

Wem Rural Parish Council

Action Plan: 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

Wem Rural Parish Council aims to:

- To provide effective, efficient and accountable local government for the parish, enabling residents to be involved in the life of the community and its future development.
- To be a strong voice for residents and local businesses, working to improve the overall parish area both built and natural, while preserving the uniqueness of heritage areas.

The Council's objectives are:

- To understand and communicate the views, needs and aspirations of residents and businesses to statutory and non-governmental bodies as required.
- Increase public involvement in the community through ensuring the parish council and its activities are open, transparent and accountable to residents.
- Support local business and economic activity in the parish.
- Work with other Councils to provide safe, healthy and timely opportunities for recreation, leisure and education.
- To support the work of parish voluntary organizations through grants and practical support
- Respond to planning applications and other statutory consultations on time, ensuring that recommendations made to Shropshire Council adhere to the community plan, any statutory regulations, and the interests of the community.
- Promote, within our community, activities which support the principles of environmental sustainability and an ethical society, working with others to keep public places clean and safe.
- Ensure that Councilors and Staff have access to high quality training and development opportunities and that they meet all required standards, for example working towards achieving Quality Council status.

A Business Plan for 2021 – 2025 was adopted in July 2021 which included the principles of the Council's aims and objectives.

The Council monitors progress of the Business Plan through an Annual Action Plan. It is a 'live' document which the Parish Council updates on a regular basis, enabling the Council to track and monitor progress against the objective and timescale. The Action Plan is publicly available, so residents can also monitor progress.

To ensure the Action Plan truly represents the Parish's best interests, the Parish Council will invite the local community to participate in its development.

The Action Plan will continue to be the main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community.

It is a two-way conversation. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know.

We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan.

