

Whixall Parish Council



Chairman: Ian Mercer

Minutes of the Parish Council's Monthly Meeting held on 8 September 2021 at Whixall Social Centre starting at 7:30pm

Present:

Councillors: I Mercer (Chair); J Spenser; B Harris; A Rawlinson; M Howard; D Edgerton; C Weedall;
E Towers (Shropshire Council)
Cllr C Weedall joined the meeting following co-option (item 55/21a)
Cllr Harris left the meeting at 19.52

Clerk: A Roberts

Members of the community: 0

Representatives of other bodies/ organisations: 1

54/21 Apologies for Absence

Cllr A Rawlinson: Cllr P Broomhall (Shropshire Council)

55/21 With the agreement of the meeting, the Chair brought forward all Parish Matters.

Parish Matters

a. Co-option of Parish Councillors

Following an interview for Co-option Cllrs Mercer, Harris and Spenser gave feedback to the meeting. Cllr Mercer proposed that Claire Weedall be co-opted onto the Council. Seconded by Cllr Spenser. Approved by all.

Resolved: Claire Weedall to be co-opted onto the Council.

Cllr Weedall signed the necessary paperwork and joined the meeting.

b. Senior Citizens' Christmas Party

Cllr Harris stated that even though lockdown restrictions were over, everything was far from normal and many activities were still being carried out online. He suggested that the party should be deferred for another year. It was also noted that the target audience for the party is one of the most vulnerable groups and keeping them safe was a priority.

Proposed: Cllr Harris. Seconded: Cllr Spenser Agreed by all.

Resolved: The Senior Citizens' Party will not take place in 2021

c. Annual Newsletter

The Clerk suggested that the newsletter should include an introduction from the Chair; Councillor contact information (including Unitary Councillors); the Marlot (including LNR); a Christmas party update; neighbourhood watch information; and information aimed at filling the two vacancies on the Council.

In addition members suggested that Remembrance Sunday arrangements and, if sufficient space is available, something about the forthcoming memorial service for William Reeves, a Whixall resident who fought at the Battle of Waterloo.

The Clerk will bring a draft newsletter to the October meeting and will aim to have it printed in time for delivery by Councillors at the end of October.

d. Bowling Club Lease – Legal Fees

The Clerk explained the background to how the Council had found itself having to pay a £360 legal bill despite the bowling club having undertaken in 2019 to pay all legal costs associated with revising the lease. The main concern of the Bowling Club appears to be that the bill may include costs for registering the land. The Clerk explained that the actual registration process had been carried out by her predecessor and herself and that she had requested a

breakdown of the costs from Hatchers, but had not received one. It was noted that the Bowling Club has recently made the same request and Cllr Harris suggested that the Council may have to consider paying any costs associated with the land registration, but it would be wise to wait and see if the Bowling Club are able to obtain the financial breakdown which could then form the basis of discussions. Other questions raised include the extent to which the facility is used by Whixall Parishioners.

Proposed: Cllr Harris. Seconded: Cllr Edgerton. Agreed by all

Resolved: No further action is to be taken at this stage, but, if required, it will be considered in the future

e. Social Centre Boundary Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference

Cllr Mercer and Cllr Harris will represent the Parish Council on this group which will meet for the first time on 16 September. The Clerk presented the proposed terms of reference (Appendix A).

Proposed: Cllr Mercer. Seconded: Cllr Harris. Agreed by all.

Resolved: The terms of reference for the Social Centre Boundary Task & Finish Group are accepted.

Cllr Harris left the meeting.

f. Royal British Legion Donation

After a short discussion it was agreed that the Council would again purchase a wreath and make a donation. Total cost: £50.

Proposed: Cllr Mercer. Seconded: Cllr Edgerton. Agreed by all.

