

Withington Annual Village Meeting

Wednesday 1st September 2021

at 7.00pm

in the Parish Room

Minutes

2021/A Present: Councillors Phil Heath (Chair) Neil Maxwell, Lesley Stone, Alan Williams, Martin Timmis, Denise Roscoe (Clerk) and 5 members of the public

2021/B Welcome: Cllr Heath welcomed everyone

2021/C Apologies: Cllr Lezley Picton, Tom and Mary Taylor

2021/D Attingham Park Presentation

The Chairman welcomed Helen Royall (Project Manager) from the National Trust, who appraised members of the 10-year vision for Attingham Park.

Attingham's Grade 1 listed mansion sits at the heart of grade II Repton designed landscape. The estate encompasses 4,000 acres with only 200 acres of the estate open to public access (apart from rights of way). Most of the estate was declared inalienable in 2011 which means that it is not saleable and should be used to promote nature and access.

One of the ambitions of the park was to look beyond its boundaries to work in partnership with and deliver benefits to the local community. Half of all the income that Attingham generates goes back to support other areas e.g. Wenlock Edge and the Long Mynd.

Looking to the future the park had followed an internal process called 'Experience Design' which is a process of master planning.

This has involved nearly 18 months of thinking and collating data and research. Building on the previous successes, existing plans and mapping data including:

- 50 year landscape visions
- Estate Management Plans
- Previous 10 year plan which delivered the new commercial units on the main site
- Re-discovered a 10 year programme of conservation which included the £1.4million roofing scheme
- Shropshire Council and demographic information
- Internal audience insight
- Audience focus groups and sounding board

The proposition: Looking at the whole estate the park had identified an area to develop an outdoor activity site that will focus on the creation of:

- Multiuse trails to encourage entry-level and family cycling
- Play interventions
- Connections beyond the car park to the wider countryside

- Access to new activities through working with an educational outdoor activity provider
- Access for schools for day trips and overnight camping
- Areas for new large-scale events and shows to promote the local area

The site is:

- Almost completely flat ensuring its suitable for entry-level activity
- Brownfield – it is a former airfield site
- Historically interesting – on the edge of Wroxeter with a history from the iron age to the present day with remaining WWII buildings. This will allow us to preserve and enhance local history
- Ecologically not overly diverse due to intensive arable farming
- Easily accessible from main routes in and can be secured with barrier parking.

Phase 1 would begin with a car park and basic cycle network and it was hoped to expand that over the 10 years to meet capacity and that some of the neighbouring estates might consider opening up their provision too.

2021/E Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting 8th May 2019

The Chairman signed the minutes.

2021/F Report from Parish Council Chairman

Before addressing some of the main issues that arouse most interest amongst our parishioners, namely

- planning applications
- roads and traffic
- crime

I feel it pertinent to mention the Covid pandemic that has impacted everyone over the last 18 months. Fortunately, only a small number of our community have tested positive for Covid and there have been no fatalities. Sadly, this cannot be said for other communities such as our neighbouring parish, Upton Magna that saw the death of Jacko Prinold, a well-known character in the area and a regular of the Hare & Hounds. He will be sadly missed. I would like to mention the excellent effort of Jon Scutt in organising a “just giving” online collection which raised over £5000 for Jacko’s family

Your PC enacted its emergency plan to provide assistance to any parishioner who need help due to self-isolating etc and I would like to thank Councillor Timmis for heading the team and providing regular bulletins on progress/advice and Councillor Stone for coordinating requests for assistance.

Mention should also be made of Lisa Sutherland who set up a village “WhatsApp” group to help keep people informed on issues in the Parish. I am pleased to say that this group continues to provide useful information on general activities not just Covid and would recommend anyone who has not yet joined to contact Lisa to do so

Planning.

Planning applications have always aroused more interest and discussion than any other subject.

In 2018 Shropshire Council reviewed the Local Plan with a public consultation on Preferred Development Site Allocations and. I am pleased to say that Withington is currently not viewed as a development area and will remain as “open countryside” the definition of which is that the only building allowed is the conversion of existing building to residential use and extensions etc to existing properties.