Wem Rural Parish Council

Action Plan: 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

Monitoring Report date: 14 January 2025

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
Theme 1 - Parish Council Governance					
To improve communication between the Parish Council and residents and businesses	Keep website up to date.	On-going		Future events and news blog are continually being updated	
	Ensure 4 editions of Rural Review are published.	On-going	Allocation of £5,000	Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter Spring/Summer issue delivered and available online. Autumn printed and distributed Christmas Edition printed and distributed Feb/March 2025 issue on agenda for discussion	
	Post relevant stories on social media on a regular basis	On-going		Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn are regularly updated on national campaigns such as NHS, Shropshire Council and other local news stories	
	Provide local press information of local interest.	On-going		Information is being shared on social media including local stories, national campaigns and consultation	
	Ensure draft Minutes and Action Plan are published on website within 1 week of meeting	On-going		Ongoing.	
To improve effectiveness of Parish Council	Review training needs of both Councillors and Clerk	Ongoing		New councillors to attend Fundamental for Councillors and Chairmanship training. Clerk's training reviewed at appraisal and throughout the year. Researching training in rural planning Councillors and Clerk attended Biodiversity training Clerk has completed CPD points Training booked for Councillors on Emergency Planning and Empowering Young Councillors Clerk attended SLCC Conference First Aid Training Event Scheduled and open to the community	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
				New training booked for councillors in Jan-March 2025 – see training schedule for list	
	Monitor criteria of LCAS.	On-going		Completed	
	Annual performance review of Clerk	March		Clerk's appraisal completed	
To increase influence / coordination in matters that impact on Parish	Work with stakeholders (see list below) to raise awareness of local issues.	On-going		West Mercia Police attended Annual Parish meeting in April 2024. Biodiversity Policy Adopted	
	Attend relevant conferences and meetings	On-going		Clerk and Councillors regularly attend meetings and report back at parish meeting	
To increase impact of Community Grant Scheme	Active promotion of the Community Grant Scheme.	April	£5,000	See Rural Review. Promoted via noticeboards, website and social media. 2024 grants awarded	
	Review impact of Grants provided and review Policy	Summer		Request reports 3 months after grants awarded and include in Rural Review and website. Grants included in Autumn Rural Review Grant procedure on agenda for discussion	
Theme 2 - Leisure and Community					
To support and work with Edstaston Village Hall Management Committee regarding the maintenance and development of facilities for the benefit of parishioners.	Liaise with Edstaston Village Hall Management Committee to apply for grants	On-going		No further work needed – grant awarded in 2024.	
	Liaise with the Committee to identify where Council assistance could be used.	On-going		Ongoing	
To investigate need for new facilities to promote social interaction, sport and leisure.	Investigate the need of permanent playing areas which are open to all through community surveys and other methods	Ongoing		Northwood Chapel/Horse & Jockey recognised as being places of social interaction.	
To support existing community groups and work with existing communities and new housing developments to become part of the same 'community'.	Work with stakeholders to promote activities.	On-going		Continue to meet with groups and raise awareness of local news and activities on website, social media and Rural Review.	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
To consult with the community to identify local needs and views which can be addressed by constructive council action.	Consult and engage with the community paying particular attention to the diversity of the community.	On-going		Feedback at APM regarding crime. Work with local schools to identify local needs for the future. Councillors engage with community. Community engagement session with Youth Club highlighting the need for affordable housing, look after environment and future jobs and skills to support local economy. Community engagement with Scouts is planned.	
To consult with over 60s to identify local needs which can be addressed by constructive council action	Consult with over 60's in the community	On-going		Ongoing consultation and includes need to support local veterans	
To ensure Broadband and Mobile Phone infrastructure is of a level to enable the community to fully access these services.	Lobby Shropshire Council and other bodies to ensure all avenues to improve services are investigated and actioned.	On-going		Continue to lobby with relevant stakeholders and attend meetings and webinars.	
	Work with Connecting Shropshire, Openreach and Airband to assess feasibility of Gigabit Community Project.	March		As above	
Theme 3 - Parish Appearance, Environment, Public Services and Safety					
To keep roads and lanes clean for the enjoyment of parishioners and visitors.	Organise with community groups periodic litter picks.	On-going		Litter picking (The Great British Spring Clean) in March 2024 Encourage local communities to arrange spring clean event Litter picking kits provided by Freedom Fibre in April 2024 and ongoing work with paths partnership to pick up litter Working with P3 to support with litter picking on organised walks	
To encourage biodiversity and wildlife in the parish	Work with stakeholders to measure wildlife and establish wildlife corridors			Make contact with Nature Recovery Network and regularly meet with WACA. Raise awareness of wildlife and places of interest and importance of verges. Biodiversity Policy Adapted and new training planned Training scheduled for visit to Wem Moss is spring 2025	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
To raise awareness of how to reduce carbon footprint				Publish articles and news via website and social media.	
To encourage sustainable agriculture	Work with farmers and other stakeholders to raise awareness of sustainable farming and the use of chemicals			Future meeting added to November 2024 agenda to discuss joint Farmers event with WACA Green event took place in June 2024	
To understand, celebrate and protect the local landscape and have a say in its future management.	Work with stakeholders to investigate whether additional planting of native trees/shrubs would be of benefit to wildlife and preserve the landscape.	March		Promote tree planning scheme	
	Pursue links with stakeholders which are concerned with the natural environment and heritage.	March		Continue to raise awareness	
	Explore working with SWT and Newtown School to develop school pond.			To be confirmed	
To reduce crime and to help parishioners and businesses feel better protected against crime.	Work in conjunction with the police and other stakeholders services to promote the various 'Alert' and 'Watch' services, and the Police and Communities Together (PACT) initiative.	March		Ongoing communication with local police regarding rural crime and prevention. Continue to share relevant articles via website and social media.	
	Continue to work with West Mercia Police to share information on local crime and safety issues, including promotion of relevant websites.	On-going		As above	
To ensure in a diverse and rural parish, local solutions to emergencies are in place to support county and national plans.	Support and work with local Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Groups to maintain the presence of this service.	March		Ongoing.	
	Ensure AED awareness sessions are organised	On-going		Defibrillator training in Northwood completed	
To improve local infrastructure.	Work with NCRA and other partners to increase capacity at Newtown Car Park	March	To be assessed	Ongoing	
	Work with Northwood residents to consider ways to improve their village eg planters	March	To be assessed	Ongoing	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
To identify and improve tall hedges on roads	Renew and monitor areas of concerns from residents and work with landowners to seek solutions			Ongoing	
To identify and improve poor land drainage.	Review and monitor areas of concerns from both residents and businesses and work with Shropshire Council to seek solutions.	March			
To lead the community on issues related to the environment and climate change	Work with local groups to support where appropriate.	March	To be assessed	Ongoing	
	Investigate ways of reducing carbon emissions on a household basis and publicise through newsletter.	March	To be assessed	Continue to raise awareness of issues via website and social media	
Theme 4 - Highways, Transport and Access					
To address highways concerns of residents and businesses and seek solutions.	Work with Shropshire Council to understand planned highways maintenance works.	On-going		Continue to report issues to Shropshire Council. Training completed for Fix My Street on raising issues.	
	Work with Shropshire Council to identify critical areas for winter gritting.	On-going		Ongoing	
	Forward any complaints about highways maintenance to Shropshire Council	On-going		Ongoing	
	Identify redundant and poorly maintained road markings and signage and report to Shropshire Council	March		Ongoing	
	Identify road safety issues and gather evidence for West Mercia Police PCC grant application	March		Ongoing	
To seek solutions to speeding traffic	Report specific incidents to the Police and Shropshire Council.	On-going		When required	
	Review areas of concern in the parish and work with Shropshire Council and Police to seek solutions	On-going		Ongoing. Encourage residents to report via Fix My Street and liaise with Shropshire Council	
				Wheelie bin speeding tickets available on request.	
	Investigate support required to set up Community Speed Watch groups	September		Working Northwood group	

