

# THE WITTON WORD

ISSUE 126, OCTOBER 2025

In this edition

**Annual Village Show**

**Fond Farewell to Village Voices**

**Village Goes Fibre**



The newsletter of Witton le Wear Parish Council

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**NEXT DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:  
Friday 28 November**

**SCHEDULED DATE FOR DELIVERY:  
Wednesday 10 December**

*If you would like to receive the Word Witton electronically,  
please let the Clerk have your email address.*

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## Welcome to the latest issue of The Witton Word

Hannah Murray-Leslie  
Parish Council Chair

**W**elcome to the Autumn edition – October has come round quickly!

I spoke too soon about our teething problems and some copies of our last edition didn't arrive on doorsteps until very late.

Understandably this is frustrating for people who've got articles and info about events to us in good time, so our apologies for that.

We've agreed and published a schedule in this newsletter and re-organised the delivery arrangements so fingers crossed!

We do rely on volunteers to put the *Witton Word* through your doors, and it would be great to have a few more – if you are able and willing to deliver to a small area close to your house or further afield, please get in touch with Mike, our Clerk, who will be coordinating deliveries from now on.

Also, if you know of anyone who doesn't get a copy and would like one, please encourage them to let us know.

We've had some very positive engagement from residents recently,

and we're working together to try and find solutions to the issues they have raised.

Most recently, we have agreed to work with the WI to campaign more strongly for action around the lack of bus services in the village.

We're also getting underway with replacing some of the village noticeboards that have seen better days.

Last year we started to gather some information to help us develop a new Parish Plan. To move this project forward we're holding a meeting outside of the normal Parish Council Meeting to discuss what we've learned so far and agree what our next steps should be.

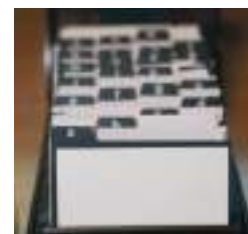
This workshop is particularly aimed at people who are involved in local groups and can represent a broad range of people, but individuals are also welcome.

The meeting has been set for 6.15pm on Thursday 16 October at the Community Centre – if you are interested in being involved, please contact [clerk@wittonlewearpc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk@wittonlewearpc@gmail.com) for more details.



# Directory

Useful telephone numbers and information



Police, non-emergency . . . . .101  
 NHS, non-emergency. . . . . 111

**HOSPITALS**

Bishop Auckland . . . . . 01388 455 000  
 North Durham. . . . . 0191 333 2333  
 Darlington Memorial . . . . . 01325 380 100

**SURGERIES**

North House, Crook. . . . . 01388 762 945  
 Repeat Prescriptions . . . . . 01388 762 718  
 Auckland Medical, Toft Hill . . . . . 01388 433 060  
 Auckland Medical, St Helen Auck . . . 01388 604 163  
 Auckland Medical, Bishop Auck . . . 01388 602 728

**SCHOOL**

Witton le Wear Primary. . . . . 01388 488 350

**UTILITIES EMERGENCIES**

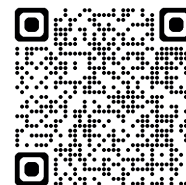
Northern Powergrid. . . . . 0800 668 877  
 Northumbrian Water  
 Leaks . . . . . 0800 393 084  
 Sewerage . . . . . 0800 328 7648  
 National Gas . . . . . 0800 111999

**Mobile Post Office**

Parks on High Street outside  
 St Phillip and St James Church

Every Tuesday 11.45 – 12.15

- Cash Withdrawals
- Cash Deposits
- Cheque Deposits
- Parcel Force Express Service
- Vehicle Tax



Scan the QR Code, above, for more information.

**Mobile Library**

Parks on High Street outside  
 St Phillip and St James Church

Tue 17 Jun: 14.55–15.10

Tue 08 Jul: 14.55–15.10



Scan the QR Code for more.



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 care and compassion  
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”



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# Over 500 exhibits at Village Show

Witton le Wear's annual show well supported



**O**n Saturday, 13 September, the annual Village Show took place in the Community Centre and once again it was another fabulously attended and well supported show, writes *Sarah Brabban*.

With over 500 exhibits on the day, the village showcased its talents for everyone to see. Thank you to everyone who entered, the display across every section and class was of excellent standard.

But it's not about the winning, it's about the taking part and coming together as a community to enjoy a genuinely happy and fun-filled day. It was lovely to see so many people enter, new and old faces, and the judges were so complimentary.

I just would like to say a huge thank you to all the committee members and our wider network of support and volunteers to help make this day possible.

It's surprising just how much work goes into Show Day, and everyone who supports deserves a shout out for giving up their time and effort to make the day as special as possible.

For the second year running the show committee oversaw the afternoon refreshments which was another amazing success.

