

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT & SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2023/4

Chairman's Report

After much planning and consultation, the play park and outdoor fitness facilities have been completed and should be enjoyed by all ages for many years to come. These were only possible with the Parish Council earmarking reserves from CIL, ECDC Rural Grant and Precept monies, together with grants from the Thalia WB Community Fund (£39800) and the Mick George Community Fund (£14000), and Parish Council third party contributions (£4378 and £1563). (Total scheme £65357 incl signs). The opening of the play park was part of the "Spring Fling" event, being combined with the Easter egg hunt organised by the newly formed Witcham Events Committee and a drop-in event organised by the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. A special thanks to Julie Bibby who formally opened the play park.

Julie's father was instrumental in acquiring the recreation ground for the village and Julie, together with her family, have been involved with its upkeep and improvements since then; donating and planting trees, and also donating and planting up the garden at the end of the Village Hall roadway around the Coronation bench, which was donated by the Village Hall.

Julie retired from the Parish Council last year after serving many years as a Councillor and as Parish Clerk prior to this. We will all miss her input and her knowledge of the village history. George Byrne is a welcome addition to the Council and has filled the outstanding vacancy.



Credit: Photos courtesy Jane Herbert, Thank you

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has overseen the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Design Code. The next stages will be to analyse the results from the questionnaire, apply for a further grant, write up the plan, put it out for consultation and referendum and, get it accepted by ECDC. If all goes well it should be completed early next year and will fix the planning wishes of the village.

The Witcham Events Committee has been formed by volunteers from the village to predominantly run the Peashoot but to also arrange other social events throughout the year.

The Christmas tree lighting event and the Easter egg hunt were well attended and enjoyed by all.

The Speedwatch scheme is shortly to be resurrected with a new team of volunteers coming forward to be trained. They will be able to use the data collected by the speed activated camera to do more targeted monitoring. If you are interested in joining, please do contact george.byrne@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

A few of the trees around the recreation ground will be trimmed back to prevent them impairing the free flow of traffic along High Street and Martins Lane.

CCC has some improvement plans are in place to update the streetlighting to LED and undertake work to tidy Byway 12 (Wardy Hill Drove), and resurface the footpath along The Slade.

Sutton GP Surgery is to remain open, with the purchase of the property and a retrofit.

Sutton Fire Station is in danger of closing due to a lack of volunteers.

Thanks to everyone for maintaining the community spirit making Witcham a good place to live, particularly all volunteers of the Witcham Events Committee, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, the litter pickers, those keeping books at the bus shelter tidy and the editor of What's On.

Special thanks to all the members on the council, the County and District Councillors Lorna and Mark, and our Parish Clerk, Sue. Our contact details are at the end of this report, please feel free to attend our meetings and/or contact us with any comments or ideas you may have to benefit the village.

M Housden

Chairman Witcham Parish Council

TRAFFIC SPEED MONITORING

The mobile vehicle activated camera (MVAC) is periodically moved between five locations, but the roads around the crossroads are monitored more often because these are deemed the high-risk area and the presence of the camera does make people slow down.

Data has been collected for three years and is consistent with the highest speeds being recorded along The Slade coming into (60mph) or out of the village (55mph) and Martins Lane alongside the recreation ground (70mph!).

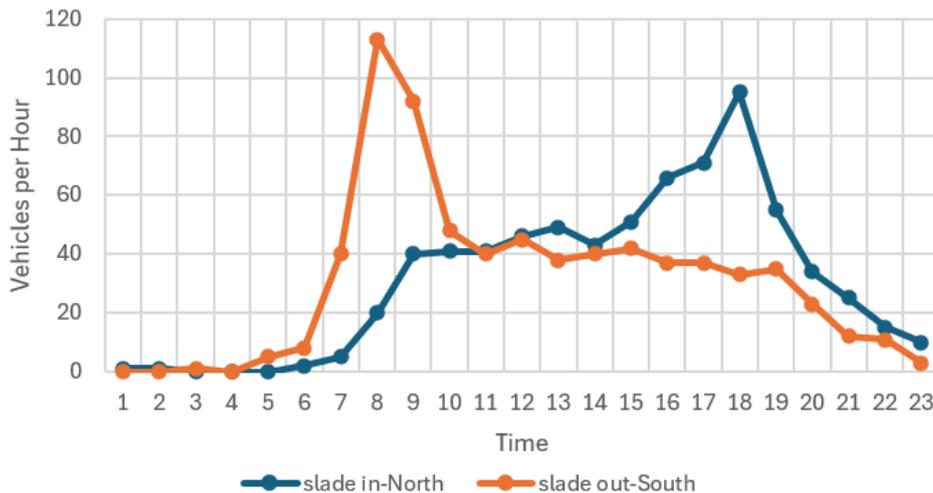
A summary of the data is presented in the table below.

