

WITCHAM PARISH COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT & SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2025/6

Welcome to our Annual Report, setting out some of this year's activities, which we hope you will find interesting and informative.

We are very pleased that the Witcham Neighbourhood Plan was so well supported at the Referendum on 12 February 2026 and confirm it was 'made' at the District Council's full council meeting on 24 February. This will now form part of the Policy under the Local Plan when determining planning applications. It will run until 2036. We anticipate there will be reviews and amendments during this period to keep it up to date. The Parish Council is immensely appreciative of all the hard work and effort of all those volunteers who stepped up to serve on the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group during the course of the project, and the guidance of the Consultant. It has been a tremendous amount of work, dedication and commitment for all those involved, including the officers at East Cambs District Council and support from our County and District Councillors spanning the last 4 years.

The Council will turn its attention to dealing with the Community Actions identified during the course of the Neighbourhood Plan survey. Our first project will be to get measures implemented to reduce speeding on the Mepal to Witcham Road. We have submitted a Local Highways Initiative (LHI) bid to the County Council to reduce the current 60mph speed limit and additional signage to protect pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders and now await the outcome, which will be later this autumn. If our bid is successful the work will be carried out during the 2027/8 financial year. Whilst the LHI grant covers a substantial portion of the cost we have set aside £2500 of our own monies. MVAS data collected at 5 locations in The Slade and Martins reveals that speedwatch sessions make some impact in reducing speeders through the village. More speedwatch volunteers needed, just an hour a month, morning or evening. In future we hope to get the footpath reinstated to connect Witcham with Mepal. We are working with Mepal Parish Council on these projects, and they are currently surveying their residents to establish priorities for speed reduction measures in and around Mepal.

From the Community Actions identified in the Neighbourhood Plan survey, volunteers have set up a conservation group and members are actively making improvements for the village. If you want to become involved please contact the Council so we can connect you to the group. The Witcham Events Committee has also been busy putting on events such as the Easter Egg Hunt, Remembrance display in November and the Christmas tree and lights, which were all very well received and appreciated by so many of you. Monies raised at the 2025 Annual Peashooting Championships is supporting their work with these activities. They have now donated a new table-tennis table to the Parish Council for the recreation ground. They hope to be putting on a display in the red telephone kiosk in High Street to mark the history of the Annual Peashooting Championships which have now passed their 50th anniversary!

M Housden

Chairman Witcham Parish Council

We are responsible for

- recreation ground at High Street, the cemetery at Mepal Road & approx 9.5 acres of droves on the Ouse Washes.
- infant play area. Facilities for older children and outdoor fitness equipment at the recreation ground. 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 2025/6 we have

- Held monthly meetings of the Parish Council (except August and December) plus additional meetings to deal with planning applications and the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Supported Witcham Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.
- Provided and maintained recreation ground and children's play areas.
- Completed repairs and re-decoration of bus shelter.
- Maintained street lights (No.5) owned by the Parish Council.
- Monitored and reviewed data from the Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign (rotated over 5 sites at The Slade and Martins Lane). Speedwatch sessions Spring to late Autumn.
- Considered and commented on 3 new planning applications amendments, variations and Discharges of Consents.
- 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 2026/7 we will

- Provide opportunity and encourage people to take an interest in community life in Witcham.
- Participate in and respond to consultation processes at national and local level, including the current Local Government Re-organisation.
- Participate in the Mepal and Witcham Joint Working Group 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. Spaces in the Garden of Remembrance only 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 EDCD, 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, including reviewing Community Actions arising from the survey of the village for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 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.
- Training: Provide opportunities for continued development and knowledge for all Councillors and the Clerk/RFO



Table Tennis table, kindly donated to the village by the Witcham Events Committee, March 2026 from funds raised at the 2025 Annual Peashooting Championships.

2025/6 ACCOUNTS AND 2026/7 PRECEPT

The Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the Unaudited Annual Return for 2025/6 will be issued shortly. The Precept for 2026/7 is £19,500

Witcham Parish Council
Summary of Receipts and Payments
Year Ended 31 March 2026

Year 2024/25	RECEIPTS	Year 2025/26
	£	
18500.00	Precept	19000.00
1110.07	RSPB Rent and Electricity Wayleaves	1136.32
50.00	Cemetery	0
4686.68	ECDC CIL money	0
400.00	Donations: Ely Cricket	0
9445.00	Locality Grant - Neighbourhood Plan	0
0.00	Cambs Foundation Fund - Thalia WB Community Fund	0
14000.00	Mick George Community Fund Grant Play phase 2	0
20.00	Misc (CAPALC training Refund)	0
1489.16	Interest	1162.37
15206.06	VAT re-claimed	1346.32
64906.97	TOTAL RECEIPTS	22645.01
	PAYMENTS	
10210.50	Staff costs	9218.74
	Admin:	
617.92	Insurance	668.55
315.00	External Audit	315.00
155.00	Internal Audit	185.00
1589.42	Gen Admin - toners, stationery, postage, tel, training, travel, IT etc	1537.21
540.67	Subscriptions	552.71
272.00	Hire of meeting venues	236.00
40.00	Chairman's Allowance (RBL Wreath)	40.00
8.75	Lloyds Bank fees	79.68
690.00	Grounds & Cemetery, equipment, etc	2060.00
4274.60	Village grass cutting/maintenance	3313.00
202.25	Street Lighting Energy and Maintenance	204.15
196.85	LGA72 S142: What's On, (old website)	0
200.00	LGA72 S.137	100.00
9469.50	Neighbourhood Plan	45.00
20333.00	Play/Fitness Project Recreation Ground	0
6880.16	VAT for year	1105.72
55995.62	TOTAL PAYMENTS	19660.76
	Receipts and Payments Book:	
51590.18	Balance carried forward from previous year	60501.53
64906.97	Add Receipts	22645.01
-55995.62	Less Payments	-19660.76
60501.53	Balance at 31 March (to carry forward to new year)	63485.78
	Bank Reconciliation:	
6177.44	Current Account at 31 March	1940.65
58962.76	Add Deposit A/cs	61725.13
65140.20	Total	63665.78
-4638.67	Less unpresented cheques	-180.00
60501.53		63485.78

CONTACT DETAILS

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 (ended March 2026). Witcham & Mepal PCs Joint Working Group Mepal-Witcham Road.
Vice-Chairman: karl.mackender@witchamparishcouncil.gov.uk	Cemetery, CAPALC, Member Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (ended March 2026)
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.
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 374. Next Elections May 2027. 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 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.

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.

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