

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT & SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2021/2

As life began to get back to normal, it was good last June to finally return to the village hall for our regular face to face meetings, having had over a year using Zoom for remote monthly meetings.

Communications are vital for the council to fulfil its duties to you and we now have a new website and dedicated email addresses which should assist with this. We conducted a thorough consultation regarding the plans to update the play park equipment and it was good to have both well attended meetings and your input into what you want. Grants for the funding for this are at an early stage but we hope to this underway later in the year.

Some trees have been replaced on the village green and more are planned to be planted later in the year. The Tree Officer has made recommendations for their locations and species. A big thanks to those of you that have already donated trees, money, or your time to help plant these. Anyone wanting to help with the next phase, please do get in touch-

The anti-social driving at the Elean Business Park had been a big problem, particularly over the Xmas holiday period. Following complaints to the police by villagers and councillors the offenders were issued warnings, and it appears to have stopped.

The mobile vehicle activated signs do appear to be having a positive impact in slowing drivers down. A monthly summary of data collected for each passing vehicle is forwarded to the speed watch coordinator and assists in doing targeted campaigns to enforce the limit. This summary will also be added to our website and is given later.

Both indoor and outdoor events are back and it will be good to see the cricketers back on the green in the summer. Unfortunately, the 50th anniversary pea shoot has been postponed again and we all look forward to it in 2023.

A recent litter pick resulted in less collectable rubbish than in previous years. This is hopefully a result of people disposing of the rubbish responsibly but is also due to a dedicated few who continue to pick it up whilst out on walks throughout the village.

Please do not hesitate to contact any of us with any comments or ideas you may have for improving our village.

Thanks to everyone for maintaining the community spirit and for making Witcham an enviable place to live.

A special thanks to all the litter pickers, my fellow councillors, County Councillor (Lorna Dupre), District Councillor (Mark Inskip) and particularly Sue Bell our hardworking Parish Clerk who filters and summarises the mountain of correspondences received and executes the decisions of the Council.

M Housden - Chairman Witcham Parish Council

**Dogs are not permitted on the recreation ground/village green,
including the footway that crosses the green from high street to village hall,
and the roadway up to the village hall.**

Co-operation from dog-owners is very much appreciated by us all

WITCHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

We are lucky to live in a small, friendly, safe village where people look out for their neighbours. Covid-19 may mean there are more people in the village working from home and hopefully, with many more of us out and about now, we can continue to be vigilant to protect each other. If you have not joined our Neighbourhood Watch scheme please contact us on: witchamnhw@gmail.com. You would be most welcome.

Our street co-ordinators are:

High Street - Allistair Berry

The Slade - Mick Housden

Martins Lane - Rachel Cross

Silver Street - Kirsty Hazlewood/Jane Lucas

Westway Place - Roxy Stephens

The Orchards - Laura Rutterford.

There has been an increase in phishing emails and texts around Covid, tapping into people's fears and concerns. If you get a suspicious email you can forward it to: report@phishing.gov.uk. You will get a reply and can access some good advice. There is also a Which website that gives warnings of such scams. You can sign up for these at: <https://campaigns.which.co.uk/scams-alert-service/#top>. If you have any concerns about activities in the village please speak to your street coordinator or contact us on the above email.

If you have any serious concerns please call 101 or 999 for emergencies.

Let's continue to work together to keep Witcham a safe, happy place to live.

Jane Lucas - NHW Co-ordinator

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND CYCLEWAY

Our network of public rights of way, which of course includes the green droves, continue to be enjoyed by residents. The A142 cycleway at Witcham Toll, linking with Sutton and Ely, are used by cyclists and walkers.

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 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

RECREATION GROUND - CYCLE RACK

We expect that the County Council will be installing a cycle rack beside the roadway to the village hall (near the pole/metal container) in the coming weeks to promote cycling. This is an initiative under the 'Emergency Action Travel Fund' and the equipment will be handed over to the Parish Council for ownership and future maintenance in due course.

TRAFFIC SPEED MONITORING

The mobile vehicle activated sign (camera) is periodically moved between the current five locations and we plan to add two more, one in High Street and the other in Silver Street.

Data has been collected for just over a year. The highest speeds and highest average speeds have been recorded along The Slade (coming north into the village) and adjacent to the village green on Martins Lane (heading south towards The Slade). The highest being double the 30mph limit!

The highest volumes of traffic in the morning are heading south towards Witcham Toll (between 0800 & 0900) and in the afternoon heading north from Witcham Toll (between 1600 & 1800.)

The data is distorted because it is only a snapshot of events when the camera is in place at the specific location for a specific period and is affected by vehicles slowing down for the camera or by external events such as delays on the A142 resulting in more traffic coming through the village. However, it clearly shows that a lot of the traffic is not generated from the village itself but by vehicles travelling to or from Mepal or Wardy Hill.

