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Witton Word

THE NEWSLETTER OF WITTON-LE-WEAR PARISH COUNCIL
www.wittonlewear.org.uk

WINTER EDITION 2025
ISSUE 122

THE WITTON WORD

The Witton Word is published six times a year, at the end of January, March, May, July, September and November. Each edition will include the submission date for articles for the next edition. This information will also be posted on the website and FB page.

All articles for inclusion should be sent to clerk.wittonlewearpc@gmail.com. The submission date for the next Witton Word will be close of business **Friday, 21st March, 2025.**

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University Hospital North Durham

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Darlington Memorial Hospital

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01388 762945

Repeat Prescriptions 01388762718

Auckland Medical Group, 51 Toft Hill

01388 433060

Auckland Medical Group, St Helen Auckland

01388 604163

Auckland Medical Group, Bishop Auckland

01388 602728

PHARMACIES

Clemitsons, 25a Hope Street, Crook

01388 764939

Boots Chemists, 8 North Terrace, Crook

01388 762726

Well Pharmacy, 50 Hope Street, Crook

01388 766718

Britton & Robson, 45 High Street Crook

01388 746269

SCHOOLS

Witton Le Wear Primary School

01388 488350

CHURCHES

St Philip and St James Parish Church

01388 768898

Methodist Chapel

01388 205319

ORGANISATIONS

Community Centre

Lorraine Preston 07805 517938

ELECTRICITY EMERGENCY

Northern Powergrid 0800 668877

WATER EMERGENCY

Northumbrian Water

Leaks 0800 393084

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MONTHLY COFFEE MORNINGS

Please come along and join us for cakes, coffee or tea, juice for children and a chance to catch up with friends and neighbours. Any donations made will be given to support Community Centre funds.

There will be a box for donations of tins, dried foods and other items to be donated for the Food Bank.

The coffee mornings will be held on:

**Tuesday 4th February
4th March &
1st April**

10.30 am - 12 midday in the Community Centre



If transport is a problem, we can arrange for a car to come and collect you and take you home again.

Please contact Anne 01388 488376 or Edith 01388 488136.



DISCLAIMER

The Editor of this publication does not accept any responsibility for any of the articles, excluding the Editor's letter, and the Parish Council accepts no responsibility for any of the articles, excluding those generated by the Parish Council or the Parish Councillors. The Editor and the Parish Council will not accept liability or responsibility for third party content in this publication.

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Tuesday 4th March**

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WITTON-LE-WEAR PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Witton le Wear Parish Council, Monday 11th November 2024 at Witton le Wear Community Centre at 18.15pm

