



Rural Review

The Newsletter of Wem Rural Parish Council
Issue 34 Summer 2021

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Rural Review

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WELCOME....

to the latest issue of Rural Review. I am delighted to take over from Liz Vernon as Chair of Wem Rural Parish Council and would like to thank her on behalf of everyone for all of her dedication and hard work and not least since Liz remained as chair during these difficult times and completed an extra year as chair. Sadly, two of our councilor's have stood down, thank you to Glynis Nicholls and Tim Wilton-Morgan for all their hard work. However, this leaves Wem Rural Parish Council with two vacancies for the Roden Ward, as well as one vacancy for the Edstaston Ward and we would very much welcome applications from people who would like to make a difference to their local community. If you would like to know a bit more about this then please do contact myself or Carole Warner the parish clerk.

I also want to thank Chris Mellings and Pauline Dee for all their years of service to the local community as Shropshire Councilors and all their hard work and energies that have made such a difference to so many of us. We welcome the appointment of Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers as the new Shropshire Councilors serving this area.

I hope to be able to continue the good works undertaken by previous chairs by ensuring the parish council remains at the heart of the community. Our monthly meetings now take place at Edstaston Village Hall, where members of the public are welcome to attend. On my travels around our local area, both in Wem itself and in Wem Rural I have met up with a lady called Jenny. Jenny has been picking up the litter off the lanes and verges and it certainly is beginning to show. On behalf of all residents, I would like to thank her very much for all her hard work, it is certainly very much appreciated.

In this issue of the magazine there are some really exciting features, not least the community led project to improve Edstaston Village Hall. The progress so far is amazing and reflects everyone's hard work. I for one really enjoyed doing my small part by getting up extra early with all the volunteers, to rake over the concrete for the footings and taking some photographs.

Another exciting development is the work of the newly reformed NCRA committee, the improvements made to the Newtown amenities is remarkable, the 100 club is an exciting way to attract funds for the project whilst winning prizes. Its great to see local businesses supporting the local community projects.

Ruth Williams,
Chair, Wem Rural Parish Council

Shropshire Council — Housing Needs Survey

In the next few months Shropshire Council will be organising a Housing Needs Survey in Wem Rural Parish. The survey is usually a 6-week-long to determine hidden housing need in the parish.

The information collected will feed directly into Shropshire Council's planning policy and will help to determine the type, scale and location of future homes, to ensure Shropshire Council is providing the right kind of housing and support where it is needed most. This includes for all types of housing, whether it is open market sale, affordable sale, rented, older person accommodation or specialist housing.

Who are your current Parish Councillors?

Nine members of the parish put themselves forward to serve the community for the next 4 years. Some have been on the Parish Council for many years, some not so. Below is a short introduction to your Councillors.

Peter Broomhall: I joined Wem Rural Parish Council in 1995 because I enjoyed working with people, helping to solve problems and working with my fellow councillors to make Wem Rural a better place. I have been Chairman twice.

Julia Goode: Through my work, I have come to understand many aspects of policing and the value of a strong and caring community. We are most fortunate to live in a beautiful rural area but this in itself can create issues for the youth of the area as boredom can be a catalyst for offending. I believe it is important to try to provide support and interests for young people in the area, youth clubs are a good option.

Peter Marsh: Having farmed at Lee Brockhurst for 48 years, I retired to Aston in 2010. I care passionately about Wem and its surrounding rural countryside and joined as a councillor just over four years ago with a view to helping make a difference.

Peter Slack: Being a councillor gives you the opportunity to give something back to the community, and get involved in shaping the issues that will be important to our area for future generations. I have also been amazed at just how much goes on in our parish. It's a real privilege to be involved in.

Len Staines: Our family moved from Shrewsbury to Barkers Green in August 1986, and I joined the Parish Council in May 1991. In the following years I soon got to know many of the residents of Barkers Green, Aston and Tilley. Following up issues they have raised has generated for me an interest in local history, with interesting discoveries on talking to residents whose families have been here much longer than I.

Liz Vernon: I have lived in Edstaston for over 45 years and fully appreciate how fortunate I am to live in such a wonderful area. I have been a teacher in schools in Shropshire and Telford for 43 years. Since my retirement, I have been able to contribute more to my local community in a positive way.

Stella Whyte: I have lived on the rural edge of Newtown/Northwood for 25 years. As well as sharing my passion and enthusiasm for this little corner of Shropshire, I bring skills to the parish council from my professional life as a strategic statutory and community consultation and public engagement specialist.