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

| Position | Vehicle Count | | | | | | | | Speed | | Speeders | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|-----|----------------|---------|-------|---------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| | Average 7 Day Total | Daily Average | | Highest Daily | | Highest Hourly | | | | Overall Average (mph) | Maximum Speed (mph) | Count (%) | Average Speeder (mph) |
| | | 5 day | 7 day | Count | Day | Count | Time | Count | Time | | | | |
| 1 The Slade - into village. Heading North | 4825 | 747 | 680 | 839 | Fri | 55 | 10-1100 | 91 | 17-1800 | 28 | 55 | 31 | 34 |
| 5 Martins Lane-out of village.Heading North | 3356 | 517 | 461 | 593 | Fri | 40 | 08-0900 | 61 | 16-1700 | 27 | 50 | 27 | 34 |
| 4 Martins Lane-into village. Heading South | 2219 | 340 | 305 | 384 | Fri | 38 | 08-0900 | 29 | 16-1700 | 24 | 40 | 6.6 | 33 |
| 3 Martins Lane - green towards cross road. Heading South | 3493 | 572 | 508 | 810 | Wed | 133 | 08-0900 | 53 | 12-1300 | 27 | 60 | 23 | 33 |
| 2 The Slade -out of village. Heading South | 4120 | 599 | 534 | 695 | Fri | 88.4 | 08-0900 | 46 | 14-1500 | 25 | 50 | 13 | 33 |

BEST KEPT GARDEN COMPETITION

Sadly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Best Kept Garden Competition had to be cancelled again for 2021. Arrangements for 2022 were discussed recently and it was agreed to leave it again this year. The Council would like to continue the competition another year and will review format and timings for visits by judges for 2023.

GETTING IN TOUCH

For regular updates, news, agendas and minutes and to engage with us on projects and share your thoughts, please visit our website and/or contact the Parish Clerk or have a chat with our Councillors. Contact details at the rear of this report.

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

WITCHAM RECREATION GROUND – CHILDREN’S PLAY FACILITIES

As residents are aware, the Parish Council has been undertaking an extensive consultation with residents in relation to plans to refurbish the play park equipment. The current equipment is now over 20 years old and is showing signs of wear and tear.

In September 2020 we issued a questionnaire seeking views on replacement equipment and facilities to suit all age groups. The result of the survey was published on our website and discussed at the Annual Meeting in April 2021. We have since obtained a number of example schemes from providers and put on two consultation meetings on 21 and 22 January 2022 where ideas were displayed and discussed. The Parish Council were delighted to see so many of you at the meetings and have considered and taken into account all feedback received.

There was overwhelming support for the Wicksteed scheme (with the suggestion that a train/tractor item was added to give some additional interest to younger children) and also for the idea of providing some adult leisure equipment. It is essential to maximise chances of funding success to show that any new equipment is open and available to as many residents as possible and, we hope, by incorporating some additional leisure equipment this will assist us to satisfy this requirement. Whilst there was some limited report for the timber option, it was generally recognised that this is more expensive and would require more maintenance.

The next stage in the process is to clear any procurement requirements with suppliers and then proceed to apply for funding support. The Parish Council is aiming to make the funding application in June this year and if successful this will enable us to proceed later in the year

Laura Holdaway – Councillor for Play Project

With generous donations we were able to plant 4 new trees on the recreation ground last Autumn: *Corylus colurna*, *Crataegus laevigata*, *Liquidamber styraciflua*, and *Prunus sargentii*.



2021/22 ACCOUNTS AND 2022/23 PRECEPT

The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the Unaudited Annual Return for 2021/22 will be issued shortly. The Precept for 2022/23 is £16,000

