

# WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL



## ANNUAL REPORT & SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2020/21

Thankfully, we are near the end of the pandemic and we can get back to some form of normality. Few would have believed that something would have affected us all so much and for so long. The speedy development of the vaccines and inoculation schedule has thankfully cut the infection rates and deaths from this terrible virus. However, we cannot become complacent and I am sure social distancing and masks will still be in place for a while.

The lock down has prevented many things that were routine in the village from taking place such as; the Peashoot, fetes, bowls, cricket, bridge, judo, Pilates, church services, use of the village hall and pub etc. Hopefully, the ease of restrictions will mean that these events can get back up and running and see face to face events being supported again.

Villagers built on the strong community spirit by offering assistance where required. The book exchange in the bus shelter is still proving popular.

Parish Council Meetings have been held remotely using Zoom.

- The old phone box has been repainted and looks like new. We will be looking for ideas for its future use. Donations from villagers made this possible.
- Following an inspection by the Tree Officer, some of the trees around the green were found to be unsafe and had to be removed immediately. Others have had their life extended by trimming, but will also require replacing eventually. Replacement trees will be planted towards the end of the year.  
Plans are at an early stage to decide on locations, how many and what species. Donations have also been received for this work. If anybody feels they would like to donate a tree please get in touch.
- An interactive speed indicator sign has been in place for a few weeks and will be moved to 5 locations within the village. Data will be collected to measure volume of traffic, speed and time. This will help identify problem times and will be passed on to the Speedwatch team and police. Initial data shows around 25% of the 500 vehicles passing through the village each day are speeding. Fundraising by the Equestrian Centre helped with the funding for this.
- A questionnaire was distributed to seek ideas of what people wanted within the children's play area. Unfortunately, progress has been delayed due to the Covid restrictions and the project will be resumed as soon as is possible.

- Organised litter picks were another casualty of the restrictions, but several villagers have been tidying up as they go for walks. Hopefully, an organised event can be arranged shortly.
- No new cemetery land available so now only able to offer plots for ashes in the garden of remembrance.
- Persistent dog fouling persists and East Cambs are keen to hear of offenders. Problems should be reported to the District Council immediately:  
<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/dogs/dog-fouling-complaint>

Thanks to everyone for making Witcham a good place to live, my fellow councillors, County Councillor (Lorna Dupre), District Councillor (Mark Inskip) and particularly Sue Bell our hard working Parish Clerk

M Housden  
Chairman Witcham Parish Council

### **WITCHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

The Neighbourhood Watch have had a very quiet year, possibly because a lot more people have been at home during the day! Witcham continues to be a safe, friendly, caring place to live and hopefully the greater community spirit, that has been evident during this current pandemic, will continue as things start to open up slowly and gradually. If you are not part of Witcham Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and would like to join please contact the team of street co-ordinators on [witchamnhw@gmail.com](mailto:witchamnhw@gmail.com) and someone will get back to you.

Jane Lucas - NHW Co-ordinator

### **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY – DROVES AND CYCLEWAYS**

Footpaths and cycleways continue to be well used even as the current lockdown is slowly lifted and it is great to be able to walk or cycle to Sutton and have a path right up to the carpark of the new CO-OP store. The droves have been muddy and very difficult to walk on over winter but hopefully, with the warmer weather, these should improve and become more passable. If you have any issues with the footpaths eg encroaching vegetation, broken signs, etc you can report them on the County Council website. They have a straightforward, interactive map. Go to [cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://cambridgeshire.gov.uk) then **report a highways fault online**. This will take you to the interactive map. **Zoom in a long way** to the site of the problem and **click to 'pin' the spot**. You can then complete the **'Report a Problem'** pop-up box which appears. You'll get an email confirmation and a progress report. The more people that take the time to do this the better our village environment will be for everyone so thanks in advance.