Ruth Williams: I am committed to support the Wem Rural Parish council and working with others to enhance the local area and hope to contribute to the regeneration of the area. In particular to develop the growth of local business and in particular young people starting up new business. Additionally, I feel that there is a role for the council to encourage affordable housing for young families.

Make a change, become a Councillor

Are you passionate about your community? Do you want to help make a long-lasting change? Do you have innovative ideas for the council? Do you have concerns about a specific issue and want to do something about it? If this is you, then we need you. We need people from all backgrounds and experiences who reflect their community to put themselves forward for election. Make a change and become a councillor.

What Do Local Councils Do?

Your local council has overall responsibility for the wellbeing of your local community. Their work falls into three main categories:

- Delivery of services;
- Improve quality of life for residents;
- Give communities a democratic voice.

Becoming a Local Councillor

As a local councillor you can become a voice for your community and make real change. Councillors are community leaders and represent the interests of the communities they serve. Local councillors have three main responsibilities:

- Decision-making;
- Monitoring;
- Getting involved locally.

To be considered you must meet certain criteria, some of which are:

- a UK or Commonwealth citizen or the European Union;
- at least 18 years old;

I'm interested, what do I do?

Contact the Parish Clerk or you are welcome to contact any Parish Councillor to understand the role more.

Broadband

Last December, the Council sought residents interest in the national Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme and Shropshire Council Top-Up Scheme. Nearly 150 residents came forward and the Council placed expressions of interest with Openreach and Airband.

The Council has been very disappointed in the slow response from these organisations, mainly due to the popularity of the scheme. The Council is also reviewing the 'small print' which is now available. The Council is still progressing the project albeit elements are outside its control.

Wem Area Climate Forum Update

Many Wem residents have long been enjoying the Mill Fields beside the River Roden – a miniature wilderness, full of wild flowers and trees, birds, butterflies and a whole world of wildlife little seen, all within a stone's throw of the town centre.

The fields are low lying and wet in winter, but also the site of some of Wem's industrial history. 400 years ago Dutch engineers carried out sophisticated water engineering works in order to keep the mill wheel turning. In fact the "river" is in actually a canal feeding what was a great pond above the road bridge.

In spite of its designation as an area subject to flooding, numerous unsuccessful attempts have been made over the years to develop this land. Wem Area Climate Change Forum recently initiated a successful application for the Mill Fields to be declared an Asset of Community Value. This means that should the area be put on the market, the sale will have to be delayed to give time for the community to raise funds to buy it. The Forum believe that, as a town which has declared a Climate Emergency, we should if possible own this reservoir of biodiversity for the benefit of everyone. They also believe that it will provide a link in a chain of green corridors joining up natural spaces in the Rural area.

Mill Fields will gain a further level of protection if it can be given Village Green status. In order to do this, we need documentary proof that local residents have been using the land for recreation over a number of years. Do you have any photographs or other evidence which could help in this process? Any records of community events such as sports or picnics would be particularly helpful. If you do, please contact Wem Climate Forum via wemclimateforum2@gmail.com, or you can find us on Facebook. Mill Fields deserves protection for future generations.

Katharine Murray

Operation Newtown Notice Board

As you will be able to see from the photos, Newtown, now has a brand new resplendent Notice Board, kindly provided by Wem Rural Parish Council.

The Learned Clerk to the Parish Council, sent out a call to the NCRA for help in fitting the notice board. Much like Jackie Weaver, Carole does have the authority! It is always a pleasure to see how one group can assist another. The old notice board was taken down by Mark, who also gave me a much needed hand painting the bits of the support I couldn't reach, he is no stranger to this! Unfortunately, Plan A failed to come to fruition and I turned to my fellow Parish Councillor, Huw Edwards to fit the new one. As you can see, he did a splendid job.

The Notice Board has been somewhat brought up to date in terms of the content displayed. There are various notices relating to organisations that may assist in these difficult times. WRPC and NCRA will continue to display relevant information. If anyone would like to display pertinent information, do please get in touch with me, I have the key!

Go Team WRPC and NCRA!

Julia Goode, Wem Rural Parish Councillor



News from our local schools

New Headteacher Appointed for Newhampton Federation

As you may be aware Mr Andrew Hodson is retiring from his role as Executive Headteacher for Newhampton Federation (the governing body for Welshampton and Newtown Primary schools) at the end of this summer term.

Following a thorough recruitment process, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that the Governing Body has appointed Mr Ben Crompton as the new Executive Headteacher for the Newhampton Federation. Mr Crompton will join us with a wealth of experience but also a passion and desire to deliver and support the holistic development of the children, broaden horizons and bring learning to life.