There have been a small number of applications for conversions of building to residential use and remodelling of existing houses. Each has been sent to the PC for review and following discussions with immediate neighbours all have approved albeit with a couple requiring modification to address concerns that have been raised

Some good news for the Parish is the application to build chicken sheds at the Rea Farm have been withdrawn. Whilst this application was in the parish of Upton Magna it would have had a significant impact on Withington.

Roads and Traffic.

Roads

The condition of the lanes around Withington still remains a concern even though Shropshire Council occasionally patch and repair potholes. Parishioners who discover new potholes should report them as soon as possible to either the PC Clerk or Shropshire Council before they become an even bigger problem.

Flooding

Flooding after heavy rain has become a common occurrence primarily due to the roadside drains becoming silted up and, in some cases, exasperated by burst water pipes. The PC have reported some of the notable areas such as outside Hucksters Cottage and on the road between Withington and Upton Magna. Shropshire council have taken action and we will see if the situation improves this winter.

HGV & Large Agricultural Vehicles

The number and size of HGV's has always been a problem for the Parish in terms of the safety of other road users and the damage they cause to the roads and verges. The majority of HGV's deliver to CJ Wildlife. The PC have worked with CJ Wildlife and Shropshire Roads Department to try and address the problem which has resulted in a reduction of the number of HGV's passing through the village.

We have also seen a significant increase in the number of very large agricultural vehicles in our area which has resulted in damage to roads and verges as well as large deposits of mud on the roads. These appear to belong to contractors working for local farmers over a short but intense period. Whilst we live in a rural community and should expect agricultural traffic and the noise/smells etc associated with farming we do expect the contractors to keep the roads clear and respect our environment.

The problem is common to most rural parishes and in March this year Shropshire Council set up the Agricultural Reference Group, of which our Clerk is a member, with the aim of

“Looking into how agricultural issues, including Traffic, impact rural communities”

They plan to liaise with the Police and the NFU to increase awareness of the issues related to rural roads and minimise damage caused by agricultural and HGV's. Our Clerk will provide updates on progress at future PC meetings.

Crime.

We are fortunate to live in what the Police class as a low crime area.

In March this year the West Midlands Police launched their Local Policing Charter and consulted with parish/town councils to identify their three top concerns. Your PC stated that the key issues for the parish are

1. Fly tipping
2. HGV's ignoring warning signs and driving down inappropriate roads/lanes
3. Drivers of large agricultural vehicles using mobile phones

Based upon the collated responses the Police intend to develop a plan for their Safer Neighbourhood Team to spend appropriate time with each Parish to address the concerns. We will provide updates at the PC meeting on progress.

We do already receive regular incident reports from the Police for parishes in Shropshire together with suggestion on how to reduce the risk of crime however we do need a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator for our Parish so if anyone is interested, please contact our Clerk or myself.

Finally.

- I wish to thank my fellow Parish Councillors and our Clerk for their efforts and support over the last 18 months.
- Members of the Village Green Committee for ensuring that our village green continues to be maintained and improved to the benefit of all Parishioners. Parishioners are reminded that the work of the Committee is funded by charitable donations and not from the village precept and welcome donations from new members of "the Friends of the Village Green" to support this important village asset.

2021/G Public Forum

Report from Cllr Lezley Picton Attached

There have been several new villagers and unfortunately there are no copies left of the Parish Plan. **Action:** Clerk to put together a "welcome" leaflet for new villagers

There is a new estate manager for the Sundorne Estate. **Action:** Clerk to invite manager to Parish Council meeting on 3rd November.

Concerns were raised regarding the spraying of crops in fields next to homes. **Action:** Clerk to find out what the protocol is for spraying crops.

Ron Lucas was thanked for keeping the Village Green well-manicured.

Jon Scutt was thanked for organising various events during the Covid Lockdown

2021/H Date of next Annual Village Meeting 4th May 2022

Closure of meeting.