Jane Lucas - Parish Councillor – Public Rights of Way

### **Help keep Witcham clean and tidy**

**When out with your dog, please be considerate and use the dog bins or take home for the black bag**

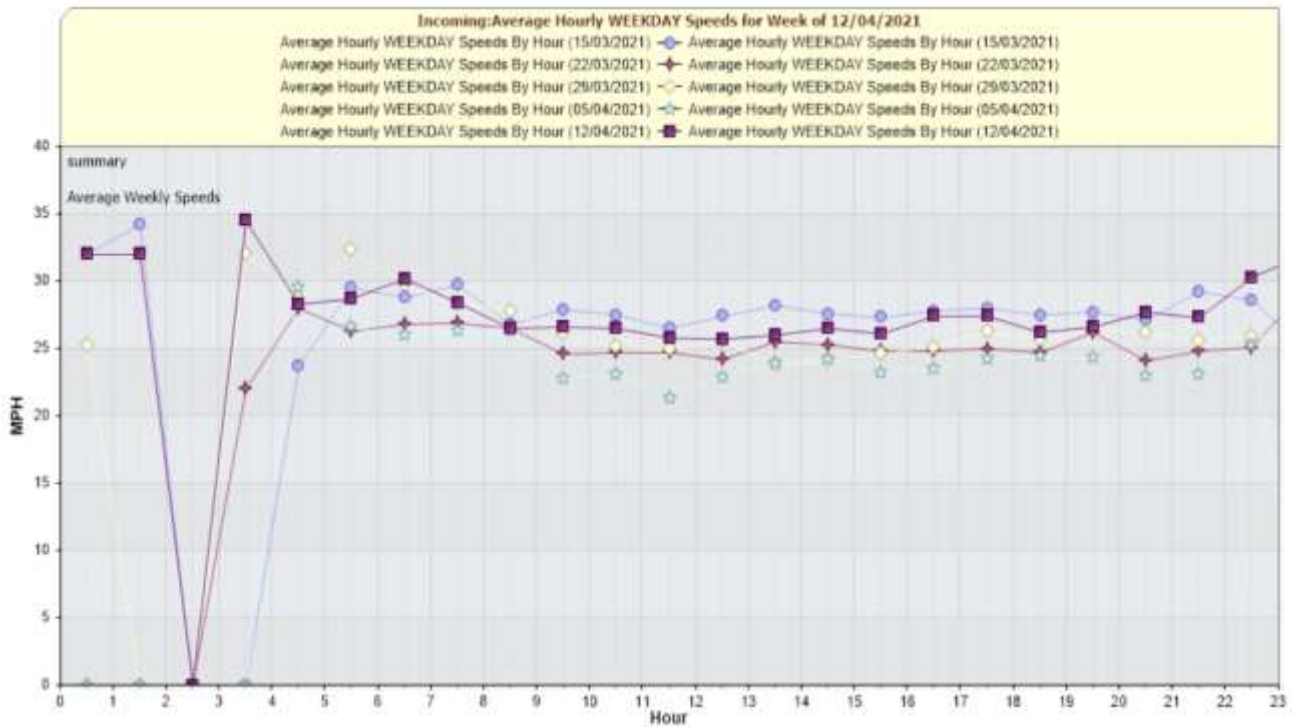
**Dogs are never permitted on the recreation ground, even when on a leash**

