



Rural Review

The Newsletter of Wem Rural Parish Council
Issue 31 Summer 2020

In this Issue

WELCOME

COMMUNITY ROUND UP

PARISH COUNCIL
UPDATE

ACTIVAGE

COVID-19 TESTING

FOOTPATHS IN WEM
RURAL

THANK YOU TO TIM
FROM THE NCRA

WEM AREA CLIMATE
FORUM UPDATE

Rural Review

is produced by
Wem Rural Parish Council
Orchard Cottage
Rowe Lane
Welshampton
SY12 0QB

For further
information
please contact
Carole Warner on
01948 710672
email:
clerk@wemrural-pc.gov.uk
www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk

WELCOME....

You may be surprised to receive this summer edition of the Parish Council's Newsletter but it is a reminder that it is still functioning. We have all experienced a very different world since March. At first, the lockdown presented practical problems to be solved. I would like to thank Carole, our Clerk, for coordinating our volunteers for the Community Support group – 15 of them – a big thanks to you who were supporting our elderly and vulnerable residents in Wem Rural area. It was a huge shock that many of our local businesses, especially retail and hospitality, had to stop their activities overnight. We are looking forward to businesses re opening when it is safe to do so. We all want to see friends and locals again and our businesses play a very important role. I think many of us have learned just how important our local businesses are and we must thank them for providing us all with essentials. On my cycle rides, I have been able to order my meat, collect vegetables, get wonderful free range eggs and buy plants from the roadside. They all deserve our ongoing support - they were there when we needed them! BUY LOCAL! SUPPORT LOCAL! Also thank you to those who helped with prescription delivery and the local surgeries who provided their own delivery service as time progressed – it was a true lifeline for many.

Our residents have displayed stoicism and a determination to support each other. A great community spirit has been unleashed, even by a 'Hello, how are you, Are you ok?' Many of you have used the opportunity to improve your levels of fitness or to tidy the garden or do that DIY job that has been waiting years!!

Our peaceful world in the 'Stay at Home' phase did seem surreal. While many of us were at home, others in the NHS, Care Home and Key workers were doing wonderful work to care for ill people and protect us from the virus. It is with much regret that the Stay Alert phase opened up our beautiful countryside to visitors, some, who have not treated our area with the respect it deserves. The people living in Coton and especially those with homes on the B5476 have felt anxious and angry by the behaviour of a minority of thoughtless motor cyclists. Carole and I have had lots of phone calls. I would like to thank Chris Mellings and Pauline Dee, our Shropshire Councillors, for their support. Unfortunately, our concerns did not seem to be a priority for some organisations!

It is good that some children are getting back to school and I know special efforts are being made by schools to ensure safety of staff and children. It has been hard for the elderly in our area but also for our children and young people, so I want to say a special thank you to them. We are just so lucky that we live in our rural area and it has made us realise that Wem Rural is a special place. The Covid-19 pandemic is something that the children will all remember for many years to come, just like I remember the Foot and Mouth epidemic when I was a child.

As we go forward, let's hope we can all continue to contribute to the safety of our community. It might be a different world in the future but we all still need to take care and stay safe. My best wishes to all of you and your families. Wem Rural Parish Council has been unable to meet during the past few months, but councillors have kept in touch with people in their own wards.

Liz Vernon,
Chair, Wem Rural Parish Council

Community Round Up

Northwood

The Community Speed Watch team are having an enforced break due to the lockdown. Be warned though, they will be back in action when it is considered safe to do so.

Other community projects are also on hold. The Council will help the community to catch up on these important matters as soon as it is possible.

Prees Station

Some residents will not be aware that Prees Station is located in Wem Rural Parish and not Prees Parish. Late last year Prees Parish Council approached Wem Rural Parish Council for support in improving the car parking facilities at the station. There are no formal parking facilities, you just park on the road or the country lane.

Representatives from the 2 Councils have met and suggestions for just a few spaces have been put to Transport for Wales. Their next period plan is already in place but the Parish Council has received assurances it will be considered in the next review.