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
To ensure parishioners do not experience 'rural isolation' and to maximise existing transport arrangements.	Promote existing Community Transport Schemes.	March	To be assessed	Ongoing	
To maintain access to the countryside	Monitor and support where appropriate Parish Path Partnership Group	On-going	To be assessed	Ongoing with P3 Paths Partnership including recent funding and walking guides	
	Work with Shropshire Council to ensure full access of Rights of Way is maintained.	On-going		See above	
	Well signposted & maintained public footpaths. Promote with walks leaflets and guides	On-going	To be assessed	See above	
Replace railway bridge Mill Lane Wem	Work with Network Rail to promote timing of proposed work and to reduce disruption caused to local road network.	January		N/A	
Theme 5 - Economy and Tourism					
To encourage economic development.	Work with stakeholders to encourage development.	On-going	To be assessed	Continue to work with WTC and local businesses on initiatives. Business Networking Events scheduled	
	Support local farmers and provide sustainable food sources.	On-going		Continue to raise awareness	
Theme 6 - Housing and Health					
To continue to comment on all key strategic planning documents and consultations that affect the Parish ensuring the Parish Council's knowledge and understanding of the local context is taken into account in decisions.	Work with Shropshire Council and stakeholders to ensure documents and consultations are fully understood.	On-going		Working with Shropshire Council on concerns regarding planning at Horsefields	
	Ensure residents are consulted to ensure parishioners views are known.	On-going			
To encourage local residents to participate in any strategic planning consultations which impact the Parish.	Publicise consultation through the Council's communication methods.	On-going			

Objective	Action	Timescale	Budget	Update (if appropriate)	Completed
To review the way in which the Parish Council considers and makes responses on planning applications.	Review training needs of Councillors.	On-going		Ongoing training around biodiversity for planning	
	Ensure responses are robust and clear.	On-going			
To retains quality health and social care services	Work in partnership with stakeholders to ensure health and social care services meet residents' needs and expectations.	On-going		Councillors part of Wem & Prees Medical	
Affordable housing	To assess the needs for affordable housing.	On-going		Continue to work with housing associations.	
Health and Wellbeing	To raise awareness of health and wellbeing			Event scheduled in October 2024 in partnership with WTH and WTC. Ongoing news stories on national health campaigns shared online and included in latest RR. Anti-bullying survey created for councillors to actively support Anti-Bullying Week in November.	

Stakeholders list includes but not exclusive to:

- NSAC North Shropshire Area Committee
- Schools in the parish (Newtown primary)
- Schools in Wem (Thomas Adams, St Peter's CofE primary)
- Shropshire Council
- The Environment Agency
- WACA Wem Area Climate Action Group
- Nature Recovery Network
- Wem Town Council
- West Mercia Police
- Seven Trent Water
- SALC Shropshire Association of Local Councils
- Businesses including public houses, WEM Industrial Estate
- Community Groups
- Churches
- Edstaston Village hall