# TRAFFIC SPEED MONITORING

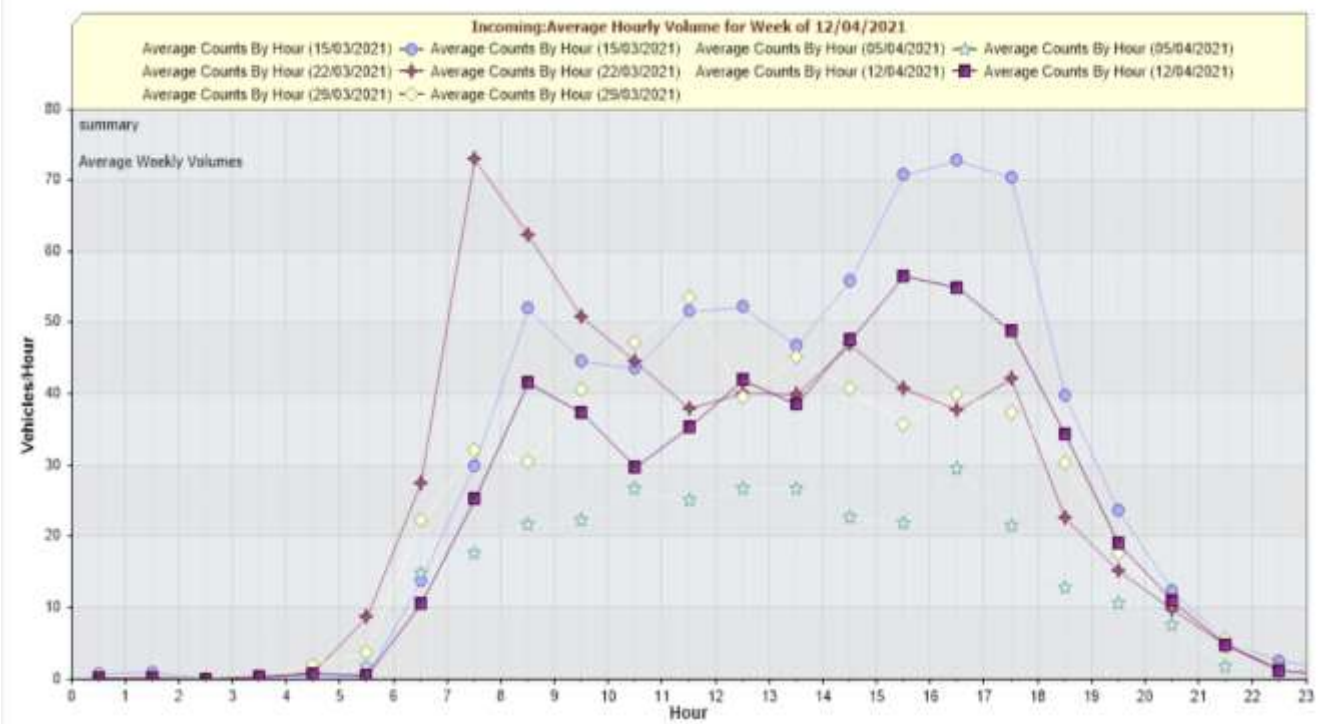
## Overall summary

15/03/2021	Position 1- The Slade into the village. Heading North
22/03/2021	Position 2- The Slade out of the village. Heading South
29/03/2021	Position 3- Martins Lane -Green, Heading South
05/04/2021	Position 4- Martins Lane -into village, Heading South
12/04/2021	Position 5- Martins Lane -out of village, Heading North

## Average Speeds:



## Average Volumes:



## **BEST KEPT GARDEN COMPETITION**

Sadly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Best Kept Garden Competition had to be cancelled for 2020. Arrangements for 2021 are under review and will depend on the outcome of restrictions under Covid-19.

## **NEW WEBSITE**

Finishing touches to the new website are currently being made. Agendas, Minutes, Finance and News will be published each month. We expect to go live in the next month - further details to follow in next newsletter. Dedicated emails are also being set up.

## **REFURBISHMENT COMPLETED AUTUMN 2020**



## **WITCHAM RECREATION GROUND – CHILDREN’S PLAY FACILITIES**

Thank you to all residents who took the time to respond to the playground questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire have been published on the Parish Council website but, in summary, the majority were in favour of looking at widening the choice of equipment to cater for multi-generations and of looking to use more sustainable products. Residents were also keen on a community facility such as a herb garden or similar.

The next step is to ask a company to review the survey results and produce some plans showing us some options for replacement equipment. This stage has unfortunately been delayed due to lockdown but we hope to resume this Summer. Once we have some ideas, these will be shared with residents with an opportunity for further input. Once we have an agreed plan, we can then actively seek funding support/grants.

Laura Holdaway – Councillor for Play Project

## SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021

Year 2019/20		Year 2020/21
	<b>RECEIPTS</b>	
£		£
14400	Precept	15300
1017	RSPB Rent and Electricity Wayleaves	1017
163	Cemetery	536
6535	ECDC CIL money	0
0	Patsy's fund donation Speed Signs	875
0	Village Green trees and kiosk refurb donations	800
24	Interest	13
1991	VAT re-claimed	1031
<b>24132</b>	<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>19572</b>
	<b>PAYMENTS</b>	
5067	Staff costs	5214
	Admin:	
448	Insurance	465
200	External Audit	0
60	Internal Audit	70
	Gen Admin - toners, stationery, postage, tel, training,	
467	travel etc	1214
380	Subscriptions	421
19	Bank Fees (Deposit Box)	14
290	Hire of meeting venues	0
47	Chairman's Allowance	30
200	Polling Fees	0
	Grounds & Cemetery, equipment, etc (incl 2020 tree works)	
9680	Kiosk refurbishment (2020)	990
		1485
2372	Village grass cutting/maintenance	2372
450	Grass cutting recreation ground (Cricket Club)	450
675	Street Lighting Energy and Maintenance	439
0	Speed signs – MVAS	3350
319	LGA72 S142: What's On, website, BKG	212
0	LGA72 S.137	0
1031	VAT for year*	1588
<b>21707</b>	<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>18314</b>
	<b>Receipts and Payments Book:</b>	
43145	Balance carried forward from previous year	45570
24132	Add Receipts	19572
-21707	Less Payments	-18314
<b>45570</b>	Balance at 31 March, to carry forward to new year	<b>46828</b>

<b>Bank Reconciliation:</b>		
3548	Current Account at 31 March	7294
<u>43103</u>	Add Deposit A/cs	<u>43916</u>
46651	Total	51210
<u>-1080</u>	Less unrepresented cheques	<u>-4382</u>
<u><b>45570.49</b></u>		<u><b>46828</b></u>

## **2020/21 ACCOUNTS AND 2021/22 PRECEPT**

The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the Unaudited Annual Return for 20220/21 will be issued shortly. The Precept for 2021/22 is £15,300.

