem Rural Community Plan 2019



Introduction to the Wem Rural Community Plan 2019

The Parish of Wem Rural is located in the northern part of North Shropshire countryside completely surrounding the historic market town of Wem. Over the years, like many others, the parish has seen its fair share of change; from a thriving homestead for the farming community to a much more diverse population. Yet despite these changes it still manages to retain the pleasant nature of a typical Shropshire parish.

The Parish Council serves a number of communities the main villages being Edstaston, Northwood, Newtown, Barkers Green, Tilley and is represented by twelve councillors.

There are some special sites within the Parish. The Domesday Book mentioned a number of individual properties including some moated properties that may possibly date from the time of the Norman invasion and subsequent settlement of Britain following the Battle of Hastings. Of these Northwood Hall near Newtown is of particular note being a rare 'double-moated' site (i.e. a moated site within a larger moated enclosure, one of only two such sites in existence

in Shropshire). Unfortunately there is no remaining visual evidence of an old Hall building but the moats are registered and protected as a Scheduled Monument

The first Wem Rural Community Plan was published in 2013. Copies of the Plan can be accessed by visiting the Parish Council's website: www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk

After 6 years of working through the 2013 plan it was necessary to review it in 2019. The review was conducted by analysing answers to questions contained in a fresh questionnaire which was distributed one to each household at the beginning of March 2019. 681 questionnaires were distributed, 70 were completed and returned. The results were analysed by members of the Community Projects Team at Shropshire Rural Communities Charity (Shropshire RCC). The questionnaire responses and Shropshire RCC analysis have been used to formulate this 2019 Community Plan.



Review of the progress of the 2013 Plan

The questionnaire set out the objectives and achievements from the 2013 plan and respondents were asked to rate overall progress against these as good, satisfactory or poor.

The actual results were
Poor: 10 (18.2%)
Satisfactory: 19 (48.5%)
Good: 32 (48.5%)

Fifty five people responded to this question. Almost all respondents were at least satisfied with the progress made towards the objectives set out in the 2013 plan. Just under half of the respondents felt progress had been good.

“You have many issues to cover & really do a great job”

	ACTIONS	ACHIEVEMENTS
WEM TOWN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Inform Shropshire Council of the overwhelming feeling that parking charges in Wem have been a negative and retrograde step for the economy of the town and surrounding area * Inform Shropshire Council and Wem TC of the perceived need for a rejuvenation of Wem town centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Letters sent to Shropshire Council and Wem Town Council.
ACCESS TO INFORMATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Highlight the poor support of libraries and suggest to Shropshire Council that they may need to target user groups and publicise services better * Inform Shropshire Council of the urgent need for improved broadband supply and increased bandwidth supply * Improve publicity and promotion of existing support groups offering information of use to local businesses (eg. Business Link and Wem Economic Forum (WEF)) * Create a register of local businesses, and promote their services at all identified information points 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Letter sent to Shropshire Council and meetings held with Library Manager. Articles in Rural Review. * Continuing liaison with Connecting Shropshire and BT Open Reach. Community solutions researched but not viable due to cost involved. * Parish Council led the re-launch of WEF. * Business Page on Parish Council website signposts where information can be found. * No response from

THEME	OBJECTIVE	ACHIEVEMENTS
COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND NEIGHBOURLINESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ask Wem Rural Parish Council to consider extending regularity and content of Rural Review so as to perhaps include events and paid for adverts. * Ask Wem Rural Parish Council to review promotion and content available on the PC website as result show the website is not visited regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Rural Review now produced quarterly. Events advertised when notified. No paid adverts as conflicts with the 'independence' of publication. * Website re-launched 2014 and is a service for the Parish.
CRIME AND SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Liaise with the police to request increasing the presence of officers in the parish but particularly around business areas * Work in conjunction with the police and other services to promote the various 'Alert' and 'Watch' services, and the Police and Communities Together (PACT) initiative * Publicise the issue of litter and fly tipping within the parish, and educate parishioners on how they can monitor and report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Security and Safety Awareness Day organised jointly with Police and held on Saturday 5 July 2014 at Edstaston Village Hall. * Police have attended Parish Meetings and Council Meetings. * Articles placed in Rural Review.
EMPLOYMENT, LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Compile a list of businesses currently available on the Wem Industrial Estate (and other local parks) and encourage the Parish Council and Wem Economic Forum to look into collaborating on creating a useful directory * Highlight the skills gap identified by local businesses to the local secondary schools and colleges, and help drive collaboration between the two groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Links made with Wem Industrial Estate owners. To be progressed. * Parish Council a partner with the launch of 'Wem into Work' project managed by Wem Town Hall. * Some advice is free through Shropshire Council's 'New Business Support'.



