

Wem Rural Parish Council

Action Plan: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Wem Rural Parish Council aims to:

- To provide effective, efficient and accountable local government for the parish, enabling residents to be involved in the life of the community and its future development.
- To be a strong voice for residents and local businesses, working to improve the overall parish area both built and natural, while preserving the uniqueness of heritage areas.

The Council's objectives are:

- To understand and communicate the views, needs and aspirations of residents and businesses to statutory and non-governmental bodies as required.
- Increase public involvement in the community through ensuring the parish council and its activities are open, transparent and accountable to residents.
- Support local business and economic activity in the parish.
- Work with other Councils to provide safe, healthy and timely opportunities for recreation, leisure and education.
- To support the work of parish voluntary organizations through grants and practical support
- Respond to planning applications and other statutory consultations on time, ensuring that recommendations made to Shropshire Council adhere to the community plan, any statutory regulations, and the interests of the community.
- Promote, within our community, activities which support the principles of environmental sustainability and an ethical society, working with others to keep public places clean and safe.
- Ensure that Councillors and Staff have access to high quality training and development opportunities and that they meet all required standards, for example working towards achieving Quality Council status.

A Business Plan for 2021 – 2025 was adopted in July 2021 which included the principles of the Council's aims and objectives.

The Council monitors progress of the Business Plan through an Annual Action Plan. It is a 'live' document which the Parish Council updates on a regular basis, enabling the Council to track and monitor progress against the objective and timescale. The Action Plan is publicly available, so residents can also monitor progress.

To ensure the Action Plan truly represents the Parish's best interests, the Parish Council will invite the local community to participate in its development.

The Action Plan will continue to be the main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community.

It is a two-way conversation. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know.

We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan.

Wem Rural Parish Council

Action Plan: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Monitoring Report date: 5 March 2024

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
Theme 1 - Parish Council Governance					
To improve communication between the Parish Council and residents and businesses	Keep website up to date.	On-going		Future events and news blog have been updated.	
	Ensure 4 editions of Rural Review are published. Include sections on reporting issues to Shropshire Council and the Police. Include Annual Report	On-going	Allocation of £3,000	Spring 2022 Edition published. Summer 2022 Edition published. Autumn 2023 Edition published Winter 2023 Edition published Spring 2023 Edition published Autumn 2023 Edition published Christmas 2023 Edition published and distributed by councillors Winter 2024 Edition in progress	
	Post on Facebook on a regular basis	On-going	Volunteer duties by Councillor	Facebook page is being updated with news on a daily basis. Twitter and Instagram account have also been created and updated.	
	Provide local press information of local interest.	On-going		Information is being shared on social media including local stories, national campaigns and consultation	
	Ensure draft Minutes and Action Plan are published on website within 1 week of meeting	On-going			
To improve effectiveness of Parish Council	Review training needs of both Councillors and Clerk	October to January	To be assessed	New councillor/clerk training completed and 2 further training modules identified. Fundamentals for Councillors planned for 14th Feb 2024. Clerk completed CiLCA in February 2024	
	Monitor criteria of LCAS.	On-going		Application submitted June 2023	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
	Annual performance review of Clerk	March		Clerk's review completed. Deputy Clerk's review completed June 2023	
To increase influence / coordination in matters that impact on Parish	Awareness of local issues and invite representatives of outside agencies to Council meetings and/or round table discussions.	On-going		Meeting with PCC John Campion and Insp Claire Greenaway and representatives of neighbouring parishes. West Mercia Police invited to Annual Parish meeting in April 2024.	
	Attend relevant conferences and meetings	On-going		WEF, WACAF, Boundary Review (WTC) – Chair and Clerk. SC & SALC – Clerk. Chairs Networking – Chair. SC Highways Group – Clerk. Wem Business Networking – Deputy Clerk	
To increase impact of Community Grant Scheme	Fund Community Grant Scheme	October to January	To be assessed		
	Active promotion of the Community Grant Scheme.	Autumn Newsletter		Included In Autumn newsletter Included in Winter newsletter, website, social media and noticeboards 6 groups awarded grants in May 2023 2024 round open from 1st Feb to 29th March. Advertised on website and to be included in Feb Rural Review	
	Review impact of Grants provided and review Policy	October to January		Positive responses from majority of recipients. Articles received from Edstaston and Whitchurch Crematorium from previous grant	
Theme 2 - Leisure and Community					
To support and work with Edstaston Village Hall Management Committee regarding the maintenance and development of facilities for the benefit of parishioners.	Liaise with Edstaston Village Hall Management Committee to apply for grants to upgrade building.	On-going		Meeting arranged to assist with external funding grants.	
	Liaise with the Committee to identify where Council assistance could be used.	On-going		Earmarked reserves at start of Financial Year of £9,466.05. £1,820 granted.	
To investigate need for new facilities to promote social interaction, sport and leisure.	Investigate the need of permanent playing areas which are open to all through community surveys and other methods	March	To be assessed	Consider Winter newsletter Further consultation to be planned.	