Special thanks to Linda and Marie for running the kitchen and to all those who kindly donated tasty cakes and treats, it's really appreciated and the generous donations from this side of the show goes towards the running costs of staging the village show.

A big thanks to the judges, many of whom are residents of the village but we have some that travel from further afield and all are steadfast in supporting our brilliant local show.

A special thanks to George at The Victoria for hosting the presentation and auction evening, this is always a special night and the atmosphere was once again electric this year!

Lastly a special thanks to the residents of Witton le Wear, whom without, this show wouldn't continue.

Here's to inspiring more exhibitors and exhibits for next year... the preparations have already begun!

## VILLAGE SHOW TROPHY WINNERS 2025

**Sunflower Championship - H Simpson**

**Pair of Pot Leeks - G Ablett**

**Best Single Leek - E Hawes**

**Best Onion in Show - P Gibbs**

**Most Points Vegetables - E Short**

**Best Exhibit in Vegetables NVS Medal - E Short**

**Most Points Flowers - C Brabban**

**Best Three Gladioli - G Ablett**

**Best Exhibit in Flowers - H Murray-Leslie**

**Best Exhibit Buttonholes - S Cooper**

**Most Points Cookery - S Cooper**

**Best Exhibit in Preserves - S Short**

**Best Exhibit in Handicrafts - E Graves**

**Best Exhibit in Photography - B Powell**

**Best Exhibit in Floral Arrangement - D Crombie**



# Fond Farewell to Village Voices

Choir to close after eight years



This is the final report from Village Voices for the *Witton Word* as, sadly, we are coming to the end of eight and a half years of singing.

Our Musical Director is moving away from the village and our brilliant accompanist has moved to another choir. We wish them both all the very best.

In addition to these two events our numbers have dwindled to a point where the choir is no longer viable.

We have had a lot of fun over the years singing together. We have performed in Durham Cathedral and at Ushaw College, and, of course, have put on many concerts, using the church with its excellent acoustics and raising hundreds of pounds for charity.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Witton-Le-Wear for their support over the past eight years.

**North East Theatre Organ Trust (NETOA) are offering a chance to win two free tickets to either of the concerts advertised in this edition of *Witton Word* (see below).**

**To enter this exclusive quiz, answer the following question:**

**What type of organ is the Mighty Wurlitzer? a) Electronic Organ b) Pipe Organ c) Mouth Organ**

Answers to david.wright@netoa.org.uk. One winner will be drawn from correct answers received before closing date 31/10/2025. Winner notified 1/11/2025 via email.

North East Theatre Organ Association  
Registered Charity No. 1149463

**LON CHANEY**  
stars in the classic silent movie  
**'THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA'**

celebrating its centenary  
in 2025  
with 'live' accompaniment at the Mighty Wurlitzer by  
**AARON HAWTHORNE**

Sunday 23rd November 2025 at 2.30

Tickets cost £12.00  
Available from:  
www.netoa.org.uk  
or phone: 0333 666 3366  
(Booking fee applies)

New Victoria Centre  
High Street  
Howden le Wear  
Crook  
Co. Durham  
DL15 8EZ

North East Theatre Organ Association  
Registered Charity No. 1149463

**Traditional Christmas Concerts 2025**

Featuring  
**LEWIS SCOTT**  
at the  
**Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Pipe Organ**

Sunday 14th December  
at 2.30

at the  
NEW VICTORIA CENTRE, High Street, Howden le Wear, DL15 8EZ  
Tickets £12.00 - Buy at: www.netoa.org.uk  
or Tel: 0333 666 3366 (Booking Fee applies)

(Please book in good time or there may be no room at the end)

# Community Centre

Call Lorraine Preston on 07805 517938 or email: [trustees@wittonlewear.com](mailto:trustees@wittonlewear.com)



<u>Activity</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Time</u>
<b>Mondays</b>		
Carpet Bowls	Contact Kate Atkins: 01388 488626	6.45pm - 9.45pm
<b>Tuesdays</b>		
Coffee Morning	Every 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month. Christina: 07714 200254	10.15am - 11.45am
Chair Exercise	Gentle exercise with coach, Jack Desmond. Free.	9.30am - 10.30am
Sewing Group	Anne Yuill: 01388 488376	1pm - 4pm
Yoga	Mark Aspinall: 01388 710658	7pm - 8.30pm
<b>Wednesdays</b>		
Badminton	Ursula Jones: 01388 488697 or 07717 707934	1.30pm - 3pm
Youth Club	Derek Bradley: 07808 480029	6.30pm - 8.30pm

**WEARDALE RAILWAY**

# SANTA EXPRESS

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ONE TRAIN RIDE AT A TIME...**

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# Women's Institute News

Inspiring the women of Witton le Wear



**W**elcome to the latest edition of Witton le Wear WI News Bulletin, writes *Barbara Coia*.

The autumn months are here, and we have been having a mixed bag of weather – brilliant sunshine as we speak, though cooler mornings and evenings.