Position	Duration of Test (weeks)	Vehicle Count										Speed				Speeders	
		Average 7 Day Total	Daily Average		Highest Daily#		Highest Hourly #				Average (mph)	Highest			Count (%)	Average (mph)	
			5 day	7 day	Count	Day	am		pm			Speed (mph)	Day	Time			
							Count	Time	Count	Time							
1 The Slade - into village. Heading North	42	4512	688	634	1260	Tues	190	1000-1100	142	1700-1800	27.1	60	Fri	1925	24.6	33.3	
5 Martins Lane-out of village,Heading North	17	3314	522	466	683	Fri	128	0800-0900	84	1600-1700	26.8	55	Sun	1930	25.3	33.7	
4 Martins Lane-into village. Heading South	15	2298	339	305	448	Fri	98	0800-0900	40	1500-1600	24.3	45	Mon	0805	7.6	32.7	
3 Martins Lane - green towards cross road. Heading South	49	3423	557	498	1423	Wed	365	0800-0900	110	1600-1700	26.6	70	Thurs	0655	24.0	33.6	
2 The Slade -out of village. Heading South	38	3878	597	543	1110	Fri	153	1000-1100	128	1200-1300	25.0	55	Thurs	2150	13.9	33.3	

= Increased due to A142 being closed due to accidents

A lot of the traffic is a result of vehicles avoiding the hold ups on the A142 before the Sutton roundabout during peak periods with highest volumes through the village in the morning heading towards Witcham Toll and from there in the afternoon.

Vehicle Hourly Volumes



WITCHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

We have a scheme running in all areas of the village apart from Westway Place which needs a co-ordinator. This is not an involved or time-consuming job. If you are interested in volunteering, which would be much appreciated, please contact the Secretary of the East Cambs Neighbourhood Watch Association - email: kevin.g.evans@ntlworld.com and let me know: jane.lucas@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk. Thank you.

If you signed up when the scheme started in 2018, or you are new to the village and want to join our scheme, you can now join online: www.ourwatchmember.org.uk Follow the link 'click here to join Neighbourhood Watch', enter your details and join. You'll be asked to submit a verification code sent to your email. Put in your details, choose who you want to receive information from, create a password and then your registration is complete. Once registered you'll see the schemes available and can join the one for your address. If you have any problems please send a message to our scheme email: witchamnhw@gmail.com giving your address and your street co-ordinator will get in touch with you.

If you don't have internet access call in to see me at 8 The Orchards and I can put you in touch with your street co-ordinator.

Jane Lucas

Village Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator

BEST KEPT GARDENS

Unfortunately last year there was very little interest from residents to take part and this annual event is no longer viable. The Council has decided not to arrange for judging this year but does warmly welcome alternative ideas from residents to match the changing desires of the community.

FOOTPATH (PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY) OR CYCLEWAY PROBLEMS

Report any issues to Cambridgeshire County Council by using the link below:

<https://highwaysreporting.cambridgeshire.gov.uk>

This will take you to an interactive map. Zoom in and pinpoint where the problem is.

A text box will appear to complete which requires you to 'Select a problem type'.

If a footpath issue choose 'Public Rights of Way'.

If a cycleway issue the problem will probably be covered either by 'roads and pavement surfaces' or 'grass, hedges, trees, weeds'.