Community Grants

Following the appeal in the last Review for community groups to apply for funding, the Parish Council approved the following grants:

Edstaston Village Hall: £600
Newtown Community and Recreation Assoc: £400
Friends of Whitchurch Road, Wem Cemetery: £400
1st Wem Scouts: £300
NS Wheelers: £300
Wem Christmas Lights and Festival: £300

Parish Council Update

The Parish Council has not met since March but it is still functioning and progressing community projects where possible. Early on in the crisis, the Government passed emergency legislation to allow Councils to adapt to the situation. One example being, not to hold the Annual Meeting this year, including the election of the Chair of the Parish Council. So Liz Vernon will continue in as Chair and Tim Wilton-Morgan will continue as Vice Chair, until May 2021.

The Council is well placed to operate during this strange period for, as part of the Council achieving Quality Gold status, it had to adopt a Scheme of Delegation. This means that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair can take emergency actions on behalf of the Council and most essential tasks continue as previously.

Consultation requests on planning applications within the Parish continue to be received from Shropshire Council and the Parish Council is responding to these based on the feedback of past consultations with residents. The Council will only support appropriate development, of any kind, and will strongly object to inappropriate development.

ACTIVAGE

ACTIVAGE is an EU-funded scheme led by Samsung. The project is being trialled in Shropshire in partnership with Shropshire Council, and aims to see how everyday technology such as smart watches, smart phones and sensors can be used or adapted to support the health and social care needs of vulnerable people.

People over the age of 55 who live in Shropshire and have a broadband connection are invited to apply. Those who care for people who fit this criterion can also apply on behalf of the person they care for. Those involved will receive a technology package worth over £600 that can help support people to stay independent, safe and active for longer, especially if their carers or family aren't close by. This includes a free Samsung watch and smartphone which will be posted to individuals. Also included in the tech package are home sensors but due to the COVID-19 crisis, these will be issued later as they require installation.

There is no cost to take part in this initiative and what's great is that you get to keep all the equipment when you complete the scheme. For more information or to express your interest, whether for yourself or on behalf of someone else, please check details on the ACTIVAGE website or contact support@activageshropshire.co.uk

Covid-19 Testing

If you have coronavirus symptoms, you can apply for a test straightaway. Find out more about getting tested here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>. People without internet access can order a test by phoning 119.

If you get a positive test, NHS Test and Trace will contact you by text message, email or phone and ask you to share information about any close contacts you had just before or after you developed symptoms. If you are told by NHS Test and Trace you have been exposed to an infected person, you must self-isolate for 14 days. Find out more about NHS Test and Trace here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-test-and-trace-how-it-works>

Footpaths in Wem Rural

The current pandemic has understandably encouraged us to be more aware of, and make use of, the network of paths and tracks in and around Wem for our physical and mental health. These rights of way can be found on Ordnance Survey maps (our area can be found on OS sheet 24), and on Shropshire Council's website 'Shropshire's Great Outdoors' Interactive Map.

Problems are being both more readily identified and more created by the increase of visits to our countryside. Two instances in particular have come to light, firstly the bank of the river Roden where heavy rain earlier in the year has caused it to collapse, and secondly south of the village of Tilley where waymarking of the footpath is not clear and some stiles are difficult to negotiate. Your Parish Council has reported both of these to Shropshire Council's Outdoor Partnership, and when conditions allow a proper inspection will be made and actions to rectify problems identified. The Partnership's aims are to conserve and enhance the natural environment, to improve people's health and well-being, and support the local economy.

However while the Parish Council would like to be made aware of footpaths and rights of way issues and to act accordingly, and footpath care and improvement is part of our Parish Plan, there is nothing to stop individual parishioners from contacting Shropshire Council's [Outdoor Partnership](mailto:OutdoorPartnership@shropshire.gov.uk) direct, outdoor.recreation@shropshire.gov.uk where ways of contacting their Countryside Access Team are provided.

The Shropshire Council team is also keen to foster the creation of local interest groups, through their Parish Paths Partnership, and this has been considered by the Climate Forum as part of its remit. The Forum has looked at ways of re-wilding and linking existing natural spaces some of which have high wildlife quality, such as Wem Moss, giving the opportunity to improve open spaces footpaths and cycleways within the town and the wider rural area, while at the same time producing carbon sinks and habitats for wildlife under threat. However, the Forum has decided that as it involves so many important issues, a separate group should be formed, as has been the case in surrounding parishes. And so, existing groups and individuals in and around Wem, with representation from the Town and Parish Councils, will be forming a new Parish Path Partnership. Hopefully more news on this in the next Rural Review.