We all had an enjoyable summer break and have only had one meeting since the last update.

Our guest speaker, Stephanie Yearnshire, had us all guessing when she took us through the life of Mary Ann Cotton – was she really a murderess?.

Our next meeting will be the Annual Group Meeting, and this year it is Witton le Wear WI's turn to be the host institute.

A lot of hard work goes into the group meetings, but it's worth it in the end when we get to meet up with our fellow WI Members in the Gaunless Valley group.

November will be our Annual General Meeting, so I think we will all be ready for the festive season when it comes around!

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

## 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.

**Donations for the food bank will be accepted.**

The coffee mornings will be held from **10.15am – 11.45am**

**in the Community Centre on the first Tuesday of the month**

*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)



## Friendship Lunch *Don't be a stranger*

**The Autumn lunch will be on Friday 3rd October**

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 three soups and three puddings.**

We ask for a donation of £5 towards 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.

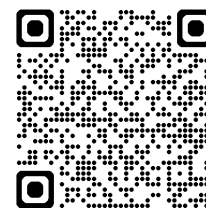
Transport can be arranged and if you have attended before, we will automatically send you information.

If you have not been before or would like to come along, please make contact with Anne (01388 488376) or Pippa (01388 488099).

**Everyone is welcome**

## Pew News

St Philip and St James Parish Church: 01388 768898



**F**irstly, the new railings have been installed by Alex from Hammer and Hound Forge at Dunston.

Alex was incredibly efficient as his brief was to form and make railings identical to the remaining railings (insurance Company instructions) and it meant measuring each stanchion to the exact size of the ones opposite which were not uniform.

The first day of work was in 34 degrees of heat and the church gave him a cool resting place when needed. The second week it rained 'cats and dogs' with thunder and lightening.

His attention to the task was superb and we now know and can recommend a very good blacksmith.

**Harvest Festival** is the weekend of 18/19th October.

By tradition the church is decorated on the morning of Saturday 18th October and all offers of greenery and help gratefully received.

The Harvest Supper is on Saturday 18th October at 7pm with vegetable soup and apple crumble afterwards. Dave Phelps is busy planning one of his fiendish quizzes. The cost as usual £5 person and a raffle will also be held.

As always we set a target for goods for the food bank at Woodhouse Close to be brought to church either before or during the Holy Communion Service at 11 o'clock on the 19th October.

The food bank numbers are always increasing with families in need being recommended by local care services. We are aiming for 350 items being donated and they welcome food, cleaning items, personal and dental hygiene items, disposable nappies etc. They recommend buying supermarket own brands as they are good value for money and you get more for your money than famous brands.

Last year we exceeded the target of 350 items with an astounding 438 items, so can we exceed that again this year? The food bank were totally gobsmacked last year and put a picture on social media.

### Crafternoon

We hope to have a Crafternoon on the Wednesday 29th of October, half term, from 2pm to 3.30pm. There will be 6 crafts to try with a theme of *Autumn into Winter*. Crafternoons are free of charge, the only stipulation is that a responsible person accompanies the child/children although our staff leaders have current DBS status or are in the process of being completed. It is available to anyone who would like to come – there are no criteria for attendance.

### Funerals

Roland Hope 18/9/2025

Norman Vipond 24/9/2025

May they rest in peace



# Parish Council News

Delivering quality services and information to Witton le Wear and surrounding areas



## WITTON-LE-WEAR PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES – JULY 2025

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Witton le Wear Parish Council held on **Monday 14th July 2025** at Witton le Wear Community Centre commencing at 18-15.

**Present:** Cllrs Murray-Leslie (Chair), L Docherty, C Cook, M Campbell, L Langstaff-Wood, L Bentley.

**Residents:** None present.

**25/37** Cllr Murray-Leslie welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**25/38** The agenda being considered by the Cllrs there was no declaration of interest.

**25/39** Apologies received from M McLaren (Parish Council Clerk)  
**Residents:** No apologies

**25/40** Both the minutes of the regular meeting and AGM held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July were accepted and signed by Cllr Murray-Leslie with the following amendments:

**25/41** Amendments to minutes:

Paul Parsons is no longer a signatory on the Parish Council Bank Account

Parish clerk is to propose and Councillors Murray Leslie and C Cook approve payments from the Parish Council Bank Account

**25/42** Vice chair – resolved, Councillor C Cook has been elected and has accepted the position. Nominated by Councillor Murray-Leslie, seconded by Councillor Campbell.