Resolved: The Clerk will arrange for a £50 payment to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

g. The Marlot

The Clerk explained that the custom has been for the grazing agreement to be signed off each year by the Council, even though the only the dates are changed. She also explained that charging £1 rent was impractical and suggested that an actual peppercorn would be more appropriate. There was some discussion over the duration of the individual agreements which are timed to ensure that grazing cannot take place for 365 days each year.

a) Proposed: Cllr Spenser. Seconded: Cllr Edgerton

Resolved: The grazing agreement will be updated and signed on an annual basis for as long as grazing needs to take place on the Marlot. The revised rent will be one peppercorn per annum.

Cllr Mercer explained the reasons for the Local Nature Reserve application and potential access to funding. As there was no update on the application the Clerk will make some enquiries about timescales with Graham Turnbull. Cllr Towers had visited the Marlot as part of a meeting with the Canals and Rivers Trust and he hopes to see the two organisations working to help each other where applicable.

Martin Spenser provided an activity report (Appendix B)

56/21 Public Participation

Mike Crawshaw (Natural England) provided an update to the meeting (Appendix C).

57/21 Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was proposed by Cllr Spenser that the draft minutes, of the Annual meeting of the Council held on 11 May 2021, were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Edgerton and agreed by all present.

It was proposed by Cllr Spenser that the draft minutes, of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 11 May 2021, were an accurate record. This was seconded by Cllr Howard and agreed by all present.

The Chairman signed both sets of minutes.

58/21 Planning**a. To Consider Applications**

Reference	Detail	Stance
21/03811/LBC	Allmans Lift Bridge Replacement of timber counter balance beams on a like for like basis and repairs to cracking on timber support columns using resin filler affecting a Grade II* Listed Building	Support
21/03634/FUL	3 Abbeygreen, SY13 2PT Change of use of agricultural land to residential curtilage and erection of two storey extension following demolition of existing agricultural building, together with internal and external alterations to existing dwelling	Support

b. To Receive Planning Application Decisions

Reference	Detail	Decision
21/01623/VAR	Higher House SY13 2NQ Variation of Condition No.s 2 and 4 attached to planning permission 18/03719/FUL for the creation of vehicular access, driveway and turning area; installation of gates	Grant Permission
20/03691/VAR	6 Hollinwood Whixall Variation of condition no 2 (approved plans) attached to planning permission reference 19/01768/FUL Erection of a single dwelling and detached double garage following demolition of existing dwelling.	Grant Permission
21/01140/FUL	Land At Moss Lane, SY13 2QE Engineering operations to enable an improved water level management for the land to include clay bunds, ditches, and water control measures	Grant Permission
21/02017/FUL	Church Farm Church Lane Whixall Whitchurch Shropshire SY13 2NA Erection of cattle housing building (Phase 1)	Grant Permission
21/02639/LBC	Higher House Whixall Whitchurch Shropshire SY13 2NQ Creation of vehicular access, driveway and turning area; installation of gates (in association with 21/01623/VAR) affecting a Grade II Listed Building	Grant Permission
21/02423/FUL	The Hollies Hollinwood Whixall Whitchurch Shropshire SY13 2NW Erection of single storey side and rear extensions and associated works	Grant Permission
21/02820/TEL	Land Adj Ryefields Whixall Whitchurch Shropshire SY13 2RZ Installation of a 20-metre slim-line monopole supporting three unshrouded antennas, one equipment cabinet, one meter cabinet and ancillary development thereto including one GPS module	Grant Permission
20/02458/FUL	Rack Lane Garage Rack Lane Whixall SY13 2RW Erection of replacement commercial building following demolition of dilapidated commercial building (resubmission of 19/03043/FUL)	Grant Permission

59/21 **Clerk's Report**

The report was circulated by email prior to the meeting (Appendix D).

In addition, the Clerk reported on the following:

- Condition of the Council owned noticeboards
- Original version of the Council logo (it was suggested that the school may have kept a copy).
- The Bus survey emailed by Cllr Towers is now on the website
- The Police newsletter has been circulated by email
- An update on planning enforcement issues

In response to the report, Cllr Towers stated

- a. that he would like to see the decision to close the Bridgnorth and Hodnet highways depots called in by the Council because of the impact the closures would have on service and on local communities.
- b. Shropshire Council is planning to increase the number of planning enforcement officers from 3 to 6.