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To support existing community groups and work with existing communities and new housing developments to become part of the same 'community'.	Work with Shropshire Council, community groups and other bodies to promote activities.	On-going		2/8/21 Explore all day event to promote local businesses and competitions for residents/children 7/9/21 Plan for spring event. 1/2/22 Agreed to wait for completion of Hall improvements	
To consult with the community to identify local needs and views which can be addressed by constructive council action.	Consult and engage with the community paying particular attention to the diversity of the community.	On-going		27/9/21 Article in Autumn newsletter for suggestions as part of Budget setting process Meeting at St Peters CofE Primary School and Thomas Adams to engage children and young people about needs for future – further date to be arranged for assembly and classroom engagement.	
To consult with over 60s to identify local needs which can be addressed by constructive council action	Consult with over 60's in the community	On-going			
To ensure Broadband and Mobile Phone infrastructure is of a level to enable the community to fully access these services.	Lobby Shropshire Council and other bodies to ensure all avenues to improve services are investigated and actioned.	On-going		Meetings held with Connecting Shropshire Representative from Shropshire Council spoke at APM and Chair to follow up individual cases.	
	Work with Connecting Shropshire, Openreach and Airband to assess feasibility of Gigabit Community Project.	March		19/7/21 Airband confirmed the need to focus purely on contracted commitments during this calendar year. 30/7/21 Openreach emailed to clarify areas they can quote CFP schemes. 27/9/21 Spoke with Openreach on 17/9 regarding areas. Openreach was to review areas linked to cabinets on 20/9. Chased 27/9 Responses received. Projects too large to progress at Parish Council level. 10/1/22 Approach from Freedom Fibre. 1/2 Agreed to wait for further information 28/2 Made contact with Full Fibre at Business Networking 20/11 Meeting with Shropshire Call ref Place Plan regarding issues such as poor internet	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
Theme 3 - Parish Appearance, Environment, Public Services and Safety					
To keep roads and lanes clean for the enjoyment of parishioners and visitors.	Organise with community groups periodic litter picks.	On-going		1/3 National litter picking week end of March March 2022 litter picking carried out March 2023 discussion around the Big Clean Up April 2023 litter picking carried out. More education needed on website and social media. Litter picking (The Great British Spring Clean) in March 2024	
To understand, celebrate and protect the local landscape and have a say in its future management.	Work with partners to investigate whether additional planting of native trees/shrubs would be of benefit to wildlife and preserve the landscape.	March		Investigate the area of land close to Industrial Estate identified by resident for additional planting/community use. Site reverted to grazing land.	
	Pursue links with regional, national and international bodies which are concerned with the natural environment and heritage.	March		Liaise with Mosses and Marches project (Andrew Howe). 16/7/21 Meeting RW, SW & CW to agreed ideas. AH has replied. 1 project could be suitable but timing and funding to be resolved. Not progressed.	
	Explore working with SWT and Newtown School to develop school pond.			2/8/21 re-establish links with SWT and School. 4/8/21 SWT unable to assist but provided name of another contact. Defer progress until school returns from summer holiday. School progressing	
To reduce crime and to help parishioners and businesses feel better protected against crime.	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.	March		20/7/21 Registered with Neighbourhood Matters. Clarifying how to register interested area, then circulate to Cllrs and parish. 27/9/21 To promote in next available newsletter. Included in Spring 2023 newsletter. Ongoing communication with local police regarding rural crime and prevention. Importance of reporting crime in Winter 2024 Rural Review	
	Continue to work with West Mercia Police to share information on local crime and safety issues, including promotion of relevant websites. This includes inviting the Local	On-going		22/7/21 Meeting PB, JG, SW & CW with Rural and Business Crime Officer. Follow up action: WhatsApp Group, encourage reporting of incidents (What 3 Words), help for rural businesses/farms, build	

