

Minutes of an Extra Ordinary Meeting of Wem Town Council held on Thursday 28th August 2025 at 7pm in the Town Council Meeting Room, Wem Library, High Street, Wem

Present: - Cllrs D Parry (Mayor), M Hudson, R Gascoigne, D Hill, M Meakin, G Soul, E Towers, B Cotterell, L Gilchrist, M Hoffmann.

Mrs P O'Hagan (Town Clerk)

25 members of the public present.

74/25-29 To note apologies for absence received

The following apologies were received from Cllrs Johnson, Broomhall and Barker.
Absent Cllr Nash.

75/25-29 Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests.

a) To receive any disclosure of pecuniary interest - Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillor	Item	Dispensation
Cllr Parry	77/25-26 Planning Application 25/02558/OUT predetermined as has already submitted an objection to the application.	
Cllr Soul	77/25-26 Planning Applications 25/02775/OUT and 25/02558/OUT predetermined as has already submitted an objection to the application. Trustee of Wem Town Hall	To allow participation but not voting on all matters relating to Wem Town Hall

b) To consider any applications for Dispensations under s33 of the Localism Act 2011.

None received.

76/25-29 Public Participation - a period of 15 minutes will be set aside for residents of Wem Town to speak.

At the discretion of Cllr Parry the public participation session was extended to 30 minutes to permit all those present the opportunity to speak.

A member of Wem Civic Society raised objections to planning applications 25/02775/OUT and 25/02558/OUT and raised the following issues

- Wem level crossing is not safe and will not be able to deal with the increased traffic.
- Concern was expressed about taking much needed agricultural land out of production by building on it.

The Chairman of Wem and Prees Patient Participation Group raised concerns about the capacity in the medical practice and whether it will be able to cope with the additional patients.

Robert Smith owner of Aston Road Business Park raised concerns about the impact the additional traffic from planning applications 25/02775/OUT and 25/02558/OUT would have on the crossing. A link road is needed out to the Shawbury Road which would take the majority of HGV's away from Aston Road and provide an alternative route out of town away from the level crossing. Developers need to work with planners to secure this before any permissions can be considered. Concern was also expressed about the impact of additional traffic caused by rat running on roads neighbouring the proposed development particularly Cordwell Park and Church Lane. The sewage system is not currently able to take the extra houses even though it has been upgraded.

Members of the public raised the following concerns about planning application 25/02775/OUT

- impact the development will have on residents from sheltered housing along Aston Road. If permission is granted provision should be made to ensure that properties in the development do not overlook properties on Aston Road particularly to protect residents of The Orchard which is a sheltered housing facility.
- The issue of safety at the level crossing was raised by members of the public as the opinion was expressed that the crossing is unsafe for pedestrians and motorists due to its complexity. Therefore it is not suitable to have more people trying to use the crossing as it is not currently fit for purpose.
- Concern was expressed about rat running through Aston and Barkers Green and the proposed access to the development which is on a bend. A resident from Aston Road raised concerns that the proposed exit onto Aston Road is dangerous as it is on a bend.
- Roads leading to the proposed development are similar to single track roads due to parking therefore an additional 175 houses will add to the chaos. A member of the public highlighted that it was not just the crossing as many of the roads leading to this development are predominantly single carriageways due to the parking.
- Flooding concerns were also raised as Church Lane floods.
- A view was expressed about the need for the town to grow and the lack of infrastructure to enable this. The town does not need to be defined by the railway. The opportunity to make a new access road must be pursued as this could open up a side of the town. Wem is being left behind due to a lack of development and it is important to think 15 to 20 years ahead

77/25-29 Planning Applications

To consider the following planning applications

Cllr Parry proposed a suspension of standing orders for a maximum of 15 minutes to permit a representative from Bellway Homes to give a short presentation on the application and answer questions from councillors.

RESOLVED:- to suspend standing orders for 15 minutes to permit a representative of Bellway to give a short presentation.

Cllr Soul left the room and took no part in discussions.

Jack Barnes from Bellway Homes gave a short presentation on the changes to the application since it was first submitted in 2015. He explained that Bellway consider this site to be sustainable due to its proximity to the town's services. He outlined the changes made to application following the public consultation which has led to the inclusion of a much improved green infrastructure in the development area wildflower meadows, a community orchard and a growing area.

Bellway's statement of community involvement outlines the changes made to the application and can be viewed on the planning portal

On the issue of the transport issues raised, Bellways consultants who prepared the traffic report have stated that the new development will not lead to significant extra queues at the crossing. There has been no feedback to the proposals from Shropshire Council Highways but Bellway will be willing to review any comments submitted by highways and make changes as necessary.