60/21 **Financial Matters**

- a) To receive monthly bank balance record.

The Clerk advised the council of the council's bank balances.

DATE	ACCOUNT NAME	AMOUNT
31 August 2021	Current Account (Working Budget)	5,537.24
	Savings Account (Reserves)	10,551.25
	Barclays Account	0.00
TOTAL		£16,088.69

The Clerk reported that the Barclays account is now finally closed.

- b) To resolve to approve outstanding accounts

Orders for the payment of outstanding invoices and all payments approved remotely (under "Power to Spend" LGA1972 s.112(2) and 124(1)). As per the financial report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)/ Clerk proposed by Cllr Edgerton, seconded by Cllr Howard and agreed by all present.

Resolved: The outstanding accounts should be paid and the payment transactions authorised by two authorised councillors.

61/21 **North Shropshire Wheelers**

The Chair asked Cllr Towers to give an update as he took the lead in setting up a recent meeting and the forthcoming AGM.

The NSW found themselves in the situation where because of resignations from the committee, there would be no officers. Without officers they organisation cannot function.

NSW covers a very wide geographical area and representatives from the area had been invited to a meeting on 19 August at Wem Baptist Church. Chris Purcell who heads up Community Transport at Shropshire Council also attended. The meeting was very positive; however, with no officers, no decisions could be made. Consequently an AGM was arranged for 9 September. Cllr Andy Everitt has agreed to become interim Chair until March 2022 and three other officers are required.

Cllr Mercer queried whether the Newport to Telford connection would now be cut and Cllr Towers confirmed that this would be the case with the new, slimmed-down wheelers.

Wem Town Council has taken on the co-ordination of the emergency car service and Cllr Towers sees this as an opportunity to include the four Market Towns and the 2 rural parishes (Whixall and Wem Rural). He also explained how the meals on wheels service, developed during lockdown had the potential to develop and expand.

It was noted that NSW has an employee who needs to be considered. It was also noted that Shropshire Council does not have a plan or the ability to fill the gap should NSW close.

Cllr Mercer commented that the Parish Council has always contributed and was involved in NSW from the beginning. Cllr Mercer stated that, in the past, the Council has asked for data so that it can understand the local use of NSW services, but this data has not been forthcoming.

There was some concern regarding the viability of the organisation. Cllr Mercer stated that the Parish Council is not in a position to provide additional funding but it can, and will, support the organisation.

62/21 Councillor Reports

a. Parish Councillors

Cllr Mercer: will be attending the Natural England event on 10 September.

b. Unitary Councillors

Cllr Broomhall and Cllr Towers circulated a joint report by email prior to the meeting (Appendix E).

In addition, Cllr Towers shared the three elements of work around climate change in Wem (footpaths and walking, improved building through design statements, and food/the green mile). He would like to see Whixall involved in the initiative.

He also reported that the Canals and Rivers Trust are, at some point, looking to put a footpath between Roundthorne Bridge and Morris's Bridge.

Scheduled date of next meeting: **13 October 2021**

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Whixall Parish Council

Draft Terms of Reference

Old Burial Ground / Social Centre Maintenance Boundary Task & Finish Group

Aim

The aim of the Old Burial Ground / Social Centre Maintenance Boundary Task and Finish Group is to agree a boundary between the Old Burial Ground (OBG) and Social Centre (SC) specifically for the purposes of identifying specific responsibilities for grounds and property maintenance between the Social Centre Committee and the Parish Council.

Membership

The Task and Finish Group will consist of two parish councillors (Cllr Mercer and Cllr Harris) and two representatives of the Social Centre Committee (Steve Grogan and Graham Turnbull).

Support

The clerk will provide administrative support as required.