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	Neighbourhood Team to monthly Council meetings when appropriate and forwarding any enquiries and concerns to them.			relationships with PCSOs. 30/7/21 Neighbourhood Charter 'contract' being reviewed. 3/8/21 Meeting with PCC to be arranged – invite 2 Councillors from WLPC, WPC and LPC. 3/8/21 JG & SW met with Inspector Greenaway to discuss specific issues. Survey on residents' perception of crime to be undertaken. Residents to be encouraged to contact SNT rather than 101. 27/9/21 meeting with PCC agreed for December. 25/4 Charter meeting attended. Charter priorities to be reviewed. 28/3/2023 Included in Spring 2023 Newsletter 18/10/2023 Councillors attended Police Drop-In and local PC invited to parish meeting to talk about rural crime. Articles to be included in Rural Review 14/11/23 Meeting with PC Harper regarding cameras and problems with rural crime.	
To ensure in a diverse and rural parish, local solutions to emergencies are in place to support county and national plans.	Support and work with local Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Groups to maintain the presence of this service.	March			
	Ensure AED awareness sessions are organised when face to face sessions are allowed.	On-going		Awareness training completed 14 May 2022	
To improve local infrastructure.	Work with NCRA and other partners to increase capacity at Newtown Car Park	March	To be assessed	On-going liaison with NCRA through PC representation on Association. 1/2 Planning application submitted for car park extension. 1/6 Application approved. Car Park extended. Funding for completion sought by NCRA.	
	Work with Northwood residents to consider ways to improve their village eg planters	March	To be assessed	Re-visit projects following being on hold due to Covid-19. 30/7/21 Quote for planters being obtained. 4/8/21 Request permission from SC. 27/9/21 Permission granted. Chased local company for quotes. Quotes received. 1/22 Commission of planters agreed and on-going	

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				maintenance 1/6 Planters in place July 2023 – Planters re-planted and verges cut	
To identify and improve tall hedges on roads	Renew and monitor areas of concerns from residents and work with landowners to seek solutions				
To identify and improve poor land drainage.	Review and monitor areas of concerns from both residents and businesses and work with Shropshire Council to seek solutions.	March		12/21 Oakland to Abbey Green area – SC Highways to review Jan 22 1/2 SC contacting landowners	
		February		21/12 Notification of installation of additional gully at Aston to Barkers Green. 10/23 Shropshire Council regarding draining/flooding in Barkers Green	
To lead the community on issues related to the environment and climate change	Work with local groups to support where appropriate.	March	To be assessed	Wem Area Climate Forum (WACF) promotes and carries out action to reduce the local impact on climate change, with representation from WTC and WRPC LS Cllr attended biodiversity presentation	
	Investigate ways of reducing carbon emissions on a household basis and publicise through newsletter.	March	To be assessed	12/7/21 Shropshire Council updates Climate Action website and climate pack. To be reviewed. 2/8/21 Explore working with local nursery to promote peat free compost. 1/22 Invite to join webinar on 16/2 on Carbon Literacy.	
Theme 4 - Highways, Transport and Access					
To address highways concerns of residents and businesses and seek solutions.	Work with Shropshire Council to understand planned highways maintenance works.	On-going		23/7/21 Email SC requesting meeting to understand procedures 30/7/21 Clerk part of Parish Highways Working Group – First meeting 8/9/21 27/9/21 First meeting set the scene for the group. 1/22 Meetings progressing Lengthsman scheme, national Roadworks Alerts, and integration of FixMyStreet. News item on FixMyStreet included in Spring 2023 Newsletter	