Jane Lucas

Parish Councillor - Public Rights of Way Representative

Witcham Parish Council
SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS
YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

Year 2022/23	RECEIPTS	Year 2023/24
£		£
16000	Precept	16500
1087	RSPB Rent and Electricity Wayleaves	1121
240	Cemetery	385
8497	ECDC CIL money	6552
100	Donations: Ely Cricket	400
3475	Locality Grant - Neighbourhood Plan	1633
0	Cambs Foundation Fund - Thalia WB Community Fund	39800
0	Misc (IONOS Refund)	37
116	Interest	1061
1161	VAT re-claimed	1634
30676	TOTAL RECEIPTS	69124
PAYMENTS		
8143	Staff costs	12238
	Admin:	
495	Insurance	525
0	External Audit	210
75	Internal Audit	95
1598	Gen Admin - toners, stationery, postage, tel, training, travel, IT etc	2519
470	Subscriptions	514
320	Hire of meeting venues	260
30	Chairman's Allowance (RBL Wreath)	30
1211	Grounds & Cemetery, equipment, etc	784
2526	Village grass cutting/maintenance	2984
132	Street Lighting Energy and Maintenance	152
541	LGA72 S142: What's On, website	476
50	LGA72 S.137	0
3460	Neighbourhood Plan	1913
955	Play/Fitness Project Recreation Ground	45337
1634	VAT for year	9672
21640	TOTAL PAYMENTS	77708
Receipts and Payments Book:		
51138	Balance carried forward from previous year	60174
30676	Add Receipts	69124
-21640	Less Payments	-77708
60174	Balance at 31 March (to carry forward to new year)	51590
Bank Reconciliation:		
1635	Current Account at 31 March	1355
58673	Add Deposit A/cs	52287
60308	Total	53642
-134	Less unrepresented cheques	-2052
60174		51590

2023/4 ACCOUNTS AND 2024/5 PRECEPT

The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the Unaudited Annual Return for 2023/4 will be issued shortly. The Precept for 2023/24 is £18,500

In 2023/4 we have

- Held 10 monthly meetings of the Parish Council plus 1 additional meeting to deal with progressing play and Neighbourhood Plan projects.
- Provided and maintained recreation ground and children's play areas, notably completed Phases 1 and 2 - Children's playpark and new safety surfacing, and chains and seats for large swings together with 5 new outdoor fitness items.
- Supported Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, attending their meetings and helping with financial support via Locality and AECOM grant schemes.
- Considered and commented on 3 new planning applications plus numerous amendments, variations and Discharges of Consents, together with 6 applications for tree works.
- Continued to support the retention of GP services at Sutton and pleased to learn the building is to be purchased and retrofit.
- Arranged independent safety inspection of memorial stones at cemetery. Some had to be laid down and we will work with families for re-erection.
- Consented to a new park bench being at the entrance on to the recreation ground from Village Hall Committee, commemorating the Coronation of King Charles III on 6 May 2023, and accepted responsibility for future maintenance etc
- Consented to City of Ely Cricket Club 3rd team using recreation ground for matches, for which a donation towards grounds maintenance was received.
- Monitored data from the Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (rotated over 5 sites at The Slade and Martins Lane).
- Maintained street lights (No.5) owned by the Parish Council.
- Supported continuation of the monthly 'What's On in Witcham' and increased the Council's contribution for printing (LGA 1972s.142)
- Produced and circulated to each householder, Parish Council Newsletters and the Council's Annual Report. Maintained Council website for Agendas, Minutes and items of general interest to the village.
- Reported issues to appropriate local authorities/bodies, eg highways including public rights of way, lighting etc
- Engaged with District Council representatives regarding antisocial driving behaviours at Elean Business Park
- Reviewed our Policies and Procedures.