1. **Welcome and Introductions** - Residents were welcomed to the meeting. There were no apologies received.
2. **Declaration of interest** - None declared
3. **Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2024** - Minutes of September 2024 were discussed and approved by councillors without amendment.
4. **Electronic Decisions since last meeting** - There were no electronic decisions since the previous meeting.
5. **Actions from previous minutes:** -
Action: J. Tremewan to chase DCC on update on signage for path closure- Done
Signage was sent over and forwarded for distribution on gates.
Action:
 - Draft a letter to the Traffic Officer advocating for the scheduled review on speed limit on A68.- Done
Cllr Murray-Leslie drafted a letter which was sent on to the Traffic Officer. The response largely stipulated that a full review had taken place and the department were satisfied with outcomes.
 - Obtain accident data on A68 from the past 10 years (Cllr Cook to make inquiries)- Done
Cllr Cook issued a Freedom of Information Request to obtain road traffic data which was obtained and shared with councillors.
 - Establish a Working Group to work on the issue.
 - Cllr Murray-Leslie acknowledged the response from the Traffic Officer and suggested that seeking additional support from residents could strengthen the case.
Resident C. Fernyhough stated that he would approach residents to garner their support, while councillors could also explore potential supporters.**Action:** J. Tremewan to ascertain whether Village Voices are still seeking a micro grant- Done
Village Voices have expressed no further interest in pursuing a grant.
Action: Following concerns raised regarding the entrance gate towards the Cricket Field, Councillors were to speak with the landowner to request they submit an application for remedial work as it is the owner and not the PC who may apply for 50% funding towards the repair of the gate.- Done
Action: Request remedial work from DCC; J Tremewan to email the cemeteries department.- Done
J. Tremewan is awaiting response from DCC.
6. **Representation by Residents** -
 - Speed Limit A68 West End
Councillors welcomed C. Fernyhough, who provided an update on his efforts regarding the A68 speed limit. He shared historic correspondence indicating that further investigation and review may be necessary. Councillors noted the change in Traffic Officer since the original review and acknowledged C. Fernyhough's observations regarding potential anomalies in the initial assessment.
7. **Small Grants Programme** - There have been no further requests.
8. **Financial Statement and report** - To follow via email for approval.
9. **Risk Assessment Updates** - Nil. To be removed from agenda.
10. **Planning matters** - Nil
11. **Parish Plan** - Cllr P Parsons advised that a list of organisations for the parish plan had been compiled and feedback was to be compiled.
12. **Witton Word** - Cllrs observed demonstrative copies of the Witton Word produced by Cllr Morehead. A procurement process had been followed and prices have been obtained. Four printers were able to produce prices (in addition to a price from ELI Press) for colour copies of 12 and 16 page booklets. Of the four plus ELI Press, Cllr Morehead recommended SWD package based on cost and package.
Agreed: Cllrs agree subject to Cllr Morehead engaging with SWD Press for further clarification on cost and delivery.
13. **Correspondence Report** - CDALC Communications had been circulated via email to Cllrs.
14. **Members' Reports:**
Cllr Murray-Leslie and Cllr Parsons wished Cllrs and residents a Merry Christmas.
15. **Date for next PC meeting** - 13th January 2025

CALLING ALL VILLAGERS: LET'S CELEBRATE THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY TOGETHER!

This May marks the 80th Anniversary of VE Day – a truly special occasion to commemorate the end of World War II in Europe and honor the sacrifices made for our freedom. To make this milestone a celebration to remember, we'd love to bring together all the wonderful groups in our village to plan something truly memorable!

I'd love to involve as many village groups as possible as well as individuals with great ideas and enthusiasm. From street parties to music and exhibitions, there's so much we could do, and everyone's input would make a real difference.

I'm planning to visit as many groups as I can over the next few weeks, but if you're interested in getting involved, feel free to email me at lauralouw83@gmail.com. We can arrange a get-together to share ideas and start planning.

Let's work together to make this anniversary one to remember for the whole village!

Laura Langstaff-Wood

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE NEWS BULLETIN



Welcome to the first News Bulletin of 2025 from Witton le Wear Women's Institute, and a Happy New year to you all! Since my last article, we have had some snow and quite cold days.....however, the days are getting longer and nights starting to get lighter....Spring is around the corner (hopefully!).

December was a very enjoyable month for our ladies – we had our final Meeting of the year with our very own Chris Stockdale enlightening us on Christmas traditions, a most informative talk. The evening ended with mince pies, stollen and Mulled Wine.

Our Christmas Meal at The Copper Mine in Crook was delicious as always and the camaraderie amongst members was evident to see – we all felt the Christmas Season was well under way.

Not ones to miss out on a Party our Annual Party was held at the beginning of January, another lovely evening enjoyed by all.

Our next Meeting is on 6th February, and another one of our own, Kate Atkins, will be our Guest Speaker for the evening doing "Flower Arranging".

New Members are always welcome to come along to our Meetings. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 7 pm for 7.30 pm.

Barbara Coia - Secretary

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PEW NEWS

Firstly a huge thank you to all the men who helped to cut back the tree which fell in the churchyard during Storm Eowen. The large sycamore tree has probably grown in the that spot for over a hundred years and perhaps Ed Short can look through his postcard collection to see when it appears in them?

The Council sent a team already busy with trees down all over the area, which carried a bigger priority than our tree. So thank you Joe Mercore and your team who cleared the steps and then the gang from the village who took over to cut back the tree top and branches and swept the steps while also removing the handrail totally deformed by the trees fall. At the time of writing this the gang are considering how much more they can do without bigger chain saws. There are a lot of small branches and a suggestion was made to build a 'fence' with them in the Environmental space. Hopefully some expertise will be available to do that. We thank God that the tree fell sideways and not onto the church building which could have sustained awful damage.