Thank you to Tim from the NCRA

After 12 plus years of loyal service as Chairman of the Newtown Community and Recreation Association, Tim Wasting decided to retire as Chairman in March. Tim maintained a very steady hand on the tiller over the years and everyone who has benefitted from the NCRA, including the community and the children of Newtown School who would like to thank him for his loyal service.

I have been appointed as Interim Chairman and have a brilliant new team working through some of the current issues including replacing the broken gate posts and white-lining in the car park. The AGM is scheduled for Tuesday 14th July at 7pm and will take place via Zoom or equivalent. If you would like to receive more details or if you would like any further information please contact me andyblack999@gmail.com.

Andy Black,
7 Oakley Meadow, Wem, SY4 5SF

Wem Area Climate Forum Update

Despite the virus epidemic dramatically affecting all aspects of our existence, the Climate Forum has continued, but understandably with notable adjustments. Unfortunately after an energetic and creative start to the group, Hilary Canto has had to stand down as leader due to health reasons, but thankfully it has continued in the safe hands of Malcolm Adkins, who has continued to generate lots of ideas over a range of issues.

Another necessary change has been the way in which the Forum can meet, now taking place with weekly Zoom sessions. These have become a 'think tank', generating a number of ideas that can be put into practice when restrictions are lifted, by linking with other community groups. For example, developing already existing ways of buying local produce, thus reducing food miles as well as engendering community spirit. And stimulating identification and improvement of cycling and walking routes in Town and Rural areas, for personal health, climate and environmental quality enhancement. Note the separate item in this newsletter on footpaths. Also encouraging wider involvement of community groups such as young people, and linking in with the 'dementia friendly' initiatives. Malcolm sees one of the roles of the Forum as being a lobby group. In the light of the Coronavirus epidemic and its consequences, a whole new Strategy for Wem (including Wem Rural) needs to be considered, but which will involve other groups.

So although some things have changed, the climate emergency has not gone away. Maybe carbon dioxide output has declined, but there is still more there in the atmosphere than there should be, and it can't be said how it will be in the long term, for example will polar icecaps stop melting at an alarming rate? No matter how small, everyone can make some contribution to fighting climate change.

A reminder that participation in the Forum is open to anyone in the Town and Rural areas of Wem, and there is no obligation to join online sessions if you prefer not to. Malcolm is happy to be contacted by email at mal10@mac.com and 07979 784967

NEWTOWN



EDSTASTON

RODEN

Wem Rural Parish Council

www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk
www.facebook.com/wemruralPC

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

Covid-19 Helpline and on-line information

For non-medical support and enquires call direct Covid-19 Helpline 0345 6789028 or email customerfirst@shropshire.gov.uk.

On the Shropshire Council website, there is a wide range of information available to help you support the people in your neighbourhoods and beyond. Find the full range of information through this link: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/>

SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Please check website and notice board for details

www.wemrural-pc.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCILLORS

12 Councillors represent the 3 wards

EDSTASTON

Huw Edwards	07834 252412	Bank House Farm, Paddol Green, Wem, SY4 5QZ
Glynis Nicholls	01939 234371	Pool Head Farm, Pool Head, Wem, SY4 5QY
Pete Slack	01939 236990	Fairview, 7 Paddol Green, Wem, SY4 5QZ
Liz Vernon	01939 234896	The Park, Edstaston, Wem, SY4 5RF
Ruth Williams	01939 233389	Pool Cottage, Pool Head, Wem SY4 5QY

NEWTOWN

Julia Goode	07971 102569	3 Oakhurst Villas, Newtown, SY4 5NT
Stella Whyte	01948 710302	Grange Villa, Northwood, Wem, SY4 5NP

RODEN

Peter Broomhall	01939 232573	3 Swains Close, Wem, SY4 5NZ
Peter Marsh	01939 232498	Aston Hall, Wem, SY4 5JQ
Vacancy		
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

The Parish Council normally meet on the first Tuesday of the month but due to the present circumstances the Council is not meeting. Please refer to the Council's website.

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 is printed on recycled paper. When you have finished with it please recycle.



LOCAL COUNCIL
 AWARD SCHEME
 QUALITY GOLD

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