**25/43** The AGAR was approved. The Parish Council thanked the Parish clerk for his work with the AGAR. (This was resolved)

**25/44** Pecuniary interest forms have been completed by the Councillors and given to the Parish Clerk to be filed in the DCC system. (This was resolved)

**25/45** Councillor Murray-Leslie said all Declaration of office forms were now complete and would be handed over to the Parish Clerk. (This was resolved)

**25/46** Councillor Cook presented a financial report and agreed to forecast ongoing annual costs to be used to support other potential future projects.

### **Actions from previous minutes:**

**25/47** Councillor Bentley advised that the path strimming was ongoing. The works by the strimming company had been increased to include the removal of a dangerous tree by the river. The tree has been removed and the costs will be reclaimed from DCC. Strimming works are now complete.

**25/48** Councillor Langstaff-Wood has addressed the Facebook comms issues so the account can now be accessed.

**25/49** Parish clerk action – to contact DCC regarding lack of public transport though the village during the school holidays.

**25/50** A68 – Progress report to be given at September meeting

# Parish Council News

[www.wittonlewear.org.uk](http://www.wittonlewear.org.uk) | [clerk.wittonlewearpc@gmail.com](mailto:clerk.wittonlewearpc@gmail.com)



## WITTON-LE-WEAR PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES – JULY 2025

### Working Groups - New Actions

- 25/51** Contact from residents about the appearance of the village.  
Action: Cllrs Cook and Bentley have agreed to get prices from 3 x local companies to carry out strimming work around the Green.
- 25/52** A Microgrant for £400 has been granted to The Weardale Railway.  
Action: Cllrs Murray-Leslie and the Clerk to review the process for ease of use.
- 25/53** Footpaths and trees  
Action: Cllr Bentley to remind residents to let the Parish Council know about overgrown paths and fallen or dangerous trees.
- 25/54** Electronic Decisions - None
- 25/55** Witton Word  
Cllr Langstaff-Wood reported that the layout of the Witton Word, now in colour, has been favourably received. A timetable for publication has now been issued to regular contributors.  
Action: Cllr Langstaff-Wood to manage distribution of Witton Word.
- 25/56** Planning Issues  
None
- 25/57** Dog Bins  
Cllr Docherty requested a change in the position of the dog bin near the old bridge to make it more user friendly.  
Action: Cllr Docherty to investigate with DCC

Meeting closed at 19-15

Next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025, 18-15, at WLW Community Centre

Signed by the Chair H Murray-Leslie

Date 08/09/2025

# Parish Council News

Delivering quality services and information to Witton le Wear and surrounding areas



## Your Parish Councillors and Officers



**Michael McLaren**  
Parish Clerk

t. 07976 400604



**Hannah Murray-Leslie**  
Chair

t. 07920 557324



**Caroline Cook**  
Councillor

t. 07760 193417



**Mel Campbell**  
Councillor

t. via Parish Clerk



**Lynn Docherty**  
Councillor

t. 07765 807589



**Laura Langstaff-Wood**  
Councillor

t. 07765 142350



**Lynda Bentley**  
Councillor

t. via Parish Clerk

## Witton le Wear goes Fibre

*Notes from meeting with GoFibre, 12 August, Witton le Wear.*

### Project Gigabit

Project Gigabit is the UK governments programme to replace the old copper cable network with high speed fibre optic cable enabling hard to reach communities to access lightning-fast gigabit capable broadband.

Several large providers have been tasked with completing the fibre installations by UK area. The UK government issued the first contract to GoFibre who have been tasked with carrying out the works in Scotland and North East England.

The original UK target date for completion was 2025. Clearly, that target has been missed and the date has slipped to 2027 at which time the old copper network will be switched off.

### Will it affect me?

Yes, if you have telephone, broadband etc your existing system will need to be replaced with fibre. Take advice if you have nurse call or similar.

### How much will it cost?

The groundworks and installation are free, there is a monthly payment to GoFibre for the connection. (see prices on Gofibre website against download speed you pick)

### So what happens?

You need to contact GoFibre on 08000 590 980 to arrange a new contract at which time a survey will be arranged.

### What is the survey about?

Technicians will visit your property to determine how much work is required to get the new fibre optic cable from the pavement to the wall of your house.

### What about Broadband speeds

The existing best speeds on copper cables are about 60 mbps, decreasing as you get further away from the exchange. Go Fibre are offering a lowest speed of 150 mbps up to 1000 mbps.

### I have an existing agreement.

Go fibre will pay a contribution to buy you out of the existing agreement. Talk with them. GoFibre will pay up to £200 switching credit.

### Am I stuck with Go Fibre?

Speaking with one of the telephone sales people at Go Fibre at present the commercial agreements are not yet in place with the likes of BT, Virgin etc so other providers are not yet authorised to use the new fibre network. This will leave people tied in for at least 24 months.

### How do I contact Go Fibre?

Telephone 08000 590 980 for the initial conversation. support@gofibre.co.uk will find answers to your technical questions  
alli.walker@durham.gov.uk is the Durham County Council liaison.