A wonderful Burns Night took place the same day and diners enjoyed a traditional menu including 'Addressing the Haggis'. There were quizzes, and other games during the evening and each table competed to be the winners which went to the Haggis Hounds' team. It is thought that around £400 was made and many, many thanks to the ladies who devolved the evening and its amazing food.

Lent and Easter are now approaching and I was surprised to see Easter Eggs on sale before Christmas! Our own Rev Mel will be starting Sanctuary @ Six on a Wednesday night starting on 5th February, a time of quietness and candle light in the Celtic tradition. Well worth coming along to after a days stresses!

Kate Atkins and Mary Hayton have been involved in planning our church for a Net Zero Carbon Footprint with a workshop on Zoom explaining how we attempt this in several stages. They will keep you updated and they found it was not as daunting as it at first seemed.

They also attended a meeting in Stanhope to hear about a new Pilgrims Trail from Kilhope Museum, to the Faith Museum in Bishop Auckland. Witton le Wear will be on the route and it is called The Pilgrimage of Hope which looks like being 48 miles long. We are included in this because we have a church, a pub with B & B provision available and a station on the Weardale Railway. It sounds very exciting and again we will keep you up to date on how we can provide a place to rest in all weathers. This may need the church to be manned on perhaps a couple of days a week, or a forward telephone number to book a time to be visiting and to be able to come into church and use its facilities and have time of quiet on their journey. Almost certainly the least we would need to think about is to make the porch a place of shelter if needed, provide a water bowl for dogs and water together with snacks, a cushion or two to sit on. If the organisers go for stickers or a stamper at each place of interest, these can be kept in a box file/plastic box so the pilgrims can mark their own cards if there is no one able to do it for them. All very exciting for us as a village.

PARISH COUNCILLORS & OFFICERS

Name	Telephone Number
MURRAY- LESLIE. Hannah <i>Chair</i>	07920 557324
PARSONS. Paul <i>Vice Chair</i>	01388 488528
COOK. Caroline <i>Councillor</i>	07760 193417
DOCHERTY. Lynn <i>Councillor</i>	07765 807589
MOREHEAD. Sarah <i>Councillor</i>	07763 828076
LANGSTAFF-WOOD. Laura	07765 142350
WILSON. Olive	01388 488294
CAMPBELL. Mel	

FRIENDSHIP LUNCH - DON'T BE A STRANGER



The Spring lunch will be on Friday 21st March.

The lunches are organised for anyone in our community who wants some companionship and who would enjoy meeting friends, neighbours or strangers who will soon become friends for a light lunch. We offer a choice of 3 soups and 3 puddings. We ask for a donation of £5 towards the costs of the day. There may be a glass or two of wine. It starts at 12 midday in the Community Centre, and usually finishes around 1.30pm.

Transport can be arranged and if you have attended before, we will automatically send you information. If you have not been before or would like to come along, please make contact with Anne or Pippa. Everyone is welcome.

Anne Yuill 01388 488376 or Pippa Cross 01388 488099

MARY AND JOSEPH'S TRAVEL LOG DECEMBER 2024

During December, a Posada containing Mary, Joseph and the donkey knitted figures made its way around the local Parish. They stayed at different venues each day and on the 24th December arrived at St Philip and St James Parish Church in Witton le Wear ready for the Christmas services. A travel log was kept and the following is a synopsis of their journey.

Mary, Joseph and the donkey started their travels at Witton le Wear Primary School where they spent a day with each of the four-year groups. Children drew pictures and wrote stories telling the story in the words of Mary and Joseph. One child wrote "Joseph was calm, but I was mostly feeling excited by the time we reached Bethlehem as I realised, I was the only woman in the world to give birth to such a precious little baby". Mary and Joseph went onto stay with Dorothy and Dave and they took part in the bustle of family life.

