

**Withington Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 8th January 2025
at 7.00pm in the Parish Room**

Minutes

61/2024 Present: Councillors: Phil Heath (Chair), Neil Maxwell, Lesley Stone, Martin Timmis, Alan Williams, Cllr Lezley Picton, Denise Roscoe (Clerk) and 11 members of the public

62/2024 Welcome: The Chairman welcomed everyone

63/2024 Presentation by Attingham Park

The presentation was cancelled due to the weather. **Action: Clerk** to invite to future meeting.

64/2024 Apologies: Steve & Yvonne Walton

65/2024 Declaration of Interest: None

66/2024 Approval of the Minutes for 6th November 2024

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman

67/2024 Public Forum

Concern was expressed over the number of roads that are flooding around the village. See discussion under Updates from Previous Meetings.

With reference to the balance of £292 left over from the Coronation celebrations.

Cllr Stone put forward suggestions to use the fund:

1. To put towards an event to raise funds for a storage building on the Village Green.
 2. To put towards an event on the Village Green to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE day
- Perhaps the two events good be tied together. It was agreed these were good ideas and that they would be discussed at the annual event planning meeting being held in January.

Cllr Williams asked for the pavements and roads in Sunnyfields and Woodlands Close to be swept.

Action Clerk: to report to Fix My Street.

68/2024 Report from Cllr Lezley Picton

The **Government's funding settlement** announced in December was not helpful. Despite the government saying that there is on average a 6% increase in Core Spending Power for authorities. Shropshire Council and several other rural authorities will receive increases of only 3.1%, which includes the council tax increase of 4.99%, resulting in less funding than last year. Shropshire Council received the third lowest settlement across England.

The removal of the rural services delivery grant worth around £9m is a key pressure for Shropshire, as well as major reduction in social care funding, effectively representing a 'loss' of £16m. Once again, there will be more difficult decisions to make for the 2025/2026 budget. So, it is more important than ever that as many people in Shropshire as possible have their say on where savings can be made.

The **new National Planning Policy Framework** document saw the government setting specific targets for house building. The document confirmed that Shropshire's annual housing figure (currently 1,073) will rise to 1,994. Most rural counties have seen large increases in housing targets whilst urban areas have seen a reduction.

Shropshire have built slightly more than 1,500 properties in 2024. To build 1,994 properties a year means a considerable supply of housing sites would be required. This target will put additional

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pressure on Shropshire Council as well as on the local infrastructure, which is an issue often raised by residents when new developments are planned.

Through the **English Devolution White Paper**, the government plans to legislate to introduce Strategic Authorities and a statutory devolution framework. Strategic Authorities will belong to one of two levels, 'Foundation Strategic Authorities' or 'Mayoral Strategic Authorities'.

The documents described 'Foundation Strategic Authorities' as including non-mayoral combined authorities and combined county authorities automatically, and any local authority designated as a 'Strategic Authority' without a Mayor.

Those who meet specified eligibility criteria may be designated as Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities. This unlocks further devolution, most notably an Integrated Settlement.

Unfortunately, Shropshire Council is not big enough to be a Strategic Authority on its own. The Government has warned that it would legislate for a ministerial directive, allowing Whitehall to create Strategic Authorities "where local leaders have, after due time has been allowed, not been able to make progress". Shropshire Council is waiting to hear who it will merge with.

69/2024 Updates from Previous Meetings:

- Flooding outside Hucksters Cottage: No Update
- Potholes on the road past Villa Farm: No Update
- Faded "Slow" Sign on Rodington Road: No Update
- Road Sweeping: Several requests for roads to be swept have been declined.
- Full Fibre Broadband: To date Openreach have completed and released 207 premises who can now place orders. There are 19 premises left to complete. Voucher holders need to place an order with a internet service provider. Gail Robinson advised that once all premises were complete the working group would be disbanded. The Chairman thanked Gail and the working group for all their hard work.

A discussion took place regarding the Parish Council trying to solve some of the flooding problems themselves. **Action: Chairman** to speak to local farmer.