Scope

The group will:

- Identify the areas/assets where maintenance responsibilities are already agreed
- Identify the areas/assets where responsibilities are unclear and develop options for allocating each these responsibilities to one or other of the organisations
- Agree the preferred maintenance boundary option and recommend this to Parish Council and the Social Centre Committee
- If necessary, amend the proposals following feedback from the Parish Council and the Social Centre Committee until agreement is reached
- Once agreement is reached, produce a boundary plan and schedule identifying maintenance responsibilities along the boundary.

Meetings

- The group will agree its own meeting schedules. Meetings will not be formally noticed and minutes are not required. However, those representing the Parish Council will provide verbal progress reports to Parish Councillors (see 'reporting' below).
- The group will agree a chairman for the purpose of leading its meetings. However, the chairman but will not have a casting vote as the purpose of the group is to reach a consensus.
- The group is time-limited and will meet until its proposals are agreed by both organisations.

Reporting

- The group will report to the Full Parish Council.
- The Social Centre Committee will agree its own reporting process.
- The OBG/SC boundary will be a recurring item on the Parish Council agenda and the group will provide an update when they have key information to share or require a decision from the Council.

Output

The output of the task and finish group will be a boundary plan and schedule that is agreed, accepted and honoured by both parties, identifying maintenance responsibilities along the boundary. A copy will be retained by each organisation.

Marlot Conservation Group**Work Report to Whixall Parish Council (8 September 2021)**Bird nest boxes

Sian Mercer carried out weekly monitoring until the new chicks had fledged, with reports being submitted to Natural England. She and Ian assisted Bob Harris with ringing, carried out on 21 May.

Our last report referred to the ongoing interference with the boxes during the breeding season, which had a substantial effect upon the success rate. The MCG therefore resolved to re-instate the boxes at a higher level in an effort to reduce the interference, as it is suspected that children are the culprits.

The twelve boxes were taken down on 20 July and ten of them have been refurbished by Graham Turnbull and Martin Spenser. Two had to be scrapped but we have been able to secure replacements from Natural England, along with three more, to be installed on site during Spring 2022.

Newt surveys

Under the guidance of Nicky Hunter, trapping sessions were conducted on 14 May and 5 and 30 June. The results were a little down on previous years, but some efts (babies) were recorded, so breeding has taken place. The lower numbers may have resulted from dense growth of pond vegetation.

Some newts were located in the dark pool for the first time in years, so the MCG is resolved to continue improvement works here, including opening out the overhanging tree canopy. Having noted that the pool had dried up, Graham and Martin attended on 3 August and scraped out the accumulated bed of debris, which would otherwise have contributed to the stagnation of the water, when the pool starts to refill in the winter. The objective is to sustain growing vegetation in the pool, without choking it.

Wildflowers

There has been a good showing of Spotted Orchid this year, and an abundance of Meadowsweet, Tufted Vetch and Birds' Foot Trefoil.

A patch of Yellow Loosestrife was found and an early emergence of Cowslip. Graham also identified Monkey Flower, which had not been seen on site for many years.

Ten wildflower seed beds were prepared in early season, although our efforts to create something extra have been somewhat hampered by the phenomenal growth of everything else this year.

The MCG plans to create a further seed bed in the back meadow during the autumn, which is to be ring-fenced to create a separate colourful feature.

Creeping willow

There is a patch of this rare shrub in the front meadow and it is thriving, thanks to a ring-fencing exercise undertaken two years ago. Weeding around the plants has to be done by hand. The MCG will be up-grading the fencing to take in an adjacent patch.

Back meadow

The MCG is looking at methods to control the burgeoning bracken growth. Many hours have been spent this year beating the new growth by hand.

It is proposed to introduce grazing cattle at the earliest opportunity, in an effort to reduce man-hours spent on maintenance of the meadow areas.

Wildlife

There is little better reward for our efforts than seeing and hearing myriads of insect life and listening to birdsong whilst working on site or visiting.

On 27 May, the first recorded sighting this year of White-legged Damselfly was noted by Stephen Barlow, who is a local ecologist and expert photographer and frequent visitor to Whixall Moss. On 13 July, he led a dragonfly walk on the Moss and brought his visitors to The Marlot, who were delighted to note several species of damselfly: - White-legged, Blue-tailed, Common Blue, Azure, Emerald and Banded Demoiselle.