At Jim and Denise's, Mary and Joseph saw the life size versions of themselves that live in the Crombie's garage for 11 months of the year. Edward and Jane offered the couple a peaceful place to stay on the 14th December to enable Mary to rest her swollen ankles and aching back. The following cold winter's night, Kate and Tim made them welcome and ensured they had a candle burning throughout the evening. God was working in mysterious ways. Barrie, Lynne and David were next to host the weary couple and organised for food and comforts. They all prayed together and in the morning Mary and Joseph set off again on their journey. They arrived at Anne and Kelso's late the following night and were very thankful for a place to rest. The following morning Joseph used his carpentry skills to help Kelso's model boat making whilst Mary rested.

Mary and Joseph set off to stay with Jean and Barry and their dog was very surprised by the visit of the donkey. Onto Jonathan and Caroline's home where there was not much rest with three noisy children running around, but Mary was glad to stretch out on a comfy bed. The following day, they set off for Mary and Jonathan's home but had no oil left in their lamp when they arrived. Jonathan refilled the lamp ready for the final part of their journey. The following day 24th December, Mary and Joseph arrived at St Philip and St James Parish Church in Witton le Wear where they waiting for the birth of their son.

To some people reading this, it may seem like some adult silliness, but to those who had the privilege of hosting the Posada, young and old, it gave time for reflection on the real meaning of Christmas. We feel very lucky to have had this special opportunity.

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VERY SUCCESSFUL SAFARI SUPPER IN THE CHURCH

On Friday 24th January, 35 guests enjoyed a fabulous home cooked, three course meal plus prosecco and tea, coffee and biscotti. Haggis was piped in and addressed with much aplomb and a toast was raised to the Haggis and of course Robert Burns. The evening was interspersed with some friendly quizzes, raffles, games and enjoyed by all who attended. The whole idea of a safari supper is to be able to chat with friends and meet new friends; the food, entertainment and any money raised is of a secondary nature. It is fantastic to inform residents that £400 was raised for the church.

There was even great fun when many hands turned up to help with the clear up on the Saturday morning. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this very happy event.

Anne Yuill



VILLAGE VOICES

Singing for Health & Happiness



Happy New Year to you all from Village Voices. Christmas seems like a distant memory now but we had a winter celebration on Saturday with our JaNbury concert. A very good audience enjoyed a varied programme. Not only were Village Voices singing a variety of songs but we had support from our friends. Highside Madrigal Singers came all the way from Ripon to give us a musical treat. Paul Smith once again came to not only sing solos but also to add his wonderful voice to the choir songs. Similarly, Maddy & Alastair Fisher played the flute and piano beautifully and joined the choir. Matthew Haworth, accompanied on piano by Issac, demonstrated what a wonderful instrument the violin is in the hands of an expert. The music was followed by excellent refreshments provided by choir members. Donations at the door raised £235 for the Neuroendocrine Cancer UK Charity, this is a rare cancer that one of our choir members is suffering from. The raffle raised £151 for choir funds. We are very grateful to everyone for supporting us.

The choir is dwindling in numbers and, if it wasn't for the performers who come along to support us, we wouldn't be able to hold concerts. If we don't get new members this may have been the last concert we can put on. It would be a shame for Village Voices to finish after eight years. Please come along to our next practice on 28th January at 19.30 in St. Philip & St. James Church, Witton-Le-Wear to see what we do. You don't have to be a great singer, we are all about having fun.

Do you enjoy singing? Come and give us a try, just drop in.



Village Voices

“ *Singing for Health & Happiness* “

A Community Choir which meets in St Philip and St James Parish Church,
on a Tuesday evening 7.30 – 9pm

We sing a variety of music and enjoy ourselves.

It doesn't matter how well you can sing because together we make great music.



If you are interested contact:

Liz – 01388 488195, Mike – 01388 488136, Denise – 01388 488661



NEWS FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL

I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas break and a Happy New Year.

I'd like to start the year with some news about the Parish Clerk post, which Jenny Tremewan has had to give up. Jenny joined us in 2023, she has provided invaluable support and we thank her for all her hard work. I'm delighted to announce that Mike McLaren has just accepted the post, and we look forward to working with him in the coming months.

This year we are continuing our work on developing a Parish Plan. We're having conversations with local groups to help us develop a survey for everyone who lives in the village, to inform an action plan for the Parish Council that reflects what is important to residents.

A number of people have spoken to us about traffic on the A68 recently. The Parish Council has no direct control over highways decisions, but we are keen to support residents to amplify their very real concerns about how the traffic affects them and their access to the main part of the village.