In 2020/21 we have

- Held a meeting of the Parish Council each month, remote by Zoom including facilitating the Annual Parish Meeting which had to be deferred until September in accordance with advice pertaining to Covid-19 restrictions.
- Considered and commented on 11 planning applications, plus applications for tree works in the conservation area.
- Provided and maintained recreation ground and children's play areas.
- Undertaken a village survey (published with Autumn Newsletter to each house) as part of the consultation process for the refurbishment of play facilities at the recreation ground/Village Green.
- Engaged with consultants for the upgrading of the Parish Council website.
- Installed Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (5 operation points for rotation).
- Refurbished red telephone box in conservation area.
- Maintained street lights (No.5) owned by the Parish Council.
- Training: Clerk – CAPALC/SLCC seminars; Councillors - New Councillor Training Day.
- Consultee on various strategies and policies affecting the area, including County and District Councils.
- Produced and circulated to each householder, Parish Council Newsletters and the Council's Annual Report.
- Provide and maintain Parish Council website [www.witcham.org.uk](http://www.witcham.org.uk)
- Reported issues to appropriate local authorities/bodies, eg highways, street lighting, dog fouling etc.
- Reviewed and developed Policies and Procedures, including covering operations under Covid-19 restrictions.

In 2021/22 we will

- Continue to maintain the recreation ground and children's play areas, and promote the health and well-being of parishioners. This will include progressing the refurbishment of play facilities.
- Provide opportunity and encourage people to take an interest in community life in Witcham – please do your best to support the village clubs and Witcham Village Hall.
- Maintain the cemetery. Currently we are unable to release any further plots. We do have plenty of space in the Garden of Remembrance. We are not able to get land for an extension to existing site.
- Work with CCC to ensure the availability of public transport to serve the village; we ask residents to use the Ely Zipper service as much as possible to ensure the future of a bus service for Witcham.
- Continue to work with ECDC, CCC, landowners and all interested parties on the future management of the network of the public rights of ways in the parish.
- Continue to engage with the community and regularly report on the Council's activities, namely to produce and circulate newsletters to each home and an Annual Report.
- Ensure the website is up-dated with Council agendas, minutes and news.
- 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, including the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan and updates to SPDs, and CCC Waste and Mineral Development Plan.
- Training: continued development and knowledge for Clerk and New Councillor Training workshops.

## ABOUT WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

- Comprises 6 Councillors. Next elections May 2023. 4-year term of office, representing an electorate of 355.
  - Employs - Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer.
  - Internal Auditor – Mr M Williamson. External Auditor - PKF Littlejohn
  - Meets normally on second Wednesday of the month except August and December – dates published on village noticeboard and [www.witcham.org.uk](http://www.witcham.org.uk) together with agendas and minutes. Additional meetings are held for planning applications as required.
  - 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 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.
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- **The Parish Council is responsible for**
    - approx 9.5 acres droves on Ouse Washes, and recreation ground at High Street
    - cemetery at Mepal Road
    - infant play area and facilities for older children at recreation ground
    - seats at recreation ground and cemetery
    - 5 street lights (remainder adopted by CCC)
    - bus shelter
    - 2 noticeboards, Interpretation board
    - village sign
    - 3 salt bins, 4 dog bins
    - Red telephone kiosk conservation area (adopted 2010) (No longer in service)



## COUNCILLOR CONTACT DETAILS & RESPONSIBILITIES

<p><b>CHAIRMAN</b> Mick Housden</p>	<p>01353 777181</p>	<p>17 The Slade Witcham Ely CB6 2LA <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Recreation Ground and Play Areas, CAPALC</i></p>
<p><b>VICE-CHAIRMAN</b> Karl Mackender</p>	<p>01353 777640</p>	<p>19 High Street Witcham Ely CB6 2LQ <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery</i></p>
<p>Julia Bibby</p>	<p>01353 777267</p>	<p>26 Martins Lane Witcham Ely CB6 2LB <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Best Kept Garden Competition</i></p>
<p>Laura Holdaway</p>	<p>01353 774717</p>	<p>Witcham House Headleys Lane Witcham Ely CB6 2LH <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery Playground Project</i></p>
<p>Jane Lucas</p>	<p>01353 777548</p>	<p>8 The Orchards Witcham Ely CB6 2LR <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Public Rights of Way, Neighbourhood Watch Liaison</i></p>
<p>Sally Wilkin</p>	<p>01353 777588</p>	<p>Witcham Equestrian Centre Mepal Road Witcham Ely CB6 2LD <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery</i></p>

Sue Bell Clerk/RFO  
17 Astley Close Sutton Ely Cambs CB6 2PG  
[witchamparishc@btinternet.com](mailto:witchamparishc@btinternet.com)