**Please help keep Witcham clean and tidy
Use the litter bins**

In 2024/5 we will

- Provide opportunity and encourage people to take an interest in community life in Witcham – we ask residents to please do your best to support the village clubs and Witcham Village Hall.
- Maintain the recreation ground and children's play areas. Promote the health and well-being of residents.
- Maintain the cemetery.
- Continue working with the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.
- Endeavour to ensure there is a bus service for Witcham residents. Residents are encouraged to use the Ely Zipper service as much as possible to ensure continuity for the future.
- Work with ECDC, CCC, landowners and all interested parties to ensure access to the network of public rights of ways in the parish.
- Continue to engage with the community and regularly report on the Council's activities; to produce and circulate newsletters to each home and an Annual Report.
- Provide website and update with Council agendas, minutes and news.
- Continue to support the publication of "What's on in Witcham" by meeting printing costs and sharing news from the Council in between its normal newsletters.
- Work in partnership with other bodies and agencies, and where possible improve facilities and enhance the quality of life for people in Witcham.
- Participate in and respond to consultation processes at national and local level
- Training: Provide opportunities for continued development and knowledge for all Councillors and the Clerk/RFO

ABOUT WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

- Comprises 6 Councillors. 4-year term of office, representing an electorate of 372 (Jan23)
- One employee - Part-time Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer
- Internal Auditor – LGS Services. External Auditor - PKF Littlejohn
- Meets normally on second Wednesday of the month except August and December – dates published on village noticeboard and website, together with agendas and minutes. Additional meetings are held for planning applications as required. There is provision at each meeting for people to attend to speak to Councillors on items on the agenda.
- The Council is always keen to involve people in community life in Witcham and will enlist the help and support of members of the community to serve on working parties for some projects which are reported back to the Council. There is currently no committee system.
- The Council carries out its functions financed by the Precept which is collected by the District Council through the Council Tax system. Other income is limited but does include an income from the RSPB in respect of rent on droves situated on the Ouse Washes. Grant aid is obtained to fund any projects from a number of different organisations as and when possible.
- Councillors have opted not to claim the Parish Basic Allowance for elected Councillors.

The Parish Council is responsible for

- approx 9.5 acres droves on the Ouse Washes
- recreation ground at High Street
- cemetery at Mepal Road
- infant play area and facilities for older children and outdoor fitness equipment at the recreation ground
- seats at recreation ground and cemetery
- 5 street lights (upgraded to LED 2021) (remainder adopted by CCC)
- bus shelter at High Street
- noticeboards at bus shelter Silver Street/The Slade and cemetery
- the Interpretation board at Silver Street
- village sign at The Slade
- signage on roadway to Village Hall,

- cycle rack near Village Hall,
- 3 salt bins
- 6 dog bins
- 1 mobile vehicle activated speed sign (MVAS)
- red telephone kiosk conservation area (adopted 2010) (No longer in service)

Adult and older children play and fitness equipment



When out with your dog, by the highway or on the network of droves/public rights of way, please be considerate and use the dog bins, or take home for the black refuse bag.

CONTACT DETAILS 2023/4

Council meetings are open to the public and residents are welcome to come along to meetings and to play an active role in the community. Your views and concerns are welcome, please address to the Parish Clerk in the first instance and it will be passed on at the next meeting of the Council as appropriate: clerk@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk

<p>CHAIRMAN Mick Housden</p>	<p>mick.housden@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk</p>	<p>17 The Slade Witcham Ely CB6 2LA <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Recreation Ground and Play Areas, CAPALC, Member Play and Fitness Project Working Party & Neighbourhood Plan Working Group</i></p>
<p>VICE-CHAIRMAN Karl Mackender</p>	<p>karl.mackender@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk</p>	<p>19 High Street Witcham Ely CB6 2LQ <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, CAPALC, Member Play and Fitness Project Working Party</i></p>
<p>George Byrne</p>	<p>george.byrne@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk</p>	<p>Robins, Mepal Road Witcham Ely CB6 2AE <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery,</i></p>
<p>Laura Holdaway</p>	<p>laura.holdaway@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk</p>	<p>Witcham House Headleys Lane Witcham Ely CB6 2LH <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Member Play and Fitness Project Working Party</i></p>
<p>Jane Lucas</p>	<p>jane.lucas@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk</p>	<p>8 The Orchards Witcham Ely CB6 2LR <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Public Rights of Way, Member of Neighbourhood Plan Working Group & Neighbourhood Watch Liaison.</i></p>
<p>Sally Wilkin</p>	<p>sally.wilkin@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk</p>	<p>Witcham Equestrian Centre Mepal Road Witcham Ely CB6 2LD <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Public Rights of Way. Village Hall Trustee</i></p>