70/2024 Finance Report

Approval of Accounts to date for the Parish Council and the Village Green

WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL FINANCIAL STATEMENT 8 January 2025

<u>Parish Council</u>		<u>Village Green</u>	
Brought Forward from 05/11/24	£2,991.19	Brought Forward from 05/11/24	£3,979.31
Receipts since 05/11/24	£0.00	Receipts since 05/11/24	£246.00
		Friends of the Green	£246.00
Payments Approved - 06/11/24	£83.99	Payments Approved - 06/11/24	£0.00
Hire of Hall (Sept & Nov 24)	£24.00		
Microsoft Subscription	59.99		
Payments made since 05/11/24 for approval	£848.81	Payments made since 05/11/24 for approval	£0.00
Clerk Salary (Dec 24)	£516.64		
HMRC PAYE (Dec 24)	£129.20		
M Timmis - Website Hosting	£23.99		
D Malley - Payroll 1/2 yr	£50.00		
D Roscoe - McAfee	£49.99		
D Roscoe - Printer Ink	£42.99		
CPRE - Membership	£36.00		
Balance Carried Forward to 07/01/25	£2,058.39	Balance Carried Forward to 07/01/25	£4,225.31
Defibrillator Funds	£102.46		
Coronation Proceeds	£291.71		
Balance Available to the Parish Council	£1,664.22		
Payments for approval - 08/01/25		Payments for approval - 08/01/25	
Hire of Hall (Jan 25)	£12.00		
Authorisation to pay the following if within budget amount:		Authorisation to pay the following if within budget amount:	
		Lawn Mower Maintenance, Hedge Cutting	

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Payments approved:

Payments made since 05/11/24

£516.64 Clerk Salary (Dec 24 Qtr)
£129.20 HMRC PAYE (Dec 24)
£23.99 M Timmis – Website Hosting
£50.00 D Malley – Payroll ½ yr
£49.99 D Roscoe – McAfee
£42.99 D Roscoe – Printer Ink
£36.00 CPRE – Membership

Payments for approval 08/01/25

£12.00 Hire of Hall (Jan 25)

Budget Forecast 2024/2025:

The Parish Council balance for the year end 2024/25 has been estimated to be £963.

Councillors resolved that the defibrillator balance of £102.46 be included in the Parish Council account and that all costs associated with the defibrillator would be met by the Parish Council.

Approval of the Precept & Budget for 2025/2026

Due to price increases and additional statutory expenses the **Parish Council resolved** to increase their portion of the council tax from April 2025 by 5% and therefore, the charge per household will increase from £59.55 to £62.53 which is an increase of £2.98 for the year.

Cllr Williams asked the for the Village Green budget to be altered to include £400 for the for the mower insurance.

71/2024 Planning

Church Farm Solar Farm 22/03486/FUL:

The proposed solar farm has been sold to Severn Trent Green Power (STGP). The build may start in early Summer/August 2025. Action: Cllr Heath to invite STGP to March Parish Council meeting to discuss their traffic management plan.

Telford & Wrekin Council Local Plan 5 Year Review:

The local plan is going to the Telford & Wrekin Council Cabinet on 13 February for approval. There should then be a further public consultation which needs to be looked out for.

72/2024 Withington's Sewer and Drainage Problems

Following a storm the 8th of December 2024 saw the worst flooding event, containing sewage, on the road which runs past the Parish Room. The cause is a lack of capacity and the poor condition of the sewerage system, which is at the end of its asset life.

Philip Smith & Gail Robinson have repeatedly contacted Severn Trent Water (STW), the Environment Agency and Shropshire Council Highways. They have both written to Julia Buckley MP for Shrewsbury but have not received a reply.

STW takes a while to respond when an event has occurred, but they haven't taken action to prevent future events. Shropshire Council Highways has now carried out root cutting in the gullies on the road which should help relieve some of the flooding but these gullies flow into the river.

Gail Robinson and the Clerk met with the Clerk and Councillor Tilston from Rodington PC in December to discuss the problems with the sewerage system and the effect on it from the proposed plan to build 300+ houses. The Rodington Clerk is compiling a letter for approval which will be sent to a number of parties. **Action: Clerk** to contact Rodington Clerk for update.

The Clerk has contacted Upton Magna PC asking if they have similar problems and if so, would they like to join us in trying to remedy the issues with STW.

73/2024 Village Green Committee Report

Parts of the path around the village green are impassable due to flooding and alternative routes may need to be considered. Cllr Timmis asked for the affected parts of the path to be taped off/shut.

Work on the revised Village Green Constitution and a storage shed/building on the village green are ongoing.

The next Village Green Committee meeting will be held on Thursday 16th January. **Action: Clerk** to invite Chris Roscoe to the meeting to discuss whether planning permission is needed for a storage building on the village green.

74/2024 Date of Next Parish Council Meetings: Wednesday 5th March 2025

Councillors resolved that from now on all Parish Council meetings would start at 7.00pm.

DRAFT