Councillors asked a range of questions about the proposals including challenging the findings of the traffic survey which did not seem to mirror the lived experience of using the crossing on a daily basis.

Questions were asked about whether the proposals were truly sustainable and whether any provision would be made to make the crossing safer.

Flooding concerns were also raised and Mr Barnes responded that attenuation basins will be incorporated into the development which will alleviate the risk of flooding and may even improve the situation on Church Lane

Mr Barnes was thanked for his attendance at the meeting and standing orders were resumed.

1. 25/02775/OUT Outline planning application, to include access matters only for: up to 175 dwellings, site access and highway works, green infrastructure including public open space, sustainable drainage, landscape buffering, amenity green space, and ancillary works. Address: Proposed Residential Development Land Between Aston Road And, Church Lane, Wem, Shropshire

A lengthy discussion took place and it was:

RESOLVED:- to submit the following comments:

The Town Council has previously objected to several developments to the east of the level crossing due to existing traffic congestion, standing traffic and the resulting impact on traffic flow and road safety. These concerns are particularly acute at the level crossing itself and on surrounding roads, especially Aston Road, Aston Street and Soultan Road.

The Council remains seriously concerned about the ability of existing infrastructure to cope with further development in this part of the town. We urge Shropshire Council to facilitate round-table discussions with all current applicants seeking permission for housing developments east of the town. Such discussions are needed to find solutions to shared concerns, particularly the impact of increased traffic on the level crossing. The Council believes there is a clear need for developers to work together to create a link road between Aston Road and Shawbury Road. This would help relieve pressure on the town's road network and, in time, provide a more sustainable basis for potential development in this area.

Viewed as a stand alone application the Town Council wish to submit the following objections to the application

Specific Objections

1. Road Safety and Highways

- The surrounding road network cannot accommodate the additional traffic generated by a development of this scale.
- Smaller local roads, such as Church Lane and Cordwell Park, would be placed under increased pressure as residents seek to avoid congestion at the level crossing.
- Roads leading into the proposed development are already heavily constrained by on-street parking, effectively reducing them to single-track sections. Additional traffic will worsen congestion in and out of town.
- In the nearby rural settlements of Aston and Barkers Green, the impact will also be significant, with more vehicles using minor roads categorised as “quiet lanes.” Particular concern is raised regarding Aston Bridge, a listed structure, which must be fully protected from potential damage caused by increased traffic.
- The Council also highlights accessibility issues. Pavements along Aston Road and Saulton Road near the railway crossing are narrow and unsuitable for wheelchair users or those with mobility needs. This development would exacerbate challenges for people with disabilities wishing to access the town centre.
- The level crossing itself remains a major concern. Increased use by and conflict between both vehicles (particularly HGV's), cyclists and pedestrians will place significant additional strain on a crossing that the Council already considers unsafe. The current road layout and crossing cannot safely accommodate the volume of movements generated by an additional 175 houses.

2. Nature Conservation

- The site is greenfield and would result in the permanent loss of productive agricultural land.
- The Council does not consider that the inclusion of greenspace within the development adequately mitigates the environmental harm caused.

3. Overlooking and Residential Amenity

- The proposals risk overlooking existing properties along Aston Road.
- Particular concern is raised regarding The Orchards, a sheltered housing facility, which must not be overlooked in any approved scheme.

4. Flooding

- The Town Council is concerned about increased flood risks as a result of the development proposals. Church Lane regularly floods and an additional 175 houses in this location could increase the incidence of flooding along Church Lane.

Cllr Parry and Gilchrist left the room took no part in discussions.

2. 25/02558/OUT Outline Planning Application (with access and layout for approval) for a residential development of up to 60 dwellings, Land South of Saulton Lane Wem Shropshire

RESOLVED:- to appoint Cllr Towers as meeting chairman for this item.

FURTHER RESOLVED to submit the following comments on the planning application.

The Town Council has previously objected to several developments to the east of the level crossing due to existing traffic congestion, standing traffic and the resulting impact on traffic flow and road safety. These concerns are particularly acute at the level crossing itself and on surrounding roads, especially Aston Road, Aston Street and Soultan Road.

The Council remains seriously concerned about the ability of existing infrastructure to cope with further development to the east of the town. We urge Shropshire Council to facilitate round-table discussions with all current applicants seeking permission for housing developments east of the town. Such discussions are needed to find solutions to shared concerns, particularly the impact of increased traffic on the level crossing.

The Council believes there is a clear need for developers to work together to create a link road to link this side of town with The Shawbury Road. This would help relieve pressure on the town's road network and in time, provide a more sustainable basis for potential development in this area.