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS 31 March 2022

| Year 2020/21 | RECEIPTS | Year 2021/22 |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| £ | | £ |
| 15300 | Precept | 15300 |
| 1017 | RSPB Rent and Electricity Wayleaves | 1298 |
| 536 | Cemetery | 1030 |
| 0 | ECDC CIL money | 1339 |
| 875 | Patsy's fund donation Speed Signs | 0 |
| 800 | Village Green trees and kiosk refurb donations | 0 |
| 0 | Donations new trees (£479.60, village £40, and RBL £5) | 524 |
| 13 | Interest | 5 |
| 1031 | VAT re-claimed | 1588 |
| 19572 | TOTAL RECEIPTS | 21084 |
| PAYMENTS | | |
| 5214 | Staff costs | 7311 |
| | Admin: | |
| 465 | Insurance | 473 |
| 0 | External Audit | 0 |
| 70 | Internal Audit | 75 |
| 1214 | Gen Admin-stationery, postage, tel, training, travel, website .. | 1370 |
| 421 | Subscriptions | 444 |
| 14 | Bank Fees (Deposit Box) | 0 |
| 0 | Hire of meeting venues | 260 |
| 30 | Chairman's Allowance | 35 |
| 990 | Grounds & Cemetery, equipment, etc (incl 2020 tree works) | 692 |
| 1485 | Kiosk refurbishment (2020) | 0 |
| 2372 | Village grass cutting/maintenance | 2617 |
| 450 | Grass cutting recreation ground (Cricket Club) | 450 |
| 439 | Street Lighting Energy and Maintenance | 1535 |
| 3350 | Speed signs – MVAS | 0 |
| 212 | LGA72 S142: What's On, website, BKG | 242 |
| 0 | LGA72 S.137 | 110 |
| 1588 | VAT for year* | 1160 |
| 18314 | TOTAL PAYMENTS | 16774 |
| Receipts and Payments Book: | | |
| 45570 | Balance carried forward from previous year | 46828 |
| 19572 | Add Receipts | 21084 |
| -18314 | Less Payments | -16774 |
| 46828 | Balance at 31 March, to carry forward to new year | 51138 |
| Bank Reconciliation: | | |
| 7294 | Current Account at 31 March | 3776 |
| 43916 | Add Deposit A/cs | 47559 |
| 51210 | Total | 51335 |
| -4382 | Less unrepresented cheques | -197 |
| 46828 | | 51138 |

In 2021/22 we have

- Held a meeting of the Parish Council each month plus some additional meetings as required. Face to face meetings resumed in May 2021 following the ending of the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020.
- Engaged with residents regarding option to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. <https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework/neighbourhood-planning>
- Considered and commented on a larger than usual number of planning applications, including amendments/discharge of conditions, plus applications for tree works in the conservation area. The new website now provides a link to the ECDC site for residents to view all applications for development in the village <https://www.witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk/planning-applications>
- Provided and maintained recreation ground and children's play areas.
- Engaged with residents on plans for replacement play facilities including future management of the trees at the recreation ground.
- Commissioned new independent Parish Council website for agendas, minutes, finance reports, news in accordance with transparency requirements
- Monitored data from the Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (rotated over 5 operation points on the main road through the village - The Slade and Martins Lane). Data passed on to the Police and Speedwatch teams with a request that Speedwatch sessions be organised for the village in the very near future.
- Maintained street lights (No.5) owned by the Parish Council, including taking the opportunity to upgrade to LED lamps to significantly reduce energy costs in terms of units used.
- 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.
- Reported issues to appropriate local authorities/bodies, eg highways, lighting
- Reviewed and developed Policies and Procedures, including covering operations under any future Covid-19 restrictions.

In 2022/23 we will

- 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 recreation ground and children's play areas, and promote the health and well-being of parishioners. This will include progressing the refurbishment of play and fitness facilities over the coming months led by the Council's Working Party and in consultation with residents. Funding will be sought in the form of grants to support the reserves built up by the Council and monies received under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) raised by the District Council for current housing development in the village.
- Maintain the cemetery. Unfortunately to-date we have not been able to get land for an extension to existing site. We are unable to release any further plots. We do have spaces in the Garden of Remembrance.
- Work with CCC to ensure the availability of public transport to serve the village; we do encourage residents to use the Ely Zipper service as much as possible to ensure the future of a bus service for Witcham.
- 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
- Training: Provide opportunities for continued development and knowledge for all Councillors and the Clerk/RFO

ABOUT WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL

- Comprises 6 Councillors. Next elections May 2023. 4-year term of office, representing an electorate of 368 (Feb21)
- Employs – Part-time 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 website, 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 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 at 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, cemetery, and the Interpretation board at Silver Street
- village sign at The Slade
- signage roadway to village hall
- 3 salt bins, 6 dog bins
- mobile vehicle activated speed signs (MVAS)
- Red telephone kiosk conservation area (adopted 2010)
(No longer in service)



One of the four new trees planted last Autumn.

All are coming along nicely this Spring.

Next, renew some of our seats !

CONTACT DETAILS

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 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

COUNCILLOR CONTACT DETAILS & RESPONSIBILITIES 2021/22

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <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</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, Member Play and Fitness Project Working Party</i></p> |
| <p>Julia Bibby</p> | <p>julia.bibby@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk</p> | <p>26 Martins Lane Witcham Ely CB6 2LB <i>Responsibilities: Cemetery, Best Kept Garden Competition</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, Best Kept Garden Competition, 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</i></p> |

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. Dogs are never to be permitted on any area of the recreation ground, even when on a leash

Help Keep Witcham Tidy – Thank you