Don't forget we have a small grants fund available to local groups to support community-led action. This can be used to help with whatever they need e.g. running costs, equipment, events or pretty much anything else. You don't necessarily need to have a group bank account, so if you want to organise something for the benefit of the village just get in touch. Come along to a meeting or email clerk.wittonlewear@gmail.com for more info.

And finally, 2025 is a local election year in County Durham! If we receive enough nominations, an election will be held on 1st May. A formal notice will be posted in the village notice boards and on facebook closer to the time.

In the meantime, if you think you might be interested in standing as a Parish Councillor, why not find out more about the role? The County Durham Association of Local Councils (CDALC) website has lots of information, or you could have a chat with a current Councillor or come along to our next meeting (10th March). Witton le Wear is one of the smallest Parish Councils in the County – we are a friendly and positive Council and we welcome new ideas and people who want to get involved.

All the best - Hannah



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WITTON LE WEAR COMMUNITY CENTRE GROUPS



Mondays:

- Carpet Bowls 18.45pm – 21.45pm – Kate Atkins 01388 488626

Tuesdays:

- Chair Exercise 9.30am – 10.30am (Start date to be confirmed)
 - Sewing group – 13.00pm – 16.00pm

This is a closed group but if you are interested in joining a sewing group please speak with: Anne Yuill – 01388 488376

- Yoga 7.00pm – 8.30pm – Mark Aspinall 01388 710658

Wednesdays:

- Badminton 13.30pm – 15.00pm – Ursula Jones 01388 488697 / 07717707934
- Youth Club 18.30pm – 20.30pm – Derek Bradley 07808480029

Thursdays:

- Clubbercise 7pm - 8pm (no session on the 1st Thursday of the Month) – Vikki Mitchell - 07503191919

Every 1st Tuesday of the month, coffee morning 10.00am – 12.00pm – Christina 07714200254

We have regular friendship lunch days, next date is 13th December 2024.
For more information, please contact Anne Yuill 01388 488376

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Call Vikki on 07503191919 Or message me on Facebook 'club with Vikki' See you soon!

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FUNCTIONAL MOBILITY BALANCE

WITTON LE WEAR COMMUNITY CENTRE



Witton-le-Wear Community Association would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year! We hope you all enjoyed the Christmas light switch on in December. It is becoming such a well-attended event, bringing the community and the school together. Along with cups of mulled wine and hot chocolate, we enjoyed Christmas carols sang by pupils from the Primary School and the Village Voices accompanied by the musical delights of Alistair and Maddy Fisher. The event also saw local independent small businesses attended with their delightful handmade crafts. A special thanks to the school's Head Teacher, Mr Laws, who led the countdown to the switch on of our new Christmas lights! A big thank you to all that made the event happen!

Summer Fair 2025 – Organisation Committee needed

We are seeking a group of volunteers from within the community to form a Summer Fair committee to lead the organisation and running of the Summer Fair this year, as there is not the usual capacity within the Community Association to do so. Without a group of volunteers from within the village, sadly the Summer Fair will not be able to go ahead. If you would like to volunteer to ensure the continuity of the fair, please contact us!

Free classes funded by Weardale AAP

We currently have two classes running at the community centre which are FREE to attend. The classes are ran by personal trainer, Jack Desmond. No booking required, just turn up.

Gentle exercise - chair based gentle exercise class promoting mobility and wellbeing. Every Tuesday, 9:30-10:15am.

Buggy Beats – an exercise class for parents/carers and their babies in buggies and/or carriers. The class runs weekly on a Tuesday, 10:30-11:15am (expect for one week a month to allow for Coffee Mornings).

Use the community centre for your events

Want a venue for a party? You can hire the Community Centre for £20 per hour (min. 3 hours hire). We often host children's bouncy castle parties! Please contact us for availability and further information, email below.

We need you!

We are seeking to recruit new trustees, if you are interested or would like further information on what it involves please contact the email address below. The current trustees are: Cheryl Barker, Phillip Cowan, Lorraine Preston, John Preston and Lyn Robinson-Smith.

Contact us the Trustees
trustees@wittonlewear.com

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