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	Work with Shropshire Council to identify critical areas for winter gritting.	On-going		1/22 Accident at top of Ossage Lane – not part of current gritting programme.	
	Forward any complaints about highways maintenance to Shropshire Council	On-going			
	Identify redundant and poorly maintained road markings and signage and report to Shropshire Council	March		4/4/23 Issues reported in Newtown via Fix My Street Signage repainted	
	Identify road safety issues and gather evidence for West Mercia Police PCC grant application	March		7/7/21 SC have no objection to manual highways survey. RA to be completed and then approach local residents. 1/22 Liaise with neighbouring parishes	
To seek solutions to speeding traffic	Report specific incidents to the Police and Shropshire Council.	On-going			
	Review areas of concern in the parish and work with Shropshire Council and Police to seek solutions	On-going		Liaison with SC Traffic Engineer regarding reducing speeding along Ossage Lane. 7/7/21 SC have no objection to manual highways survey. RA to be completed and then approach local residents.	
		On-going		Monitor SC's project to implement 20mph limit outside schools. Newtown 20mph in place.	
		On-going		Quina Brook 27/9/21 resident's concerns being addressed by SC. Traffic monitoring to be carried out. 28/3/23 Safety Roads Partnership had been carrying out periodic speed checking and will do formal monitoring in Spring.	
		On-going		Edstaston 4/4/23 dangerous run from corner by Vermons down to the church	
		On-going		B5476 Wem To Whitchurch via Coton and Tilstock Jan 2024- has been reported on Fix my street and reported to Highways	
		On-going		Residents' petition received re Barkers Green safety. Email to SC 4/11/21 1/2 SC will consider advisory speed signs	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
				Wheelie bin speeding tickets to be made available for areas on concern. News item included in Spring 2023 newsletter July 2023 Wheelie Bin Stickers handed out in Northwood and article to be included in Autumn newsletter	
	Investigate support required to set up Community Speed Watch groups	September		26/7/21 Team members and new co-ordinator required for Northwood CSW team otherwise will be disbanded in September 2021 11/21 new coordinator identified	
	Investigate/monitor local and county groups (eg Shropshire Council Agricultural Reference Group)	December		22/7/21 Email to SC information on ARG.	
To ensure parishioners do not experience 'rural isolation' and to maximise existing transport arrangements.	Promote existing Community Transport Schemes.	March	To be assessed		
	Liaise with Salop Wheelers to assess impact of Covid-19 on its operations	December	To be assessed	27/9/21 Meetings held and new committee in place 1/2 Grant application submitted – advised to re-apply in 2022/23. 7/3/23 Grant application submitted	
	Transport links between Ellesmere & Wem. Mini bus route would serve communities along B5063 to Wem and railway station and access to rail network		To be assessed		
To maintain access to the countryside	Monitor and support where appropriate Parish Path Partnership Group	On-going	To be assessed	3/8/21 Wem Area P3 group has been formed, the group is in the process of identifying and prioritising routes that require attention in line with Shropshire Council's Public Rights of Way guide for landowners and farmers. The group will liaise with WTC and WRPC representatives LS 13/6/23 Meeting with P3 to discuss governance and funding. July 2023 Started working with Wem Parish Paths Partnership to create Walking Guides Nov 2023 Crowdfund Shropshire funding project created to fund printing and equipment New Walking Guides in progress	

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	Work with Shropshire Council to ensure full access of Rights of Way is maintained.	On-going		See above	
	Well signposted & maintained public footpaths. Promote with walks leaflets and guides	On-going	To be assessed	See above	
Replace railway bridge Mill Lane Wem	Work with Network Rail to promote timing of proposed work and to reduce disruption caused to local road network.	January		3/8/21 RW & SW met with NR. Timescales and schedule of work discussed. 12/21 Issues identified and resolved through liaison with SC and NR	January 2022
Theme 5 - Economy and Tourism					
To encourage economic development.	Work with Shropshire Council Wem Economic Forum, businesses, and other partners to encourage development.	On-going	To be assessed	24/11 Meeting with Shropshire Councillors and Wem Town Clerk to consider involvement with Wem 'Levelling Up' and BID schemes. 1/6 Meeting with WTC and SC to discuss options. WEF bank account closed. 24/9/22 Meeting with SC and WTC 28/2/23 Attended Wem Business Networking 22/3/23 Meeting with SC to arrange further business consultation 19/4/23 Meeting with WT and SC to continue working. Event organised for June 2023 July 2023 Event organised for October 2023 in partnership with Wem Town Hall 23/10/23 Event hosted at Wem Town Hall attended by over 80 people. Gained feedback on local challenges. Further networking event in January 2024. Networking event scheduled for Tuesday 30 th January in partnership with Wem Town Hall Meeting scheduled with Wem Town Council on 1st Feb 24 Business Networking Event planned for April 2024 International Women's Day Event planned for March 2024	

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	Support local farmers and provide sustainable food sources.	On-going		Spring 2023 article newsletter around mental health of farmers.	
Theme 6 - Housing and Health					
To continue to comment on all key strategic planning documents and consultations that affect the Parish ensuring the Parish Council's knowledge and understanding of the local context is taken into account in decisions.	Work with Shropshire Council and other partners to ensure documents and consultations are fully understood.	On-going			
	Ensure residents are consulted to ensure parishioners views are known.	On-going			
To encourage local residents to participate in any strategic planning consultations which impact the Parish.	Publicise consultation through the Council's communication methods.	On-going		Feedback from APM 2023 added to Action Plan	
To review the way in which the Parish Council considers and makes responses on planning applications.	Review training needs of Councillors.	On-going	To be assessed		
	Ensure responses are robust and clear.	On-going			
To retains quality health and social care services	Work in partnership with the relevant statutory and voluntary bodies, groups and agencies to ensure health and social care services meet residents' needs and expectations.	On-going		Article in Spring Newsletter. 4/22 Registered as Community Partner with SaTHT.	
Affordable housing	To assess the needs for affordable housing.	On-going		Nov 2023 Working with Home Plus Group regarding Round Meadow allocations	