"I am thrilled to have been appointed as the new Executive Headteacher at Newhampton Federation. The opportunity to lead and develop both Newtown and Welshampton Church of England Primary Schools excites me greatly and I am really looking forward to it."

"I must thank Mr Hodson and the staff, the governing body and all of the children for welcoming me so warmly during the recruitment process. It was a real privilege to spend time talking to everyone and I saw the wonderful sense of community and pride there is in each school."

"I can't wait to continue developing two forward-thinking and outward-looking church schools and work with staff, parents and the wider community to ensure that both schools are truly special places for children to be educated. I look forward to meeting you all in September!"

Mr Crompton will take up his role full time from 1st September 2021.

As we approach the end of the summer term we will be holding in-school celebrations for Mr Hodson as we say a very well earned thank you and goodbye. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions we are unable to invite the wider community into school for these celebrations however I am sure you will join in thanking Mr Hodson for his dedication and support to our fantastic village schools and wish him a very happy retirement.

Thank you: I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our pupils, parents, staff team and governing body for their dedication, hard work and support throughout this academic year. It has been a very challenging time but everyone has pulled together to achieve the very best we can for our pupils. I hope everyone has a safe and restful summer break and look forward to everyone meeting Mr Crompton in September.

Clare Mainwaring, Chair of Governors

Governor Vacancies

Newhampton Federation and The Thomas Adams School Wem are each looking to recruit a governor to their respective boards. There will be a different focus for each governing body, primary for Newhampton and secondary, 6th form and boarding for Thomas Adams. However the role of a governor is the same; challenging but hugely rewarding. It will give you the chance to make a real difference to young people, give something back to your local community and use and develop your skills in a board-level environment. You will also be joining the largest volunteer force in the country: there are over a quarter of a million volunteers governing state funded schools in England.

Schools need governing bodies that have a balance and diversity of knowledge, skills and experience to enable it to be effective. Anyone aged 18 or over can be a governor (but there are some exceptions) and you do not need to be a parent. There is no requirement for you to have an understanding of the education system, just the necessary skills, character and time to contribute. There is plenty of training available to help you learn about education. Schools needs and benefit from a range of professional knowledge on their governing board including education, finance, human resources, legal, marketing and public relations, property and estates management, and organisational change.

As a governor you will be able to:

- use your own experience of education and life beyond school to inform conversations
- develop and utilise your skills in a board-level environment
- make a valuable contribution to education and your community
- support and challenge the school so that it improves for pupils and staff
- bring your unique experiences, perspectives and insights in to decision-making in the interests of the school community

If you would like to find out more about either role, in the first instance, please contact the respective school.



Newtown Community and Recreation Association

Newtown Community and Recreation Assoc

It has been quite an eventful year say the least! Following Tim Waslings resignation as Chairman last Spring, a new Committee was formed. As a gesture of appreciation for all the many years Tim had kindly headed up NCRA, he was given a glass decanter by the Committee.

There was much to be done and the energised NCRA set about it with gusto! Covid, caused delays but a great deal has been achieved. What is particularly heart-warming, is the keen sense of community spirit and support the NCRA has received. Many people to thank, including Simon Bellingham, Pete Curzon, Matt Brooksbank, Brian (MP Hire) and James Plaskett, Access 2 Trees, Mike Whyte.

The car park needed some TLC! We have had new lines painted, metal guards fitted to protect the lighting posts and repairs to the gates and posts. Sadly, over the years some of the equipment in the play park had started to show its age. With that in mind and with the recommendations in the annual ROSPA report NCRA set about the process of fund raising. This was met with a fantastic response from local families, local businesses and Wem Rural Parish Council. Funds were also raised by revitalising the 100 Club, which now has 2 draws a year and is only £20 to join! Prizes are £100, £50 and £25 for the 3 lucky winners.

The play park has benefited having had a new cargo net, new swings and metal posts, new zip-wire and a spanking brand-new load of bark. It is paramount that NCRA does all it can to ensure the safety of the children using this wonderful facility.



In relation to the garden area, NCRA has been greatly assisted by Matt Brooksbank having kindly overseen the refurbishment of 2 of the 4 benches. These had sadly fallen into neglect and were covered in lichen but were still sound and fit for purpose. NCRA will get round to the remaining 2 as possible.

Andy Black, Chairman, has received confirmation from Tesco, Whitchurch, that NCRA has been successful in its application to be part of Tesco Community Grant Scheme!

NCRA is now working with Newtown School to try to develop the pond and forest area. If anyone happens to have any experience of such matters your input would be appreciated.