	ACTIONS	ACHIEVEMENTS
EMPLOYMENT, LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM (CONTINUED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Highlight financial incentives for training, employment and investment available to local businesses from local, regional and national source * Request that Shropshire Council improve access to advice on planning and remove any associated costs * Ask Shropshire Council Highways Department to review the local road network and make suitable improvements * Investigate the viability and desire for the creation of a cooperative buying group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Pre-application advice is a formal procedure and part of the Planning Application Process * Worked with Wem Town Council and Wem Economic Forum to develop tourism strategies. * Worked with Wem Town Council and Wem Economic Forum on consultations regarding traffic around and through Wem.
ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ask Shropshire Council Highways Department to provide an overview of the planned road improvements and maintenance schedule for roads in the parish. Share this with parishioners via the Rural Review. * Ask Shropshire Council Highways to publicise, possibly via the Rural Review, ways in which parishioners can update Shropshire Council directly regarding maintenance issues on the parish roads * Work with local organisations to organise regular community litter picking exercises within the parish * Educate parishioners of the main contact points at Shropshire Council to report incidents of fly tipping in the parish * Highlight the views of local parishioners to potential future planning issues. Ask Shropshire Council Planning department to advise how they plan to communicate this information internally and work with Wem Rural Parish Council to ensure that parishioners' views are considered when planning decisions are made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Shropshire Council's Highways Dept attended Parish Meetings. * Articles in Rural Review to identify hotspots. * Parish Council maintains regular communication with both Planning Policy and Development Management Teams. Parish Council regularly attends planning related training and briefings to ensure parishioners views and are made in the correct manner so to be considered under the planning regulations/policies. * Cycling Safari held in September 2014 with focus on Wem Moss. Shropshire Council and Meres and Mosses Landscape Scheme involved.

“Some good progress; more progress required on speeding traffic and some environment actions”



	ACTIONS	ACHIEVEMENTS
ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)	<p>Ask Shropshire Council Planning department to advise how they plan to communicate this information internally and work with Wem Rural Parish Council to ensure that parishioners' views are considered when planning decisions are made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Highlight the enthusiasm for solar panels and other renewable technologies to appropriate organisations with the aim of organising local promotional events * Work with existing third sector organisations and the community to set-up local groups with a focus on walking, wildlife and countryside * Identify the Shropshire Council Outdoor Recreation Team member with local responsibility and include contact details in the Rural Review publication. Highlight the results to the Outdoor Recreation Team and establish what future development/maintenance plans Shropshire Council have for the parish footpaths 	
TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Investigate with Shropshire Council Highways Department, and other departments, potential initiatives to make walking and cycling safer in the parish. Feedback proposals to the community * Highlight to the Police and Shropshire Council Highways Department that speeding and heavy vehicles are seen to be a major problem locally. Investigate ways to reduce both problems and report back to the community with a plan of action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Walking for Health promoted in Rural Review. * Submissions made on regular basis under Shropshire Council's Road Safety Scheme as Community Concerns. * Community Speed Watch Scheme advertised but insufficient volunteers came forward to implement.

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Action Plan

The questionnaire set out a series of key objectives for the 2019 Community Plan, based on some objectives carried forward from the 2013 plan and feedback from residents. Responders were asked to state if they agreed or disagreed to have these objectives included in the 2019 Community Plan.

It should be noted that the people who responded did not necessarily answer all of the questions but the vast majority of responders agreed with the inclusion of all key objectives.



