

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT & SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2024/5

Firstly, on behalf of the Council, I thank everyone for maintaining the community spirit and making Witcham a good place to live. Particularly, we are grateful to all those giving their time and skills for Speedwatch, the Neighbourhood Plan Group, the Witcham Events Committee, litterpicking, and to the editor of the community magazine "What's On in Witcham". Thanks also to Lorna and Mark, our County and District Councillors, for their support. My special thanks to all the members and the clerk of the Council. Our contact details are at the end of this report, please feel free to contact us with any comments or ideas you may have which would benefit the village. You are most welcome to attend our Council meetings and everyone is invited to the Annual Meeting of the Parish - Wednesday 30 April at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

It has been very pleasing for us to see the new playpark, goals and fitness equipment being regularly used and enjoyed by children, and adults alike.

The Speedwatch volunteers have been busy undertaking speed checks. There has been some reduction in speeding events through the village and this is also being reflected in the data we gather each month from the mobile vehicle activated speed equipment, which is rotated around sites on The Slade and Martins Lane. We can see that the average number of speeders for the various locations has dropped from around 25% to 15% since equipment was installed! Meetings have been held with Mepal Parish Council to discuss a joint approach to improve pedestrian safety and access between the two villages and to reduce the current 60mph limit.

The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has been overseeing the development of the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan. The Pre-Submission Draft Plan was issued for consultation December – February, and comments reviewed and amendments now made. The next steps are consultation by East Cambs District Council, the Independent Examination, the Parish Referendum and finally Adoption of the Plan. Updates on bus shelter noticeboard.

Volunteers on the community 'Witcham Events Committee' have increased, as have the number of events. Last year's Peashoot, Halloween and Christmas events were enjoyed by all. Bulbs were planted around the recreation ground and noticeboard, and these have given a colourful display this Spring. See "What's On" and noticeboards for further planned events.

We wish everyone a splendid summer and hope you enjoy the village amenities, including the lovely walks around Witcham and surrounding area on the public rights of way and cycleways.

M Housden

Chairman Witcham Parish Council

We are responsible for

- recreation ground at High Street, the cemetery at Mepal Road & approx 9.5 acres droves on the Ouse Washes.
- infant play area and facilities for older children and the outdoor fitness equipment at the recreation ground, together with benches at recreation ground and cemetery.
- bus shelter and red telephone kiosk in the conservation area, High Street.
- noticeboards at bus shelter, Silver Street/The Slade and the cemetery; village sign at The Slade, signage on roadway to Village Hall and the Interpretation board at Silver Street.
- cycle rack near Village Hall, 3 Salt bins, 6 dog bins, 5 Street lights,
- 1 mobile vehicle activated speed sign (MVAS) and Speedwatch equipment.

In 2024/5 we have

- Held 10 monthly meetings of the Parish Council plus 2 additional meetings to deal with planning applications and the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Supported Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, attending their meetings and helping with financial support, including making successful applications under the Locality and AECOM grant schemes. The Plan will be submitted to ECDC Spring 2025.
- Provided and maintained recreation ground and children's play areas, including completion of Phase 2 comprising refurbishment of older children's equipment and provision of new outdoor fitness equipment and goals.
- Monitored and reviewed data from the Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (rotated over 5 sites at The Slade and Martins Lane) and re-started Speedwatch sessions.
- Considered and commented on 7 new planning applications plus numerous amendments, variations and Discharges of Consents, together with 2 applications for tree works.
- Consented to City of Ely Cricket Club 3rd team using recreation ground for matches, for which a donation towards grounds maintenance was received.
- Maintained street lights (No.5) owned by the Parish Council.
- Supported 'What's On in Witcham'.
- 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

In 2025/6 we will

- Provide opportunity and encourage people to take an interest in community life in Witcham. Please residents, do your best to support the village clubs and Witcham Village Hall.
- Continue working with the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.
- Integrate communities with Mepal and Witcham Joint Working Group working to improve access for pedestrians and riders, and reduce speed on the Mepal to Witcham road.
- Maintain the recreation ground and children's play areas. Promote the health and well-being of residents.
- Maintain the cemetery. Note we only have new spaces in the Garden of Remembrance now.
- 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.
- Work in partnership with other bodies and agencies, and where possible improve facilities and enhance the quality of life for people in Witcham.
- 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.
- 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

2024/5 ACCOUNTS AND 2025/6 PRECEPT

The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the Unaudited Annual Return for 2024/5 will be issued shortly. The Precept for 2025/6 is £19,000

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.

Witcham Parish Council
Summary of Receipts and Payments
Year Ended 31 March 2025

Year 2023/24		Year 2024/25
£	RECEIPTS	£
16500.00	Precept	18500.00
1120.96	RSPB Rent and Electricity Wayleaves	1110.07
385.00	Cemetery	50.00
6552.42	ECDC CIL money	4686.68
400.00	Donations: Ely Cricket	400.00
1633.00	Locality Grant - Neighbourhood Plan	9445.00
39800.00	Cambs Foundation Fund - Thalia WB Community Fund	0.00
0.00	Mick George Community Fund Grant Play phase 2	14000.00
36.62	Misc (CAPALC training Refund)	20.00
1061.46	Interest	1489.16
1634.46	VAT re-claimed	15206.06
69123.92	TOTAL RECEIPTS	64906.97
	PAYMENTS	
12237.65	Staff costs	10210.50
	Admin:	
524.93	Insurance	617.92
210.00	External Audit	315.00
95.00	Internal Audit	155.00
2518.61	Gen Admin - toners, stationery, postage, tel, training, travel, IT etc	1589.42
513.88	Subscriptions	540.67
260.00	Hire of meeting venues	272.00
30.00	Chairman's Allowance (RBL Wreath)	40.00
0.00	Lloyds Bank fees	8.75
783.65	Grounds & Cemetery, equipment, etc	690.00
2983.70	Village grass cutting/maintenance	4274.60
152.36	Street Lighting Energy and Maintenance	202.25
475.93	LGA72 S142: What's On, (old website)	196.85
0.00	LGA72 S.137	200.00
1913.00	Neighbourhood Plan	9469.50
45336.90	Play/Fitness Project Recreation Ground	20333.00
9672.22	VAT for year	6880.16
77707.83	TOTAL PAYMENTS	55995.62
	Receipts and Payments Book:	
60173.99	Balance carried forward from previous year	51590.18
69123.92	Add Receipts	64906.97
-77707.73	Less Payments	-55995.62
51590.18	Balance at 31 March (to carry forward to new year)	60501.53
	Bank Reconciliation:	
1354.86	Current Account at 31 March	6177.44
52286.92	Add Deposit A/cs	58962.76
53641.78	Total	65140.20
-2051.60	Less unrepresented cheques	-4638.67
51590.18		60501.53

CONTACT DETAILS 2024/5

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

Name	Responsibilities
Chairman: mick.housden@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cemetery, Recreation Ground and Play Areas, CAPALC, Member Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.
Vice-Chairman: karl.mackender@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cemetery, CAPALC, Member Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.
george.byrne@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cemetery, Planning, Speedwatch sessions and strawburner liaison representative, Witcham & Mepal PCs Joint Working Group Mepal-Witcham Road.
laura.holdaway@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cemetery, planning, and designated Councillor for Safeguarding.
jane.lucas@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cemetery, Public Rights of Way, & Neighbourhood Watch Liaison.
sally.wilkin@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cemetery, Public Rights of Way. Witcham & Mepal PCs Joint Working Group Mepal-Witcham Road, Village Hall Trustee.

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.

**Please help keep Witcham clean and tidy
Use the litter bins or take your waste home for your domestic bin system**