The work of NCRA is far from over, there is still a great deal to be done. Thank you to all on the Committee for your tireless enthusiasm.

Onwards and upwards!

Julia Goode
Wem Rural Parish
Councillor



Updates

Public Rights of Way

The interest in walking and exploring the countryside, has continued from last year but following the very wet May some rights of way are becoming overgrown and/or blocked. Who is responsible for keeping the rights of way open and accessible? The landowner, or occupier is responsible for controlling side and overhead vegetation from inhibiting the use of rights of way. Shropshire Council, as the Highway Authority, has a duty to control surface vegetation, although this is distinct from cultivated crops which are covered by specific legislation.

Rural Crime

If you have been unfortunate to have been a victim of rural crime, you will know full well of the damage it caused not just to properties but to individuals too. However, we live in an area of low crime. You can monitor local crime through the Police website. The parish is covered by 2 Police Teams, Wem and Whitchurch. The links to the websites are:

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/west-mercia-police/wem/?tab=Overview>

and

<https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/west-mercia-police/whitchurch/?tab=Overview>

You can see the crime levels as a chart and a list over the year. If you click on 'Crime Map' you can drill down to specific areas.

FixMyStreet

Wanting a new, easy way to report highways problems? There is a new way called 'FixMyStreet'. FixMyStreet is an independent website, built by the charity mySociety. They wanted to make it easier to report problems in the community, even if you don't know who those reports should go to.. Like other authorities, Shropshire Council is looking to formally integrate this reporting system as part of their process. Take a look:

<https://www.fixmystreet.com/>



DIARY OF A COMMUNITY BUILD

Since our last report in January, huge progress has been made, with the shell of the extension now complete. Our fantastic community has been involved along the way with all the groundworks as well as the internal renovations of the hall. We are very proud of what has been achieved so far and are about to begin the final push to finish this first stage of the project.



We look forward to inviting you to a grand Edstaston Village Hall relaunch party later in the year...WATCH THIS SPACE

FEBRUARY

The footings were finally completed in an amazing effort by many members of our community, turning up at crack of dawn to shovel, rake and smooth concrete. The bricklaying and blockwork were done by Trev Gough and Billy Rogers.



TIDY UP TIME

Many thanks to local company P.G. SKIPS LTD for their kind donation of a skip.

MARCH

ATEC CONSTRUCTION began the exterior building work with scaffolding up, walls going up, windows (recycled from the original gable wall) going in. So exciting to see almost daily progress. By the end of March with good weather on our side the roofing timbers were up...

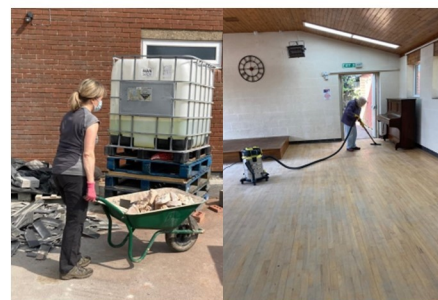
Meanwhile inside the hall the internal renovations by the community were well underway: The bar magically transformed into a disabled toilet, plastered and painted ready for fitting and a large storage cupboard. Work was also being done on the ladies toilets.



APRIL



April saw the roof going on and the disabled toilet finished, complete with baby changing facilities. HUNTER LLOYD LTD carried out first fix electrics. Members of the community put their face masks on and came together for a major tidy up and Covid-clean ready for May's Election Day.



MAY

The scaffolding was taken down and we could finally see where the huge gable window would go above bi-fold doors. These have been ordered from ALPHA WINDOWS LTD as have the fully automatic opening doors from AGS LTD.



JUNE AND BEYOND

Once the doors and windows are in and the building watertight we can get on with plastering, painting, second fix electrics (including statement chandelier!), flooring, kitchen fitting, etc.

Work on the entrance path and patio, which will stretch the whole width of the extension, begins in mid-July.

**The hall is still open
for Covid compliant
bookings.**

Contact Sandra Price for
more information

07976622654
sandra-price@lineone.net



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

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PARISH COUNCILLORS

12 Councillors represent the 3 wards

EDSTASTON

Huw Edwards	07834 252412	Bank House Farm, Paddol Green, Wem, SY4 5QZ
Vacancy		
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
Vacancy		

M E E T I N G S

The Parish Council normally meet on the first Tuesday of the month at Edstaston Village Hall at 7pm . Please refer to the Council's website.

Agendas for all meetings are available on the website 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.



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LOCAL COUNCIL
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QUALITY GOLD