



The internal audit was conducted by Karen Maloney who reported that the accounts were excellent as always.

The Council approved the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) which was signed by the Chairman and Clerk

### **09/2023: Reports on Parish Plan**

#### **St John the Baptist Church – Jon Scutt**

We have continued to have weekly services, in addition to regular weekly services there have been some special services for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and various Christmas related services. There were two confirmation services and a funeral. There was a Songs of Praise for the coronation of King Charles last Sunday (7<sup>th</sup> May) and a christening and we are looking forward to a wedding in August.

We were able to have the full range of social/fundraising activities with a summer fete, easter egg hunt, harvest auction, bonfire, Christmas Bazaar and carol singing on the village green. We also had a walk around the parish, which May become a regular event. Thank all those that organised and supported these events.

We have held monthly coffee mornings on the first Wednesday of the month, to which everyone is welcome and have been coordinating the monthly donation to the Shrewsbury Food Bank from the village, in addition we have supported the Children's Society and Hope House charities.

The lychgate has been replaced, thanks to everyone that generously donated towards that. Through regular and one-off gift aid donations and fund raising the church has paid all its financial demands and remains financially healthy and we thank people for their continued support and generosity.

#### **Parish Room – Jon Scutt**

The Parish Room is now fully open and all the pre Covid activities are back up and running as they did prior to the pandemic. We have obtained a defibrillator and a cabinet courtesy of Benenden and Mr Fire Safety, for which we are very grateful.

Have recently had the 5-year electric safety check done and all defects fixed. We are negotiating with Airband to get Wi-Fi in the parish room.

The Parish room remains financially in a healthy position, supported by the 100 club and we will be looking to have the outside redecorated in the coming year.

We thank everyone that has supported the activities that take place in the Parish Room and that are in the 100 club.

#### **Hare & Hounds – Phil Heath**

The pub has managed to stay open during difficult trading conditions for the hospitality sector which has seen on average 9 pubs per week close during 2022. The only concession to these difficult times has been for the pub to close on a Wednesday, which is it's quietest trading evening.

The owner approached myself and Martin Timmis towards the end of 2022 to discuss how we can help increase trade in order to keep the pub open. Following a meeting with other interested regulars it was decided that a monthly quiz would be a good way to raise money for charity, increase pub revenues and also attract new customers. The first quiz was held on 14<sup>th</sup> January and proved to be very popular so much so that we had to borrow additional chair and tables from the Parish Room to accommodate everyone. A charity quiz is now held every month for the foreseeable future.

The take away food service on a Friday evening continues to be very popular and you can now eat in as long as you place your order beforehand.

Minutes confirmed as correct \_\_\_\_\_ 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman

Progress on the outbuilding being developed as a holiday let has been very slow up until the last couple of months when the paths, patio slabs have been laid and the boundary wall completed however as yet there is no completion date.

The pub and carpark are listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) which means that if the owner decides to sell pub the community has the right to bid for the property and if it is accepted they have 6 months to raise the funds

The fact that the ACV only covers the pub and car park is an advantage to the community as it will make it less expensive than if it also covered the outbuilding and land at the rear. The ACV runs out in 2025 and we will ensure that it is relisted.

### **Footpaths Helen Thomas**

Several stiles and posts have been mended/ replaced in the year using Alan Williams contacts at Shropshire Council to obtain materials and with labour provided from Alan and Wayne Thomas. Many thanks to both of them.

Most footpaths have been well used and the local farmers have generally been good at marking footpaths that cross cropped fields. However, I have noticed dog mess left on footpaths on several occasions and sometimes bagged dog mess abandoned by paths. So this is a plea to dog owners to respect the countryside and other walkers and please take you dog mess home.

Shropshire are producing a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan for the next 10 years and sent out a questionnaire in January 2022, which I completed. They have now produced a Shropshire Cycling and Walking Plan consultation which our Clerk has very recently circulated. The plan for our area concentrates on Shrewsbury with no plans to change anything in our locality. I also notice that the Shrewsbury map link in the email has a schoolboy error. East and West are mislabeled!! There is a 6-week consultation period and a series of roadshows, online webinars and school workshops.

If anyone notices any footpath issues, please let me know

### **Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust Annual Report – Bernie Jones**

The Shrewsbury & Newport Canals Trust's flagship project at Wappenshall Wharf is progressing rapidly now. The East Basin has been dug out, its base has been concreted over a polythene liner and it has been filled with water once again. The smaller of the two Grade II Listed warehouses is being re-purposed and will open as a quality café and meeting venue. The building has been re-roofed, all windows and doors have been replaced, a new toilet block has been built on its western elevation and utilities are being installed. It is planned to be open by the end of the year.

Work has continued at both ends of the 970-yard-long Berwick Tunnel. The stone and brick lengthsmans hut has been disassembled and almost re-built and Widow's Bridge has been re-pointed and its coping stones replaced. An all-ability path has been constructed along the canal towpath and through the woodland on the opposite side, just north of the tunnel and up to the A5.

In Newport, the towpath has been tarmacked from Town Bridge through to Fisher's Lock and the towpath to the west of Town Bridge has been resurfaced and raised along the final watered section towards Edmond. New lock gates have been installed in Town Lock.

Our two heritage narrowboats are nearing the completion of their restoration at Norbury Wharf. Once finished they will be transported to Wappenshall Wharf and put into the recently re-watered east basin.

The new Sundorne Estate Manager, Huw Williams, has shown great interest in the canal's restoration through the estate. We will be working with him and his Trustees in the near future.

If anyone is interested to see any of this work for themselves, or would like to join our Trust, please contact Bernie Jones on 07971 016322.

## **Withington Village Green Committee Annual Report – Wayne Thomas**

We have not had many meetings since the last AGM. However, we have managed to meet when necessary and informally.

We have made two major purchases,

1. A set of 9 a side football goals which are portable and have been used by local children and adults.
2. A new mower with a mulcher. This major purchase was bought after a great deal of research. It has been used successfully by Ron and Andrew to cut the Village Green grass. It is securely stored with the old mower.

We have bought some plaques and planted an oak tree and hedge saplings:

1. We have replaced the old Jubilee oak tree plaque. We have also planted a new oak tree for the platinum Jubilee with a plaque. This oak was provided free by a tree scheme funded by Shropshire Council.
2. The Shropshire Council tree scheme also provided free hedge saplings. We used these to reinstate the hedge between the Village green and the Blandings.

We have held several events over the year. These have included the Village fete, Bonfire celebrations, Christmas carols and parking for birthdays and funerals. Not forgetting the excellent celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the Kings Coronation weekend.

We continue to maintain the hedges, cut the grass on the Green, and prune the trees. We are investigating ways of improving the path.

We are very grateful to "friends of the village green" for their financial support. In addition to committee members and villagers for their efforts in maintaining the green and holding events.

### **10/2023: Date of the 2024 Annual Parish Council Meeting and the Annual Village Meeting:**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### **11/2023: Dates of the Parish Council Meetings for 2023/24**

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2022 APCM & AVM

Minutes confirmed as correct 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Chairman