The Town Council recognise that the development is outside of the town boundary. However due to the impact that the development will have on the town's infrastructure the Town Council support the objections put forward by Wem Rural Parish Council except for the comment that the development will have a negative impact on the on schools in Wem.

Cllr Parry, Soul and Gilchrist returned to the room.

3. 25/02859/COU - Change of use of the pub trading area from Sui Generis to retail class E a-g LOCATION: - Old Post Office, 25 High Street, Wem.

RESOLVED:- to support the application as it brings a disused building in a prominent position on the High Street back into use.

4. 25/02976/FUL, Formation of vehicular access and dropped kerb, 30 Lowe Hill Road, Wem, SY4 5UA.

RESOLVED:- to support the application as it will improve highway safety as less vehicles will be parked on the road.

78/25-29 Finance and Accounts for Payment.

Accounts for payment - to approve accounts for payment.

RESOLVED:- to approve the following payments

Supplier	Service	Net	Vat	Gross	BAC r
	Salaries	£7,001.88		£7,001.88	BAC PAYROI

Shropshire Council	HMRC	£2,841.99		£2,841.99	BACS HMRC
	Pensions	£2,171.25		£2,171.25	BACS LGPS
Unity Trust Bank	Transaction charges	£10.65		£10.65	DD 33.25
West Mercia Energy	Car park toilet energy 1.5.25 - 31.5.25	£65.27	£3.26	£68.53	DD 34.25
B2B	Telephone/Broadband and	£127.63	£25.53	£153.16	DD 35.25
EE	Mobile Phones	£30.00	£6.00	£36.00	DD 36.25
PWLB	Loan Repayment (Streetlighting)	£1,753.58		£1,753.58	DD 37.25
Lloyds Bank	Credit Card Balance	£66.28		£66.28	DD 38.25
Unity Trust Bank	BACS charges July	£17.54		£17.54	DD 39.25
Waterplus	Car Park Toilet Water 8.7.25 - 8.8.25	£53.53		£53.53	DD 40.25
Waterplus	Allotments Water 12.7.25-12.8.25	£65.58	£13.12	£78.70	DD 41.25
Total DDs / Early Payments				£14,253.09	

Credit Card Payments (for Information only)

Lloyds Bank	Monthly Charge	£3.00		£3.00	CC9.25
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Payments

Supplier	Service	Net	Vat	Gross	Chq / BACS No
DANFO	Toilet Cleaning July	£1,029.24	£205.85	£1,235.09	SO 1.25
PG Skips	Rec Ground Bin	£73.00	£14.60	£87.60	123.25
PG Skips	Cemetery Bin	£46.64	£9.32	£55.96	124.25
PG Skips	Cardboard Bin	£37.90	£7.60	£45.50	125.25
ISM IT	IT Support	£340.39	£68.08	£408.47	126.25
Wem Swimming & Lifestyle Centre	Q2 Contribution	£13,750.00		£13,750.00	127.25
DW Evans	Grave Digging July	£660.00		£660.00	128.25
Parish Online	Subscription	£261.00	£52.20	£313.20	129.25
John Higgins Fabrication*	Welding - benches	£450.00	£90.00	£540.00	130.25
Ray Parry	Wet Pour Repair	£1,720.00	£344.00	£2,064.00	131.25
Shropshire Council	Streetlight Energy July - Sept 2025	£2,389.44	£477.89	£2,867.33	132.25
Garoll Construction	Stanchion Repairs	£1,140.00	£228.00	£1,368.00	133.25
Start Traffic Ltd*	Signage	£297.96	£59.60	£357.56	134.25
Mark Fitton	Bus shelter cleaning	£75.00		£75.00	135.25
Screwfix	Sundries	£75.84	£15.17	£91.01	136.25
Security Wise	Call out (June)	£105.00	£21.00	£126.00	137.25

Security Wise	Call out (July)	£105.00	£21.00	£126.00	138.25
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79/25-29 **Exclusion of Public and Press**

To resolve that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

RESOLVED:- to Exclude the press and public

a) Office Lease – to update and discuss the following matters:

- Wem Town Hall Liaison Group Meeting held 19.8.25 and meeting with Shropshire Council officers 7.8.25.

RESOLVED:- to note the report and defer the selection of Councillors onto the working party to the September meeting of the Town Council

- Appointment of a surveyor.

RESOLVED:- to increase the budget for the surveyor works to £1250

b) Staff matter – to discuss

RESOLVED:- to approve payment of the charge.

Meeting ended 21.00

Mayor.....