

Withington Annual Village Meeting

Wednesday 6th May 2026

at 7.00pm

in the Parish Room

Minutes

2026/A Present: Councillors Phil Heath (Chair), Joe Ford, Lesley Stone, Martin Timmis, Alan Williams, Cllr Brendan Mallon (Tern Ward), Denise Roscoe (Clerk) and 7 members of the public

2026/B Welcome: Cllr Heath welcomed everyone

2026/C Apologies: Helen & Wayne Thomas, Bernie Jones, Steve & Yvonne Walton, Aaron Manley

2026/D Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting 7th May 2025

The minutes were approved and the Chair signed the minutes

2026/E Report from Parish Council Chair

I will use this opportunity to address some of the main issues that arouse most interest amongst our parishioners, namely

- Infrastructure
- Planning applications
- crime

1: Infrastructure.

ROADS & TRAFFIC

Potholes.

The condition of the lanes around Withington remains a concern even though Shropshire Council (SC) occasionally patch and repair potholes.

Your PC has engaged with our Ward Councillor, Brendan Mallon, who has joined myself and our Clerk on two occasions, to drive around the Parish to point out our concerns. He has actively engaged with SC to try and improve the situation.

SC have recently announced their 2026/27 resurfacing programme but unfortunately none of the roads in Withington are included although Pelham Road in Upton Magna is so there will be a benefit to those of us who go that way to Shrewsbury.

Shropshire Council has also recently secured £168 million grant over four years (starting 2026) for road maintenance, focusing on tackling a major pothole backlog through increased repair teams and night-time work so hopefully more potholes will get repaired.

Parishioners who discover new potholes and damage to the verges resulting in potholes in the verge should report them as soon as possible in the first instance to Shropshire Council via the "Fix my Street" web site and our Clerk before they become an even bigger problem.

Road Sweeping

Unfortunately, the lanes around Withington haven't been swept for years despite being reported to SC on many occasions.

Flooding

Flooding after heavy rain has become a common occurrence primarily due to the roadside drains and ditches being unable to cope with the volume of water.

The responsibility for ensuring roadside drains and in some cases, ditches implemented to assist road drainage is with Shropshire Council. Your PC does request regular cleaning and remedial work to be carried out.

Minutes confirmed as correct _____ 12 May 2027 _____

Chairman

We engaged the services of a local farmer to clear the “grips” between the road and the drains near Hucksters Cottage to reduce flooding on the bend which is dangerous for traffic in both directions. This has been partially effective but, in the process, we identified that two of the grips had drains to soak aways that need to be unblocked and that the other two grips had no connections to soak aways. These have been reported to SC.

Parking at Haughmond Hill

Whilst not in our Parish we have raised the issue of people parking cars on the side of the road rather than use the Forestry Commission car park which causes chaos at busy times as people cannot easily get passed. SC have been made aware of the problem and are in the process of consulting neighbouring Parishes to obtain their views on implementing no parking restrictions.

Sewerage.

For the past five years, our village has experienced sewer flooding approximately 48 hours into every major storm event involving prolonged, heavy rainfall. Severn Trent has now acknowledged the issue is likely related to ground water ingress into the sewer.

The problem is at its worst between Bakehouse Yard and The Old Vicarage resulting in sewage adulterated storm water running down the road between the two houses. ST and their contractor have proposed solutions involving sealing of manhole covers and installing non return valves which are focused on mitigation measures at individual properties. Our concern is that this will result in pushing the problem further down the network within the village rather than addressing the root cause which requires capital investment in improving the capacity of wider sewer infrastructure.

Thanks to Gail Robinson and Philip Smith for persevering with obtaining a solution to the problem

Your PC will be pursuing this issue with Severn Trent and are in the process of obtaining the local sewer network map, or at least obtain information from Shropshire Council on which villages and sewage pumping stations are connected within the same system

2: Planning.

The Shropshire Council Local Plan continues to state that Withington is classed as “Open Countryside” which means that the only building allowed is the conversion of existing building to residential use, the building of low-cost housing for justified local need and extensions etc to existing properties. With the Labour Governments focus on building new houses, we await any impact this may have on the current Plan.

Previously Shropshire Council would notify immediate neighbours of any planning application but no longer do so. Your PC consider this to be unfair and therefore have committed to informing parishioners of any planning application that may affect them.

We always encourage anyone who intends to submit a planning application to discuss their plans with neighbours before doing so in order that any potential issues can be identified and hopefully resolved amicably before submission.

There have been a small number of planning applications this year which have been sent to the PC and we have notified and discussed these with immediate neighbours and reviewed them in PC meetings before submitting our comments to SC. These were:

- Agricultural building and access road off Caernarvon Lane for the housing of rare breed sheep which was approved
 - Building work started early April with laying of gravel access road into the field
- Rowan House in Withington –detached garage and single-story front and rear extensions.
 - Whilst the original planning application was refused, primarily based upon the garage’s impact on a nearby listed building the garage has now been approved under Permitted Development rules as the revised plans meet the criteria set out in Schedule 2, Part 1 Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
 - The single storey front and rear extensions were given planning permission and were allowed under permitted Development.

- Barkers House, Withington: Erection of a detached garage/workshop/storage and home gym - granted

Solar Farm

I will include in this section an update on the Solar Farm being built on land belonging to Church Farm which was approved in 2023. The original application was made by Elgin Energy who in November 2024 sold the project to Severn Trent Green Power (STGP).