THEME	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	To maintain the character of the Parish.	Support development of Parish villages and hamlets in line with Parish’s response to Shropshire Council’s Local Plan Review to 2036.
		Continue to support no ‘open market development’ in all other areas of the Parish.
	Partners: Shropshire Council	Priority (Timescale): On-going
EDUCATION FACILITIES	To ensure the Primary School continue to provide education to the young children of the Parish.	Explore new ways of working, including the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy, with the leadership teams of the schools to support their plans for the future.
	Partners: Shropshire Council and Newtown C of E Primary School	Priority (Timescale): Medium (by 2022/23)

THEME	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
EDSTASTON VILLAGE HALL	To ensure Edstaston Village Hall is developed and maintained for the benefit of all parishioners	1. Support the Hall Committee with improvements to the car park.
		2. Encourage more use of the Village Hall with conference and training facilities,
	Partners: Edstaston Village Hall Management Committee.	Priority (Timescale): Medium (by 2022/23)
COMMUNITY TRANSPORT	To ensure parishioners who have no access to public transport are not isolated.	1. Promote Community Transport schemes eg North Salop Wheelers.
		2. Encourage parishioners to become volunteers.
	Partners: 1. NS Wheelers and Shropshire RCC. 2. NS Wheelers	Priority (Timescale): On-going
SPEEDING TRAFFIC	To ensure Shropshire Council conducts regular reviews of traffic volume and speed on the major roads through the Parish.	1. Continue to report specific incidents to Shropshire Council and the Police.
		2. Continue to use Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy to record community concerns.
		To explore funding opportunities to develop Parish Council's own schemes
	Partners: Shropshire Council and West Mercia Police	Priority (Timescale): On-going

“Internet connection continuous source of frustration - I welcome improvements being sought by Parish Council. Development of tourism in Parish linked with small towns within area i.e. Wem/Ellesmere would be beneficial and bring increased numbers into area who'd use facilities etc. A more coordinated approach needed.”

“I would like to see daffodils, snow drops, primroses, bluebells, crocus and autumn crocus plated on our verges.”

THEME	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
TOURISM	To improve information and promotion of local facilities, services and activities.	1. Work with local businesses and groups to investigate the possibility of producing a local visitor offer which describes the variety of facilities and services available in the Parish, and to consider the best ways to promote.
		2. Create a series of visitor itineraries relating to the meres, villages and surrounding countryside.
		3. Improve the Parish web presence.
	Partners: 1 and 2. Shropshire Council and Local Businesses	Priority (Timescale): 1 and 2 Medium (by 2022/23) 3 Short (by 2020/21)
BROADBAND SPEED AND MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION	To ensure infrastructure is of a level to enable Parishioners to fully access these services.	Lobby Shropshire Council and other bodies to ensure all avenues to improve services are investigated and actioned.
	Partners: Shropshire Council and BT	Priority (Timescale): On-going
LOCAL LANDSCAPE	To understand and celebrate the local landscape and have a say in its future management	Work with Shropshire Wildlife and other Partners to run a series of projects to document the heritage of the area and future management plans.
	Partners: Shropshire Wildlife and other Partners	Priority (Timescale): Long (By 2024)

THEME	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
COMMUNITY FACILITIES	To provide additional and permanent facilities in the Parish	Install seating/picnic tables at 'stopping off' points for walkers and visitors.
	Partners: 1. Shropshire Council. 2. Local land owners	Priority (Timescale): Long (By 2024)
LITTER	To ensure the roads, lanes and countryside remain clear of litter.	1. Organise community litter picks. 2. Provide equipment for use by residents.
	Partners: Shropshire Council	Priority (Timescale): 1. and 2. On-going
ROADS AND LANES	To improve condition of roads and lanes to make them safer for all users including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.	1. Continue regular communication with Shropshire Council's Highways Dept. 2. Publicise the reporting procedures for potholes, damaged road surfaces, flooding and fly tipping.
	Partners: Shropshire Council	Priority (Timescale): 1. and 2. On-going
STREET FURNITURE	To improve services and signage in the Parish.	Provide signage that depicts the heritage, history and culture of the villages they represent.
	Partners: Local historians, artists and crafts people.	Priority (Timescale): Long (By 2024)



Conclusion

Of all of the actions suggested for inclusion in the 2019 plan, none of these received significant disagreement from respondents. No more than 13 people disagreed with any of the suggested actions.

What happens next?

Your Parish Council will be working with the identified partners to progress the Action Plan. Volunteers are welcomed to assist.

If you would like to get involved, please contact the Parish Clerk, Carole Warner.

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