STGP ran an open day and also attended our PC meeting on 4th March to provide an update on the project timescales. Work started on 23rd March and the project connection date to the National Grid is expected to be in quarter 4 2027. They confirmed that they are legally obliged to adhere to the planning approval conditions and that they will also be honouring the Community Benefit Fund contract negotiated between the PC and Elgin Energy that will result in £100,000 being paid to the PC upon connection to the National Grid.

The money will be used on projects that will be of benefit to parishioners. One of your PC's tasks over the next year is to agree the process for identifying projects and the allocation of the funds.

The primary concern the residents of Withington is the management of construction traffic and unfortunately the first two weeks did not go smoothly with HGV's not taking the correct route and passing through the centre of the village. We also had an HGV delivering construction machinery getting stuck on the bridge at Walcot. The issues were raised with STGP and they have been very responsive in resolving the problems. We will continue to monitor the situation and encourage anyone who sees similar problems to report them immediately to our Clerk or STGP on 0800 058 4165

3: Crime.

We are fortunate to live in what the Police class as a low crime area.

The West Midlands Police launched their Local Policing Charter and consulted with parish/town councils to identify their three top concerns. Your PC agreed at the last PC meeting that the 3 key issues for the parish are:

1. Speeding

There appears little we can do about speeding in the lanes outside the village as the limit is set at 60MPH. However, the law states, in the Highway Code, that the speed driven should be appropriate for the road and consideration should be given to pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.

2. Fly tipping

We continue to get fly tipping in our area which is classed as a criminal offence and can result in heavy fines, imprisonment and confiscation of the vehicle involved. I therefore urge anyone who witnesses or finds fly tipping to report it in the first instance to Shropshire Council on the "Fix my Street" web site and our Clerk.

Our main issue on the police charter is fly tipping on private land where the Council will not remove it and the cost of removal lies with the landowner which seems very unfair.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those parishioners who take it upon themselves to carry out litter picking activities along our lanes which seem to have become a dumping ground for litter from passing vehicles.

3. Wildlife crime

We live in a rural area and are therefore more likely to encounter crimes against wildlife such as poaching, hare coursing and the unlawful killing of birds of prey, badger etc. Such activity led recently to a vehicle being abandoned one night in a local field after it became bogged down. We therefore need to be aware this activity is taking place and report any suspicious activity to the police and local landowners

Finally,

I wish to thank

- My fellow Parish Councillors and our Clerk for their efforts and support over the last 12 months.

Minutes confirmed as correct _____ 12 May 2027 _____

Chairman

- Our Ward Councillor, Brendon Mallon, for his active engagement with the PC and SC on our behalf.
- The Village Green Trustees and members of the Village Green Committee for ensuring that our village green continues to be maintained and improved to the benefit of all Parishioners. I wish to remind everyone that the work of the Committee is funded by charitable donations and would encourage parishioners to join the “Friends of the Village Green” to support this important village asset.

2026/F Report from Cllr Brendan Mallon Shropshire Councillor Tern Ward

Highways

I have come straight from a meeting with Simon D'Vali, Shropshire Council's new Strategic Transport Executive Manager, a new role in Shropshire. He is part of a new injection of personnel into the Highways department, and my initial impressions are very positive. The level of engagement with councillors is a night-and-day contrast with what we have been used to so far, to the extent that I have Simon's personal number and his commitment to respond swiftly to enquiries. He has committed to a comprehensive inspection of the roads in and around Withington in the very near future and I will liaise with the committee to arrange this.

Haughmond Hill

The most recent word on this back in March from David Gradwell at Highways was confirmation that he had requested the provision of double yellow lines as a priority scheme for this financial year. They are currently waiting to hear confirmation of the agreed budget/works programme for Traffic Engineering schemes for this year. We are still awaiting that confirmation, but it sounds promising....

Ellesmere Road and Battlefield Housing Applications

Unfortunately, the 450 Home project on Ellesmere Road has achieved Outline Planning Permission. I managed to get this decision deferred at its previous presentation due to questions about the impacts on the roads around North Shrewsbury. Sadly, the response from the Planning Officers was inadequate in my opinion, particularly with regard to the potential road closures incorporated into the 'Big Town Plan'. Nevertheless, the committee voted to grant permission anyway. This is bound to cause even worse congestion at the Battlefield and Sundorne roundabouts, which are already experiencing chronic conditions. If the 570 house scheme at Battlefield is also permitted then it is hard to imagine the conditions that will prevail, given that, at this time, there seems no likely additional local provision of Health, Education or Employment, making car journeys essential for anyone occupying these homes.

One piece of potential good news here is the permission to build a Hilton hotel on the site of the Shrewsbury Club (David Lloyd) at Sundorne. As part of the scheme, Hilton have offered to pay for improvements to Sundorne roundabout. If only we could do more such deals with developers....

New Local Plan

The withdrawal of the old Local Plan is heavily responsible for the lack of coherence to the way developments like these are implemented and distributed without apparent due regard to the supporting infrastructure. So, another piece of tentative good news is the launch of the Plan Making and Scoping Consultation for the new Shropshire Plan. The bad news is that this is expected to take 30-months. While this is apparently faster than the old way of formulating local plans, it is still hugely frustrating to have another 2 ½ years of fighting over-development. I attended Cabinet today, where this process was being discussed. I asked whether, given the conditions I've described, any sort of accelerated process could be enacted in Shropshire. The response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning was that the process is a statutory requirement from central government and that the protracted process is necessary in order that the resulting plan is not vulnerable to legal challenge from developers. So, a positive step in the right direction, however it does mean that we have 2 ½ years of fighting ahead in order to prevent irreversible over-development.

2026/G Public Forum

None to report

2026/H Date of next Annual Village Meeting Wednesday 12th May 2027

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Chairman