The MCG has also noted Southern Hawker and Brown Hawker Dragonflies, which are sometimes curious enough to approach quite closely whilst we are working.

On 27 July, John Piper spotted a large Leopard Moth, which is not a daytime-flying species and therefore hung around to be examined at length.

Many more grasshoppers have been seen this year, compared to previous years. On the evening of 26 June, Martin visited the Marlot with family, who spotted a Barn Owl in hunting mode.

A Kingfisher was spotted earlier in the season, patrolling the ditches.

These and the numerous varieties of plant life are the features which will attract people to the site, particularly once Local Nature Reserve status has been granted. But despite the frenetic activity of the natural world during Spring and Summer, there is still scope for visitors to enjoy a peaceful environment.

Local Nature Reserve application

Shropshire Council held a cabinet meeting on 7 June, to consider a request by the Parish Council to be given delegated authority to make the application. This request was duly granted, but had been preceded by a flurry of media interest. Graham was kept busy for a while fielding the enquiries, including interviews broadcast by Radio Shropshire and the possibilities of future organised events. This sudden interest may be “jumping the gun”, but is encouraging nevertheless and any further enquiries will be handled carefully, so as not to interfere with the formal application process.

Management of the site

Maintenance groundworks are continuing and there will have to be work done to reduce the vegetation in most of the ponds. In addition, the ditches must be cleared. The four MCG team members met with Natural England staff on 23 August and there was a very helpful and constructive consultation around the assistance which they can give us with these tasks during the late autumn and winter period.

Rough weather and overloaded canopies have brought trees down and put some others in a dangerous condition. These matters are dealt with as soon as possible after they arise, but on the plus side, it is sometimes possible to use the arisings for rustic features on site. A programme of coppicing is also planned and again the resulting timber and brush could be used in a similar manner.

Finally, dog waste is an ongoing issue and human excreta had to be dealt with also. This may be an offensive note to end with, but it needs to be made clear that looking after the site is not just a matter of having a management plan in place. Indeed, many tasks remain dependent upon weather constraints and the continued availability of willing souls to do the work, but also a change in the mindset of some of our visitors

Martin Spenser.

Marches Mosses BogLIFE Project

Report by Mike Crawshaw

World's End Drainage Scheme

A contractor for the works has been appointed. However, work will not commence until later in September and completion dates may be subject to weather conditions. We have taken considerable time to discuss, reassure and listen to the residents local to the work, but we consider this time well invested. The scheme has been explained in detail to them and some minor changes to equipment following consultation.

We are now confident that the residents have had the scheme fully explained to them due to the detailed consultation process.

Sinker's Fields

Work commenced on the drainage scheme on August 5th and is ongoing. It is expected to be completed this month.

As mentioned at a previous meeting – the work has been divided into two parts, with field one and three under way now and two and four likely to be completed next spring.

Bird-Hide

The bird-hide will begin construction once the groundwork has been done following the drainage work to Sinker's Fields. It is hoped that this will be in by Christmas – weather permitting.

NNR 30th Anniversary Celebration & Declaration of Extension (10 September 2021)

Programme

- 9:30 VIP arrival for media interviews
- 10:00 Arrive for 10:30 start – Tea/Coffee/Registration
- 10:20 – 10:25 Housekeeping and what to expect
- 10:25 – 10:30 Welcome – Emma Johnson, Natural England, Area Manager West Midlands. Tony Juniper, Chair Natural England
- 10:30 – 10:44 Dr Joan Daniels MBE, Project Officer Marches Mosses BogLIFE: Saving the Marches Mosses, The First 25 Years
- 10:45 – 11:00 Robert Duff, BogLIFE Project Manager: The BogLIFE Project
- 11:00 – 11:10 Cllr Ian Mercer, Chair Whixall Parish Council: A Personal View from the Local Community
- 11:10 – 11:40 Event significance for the BogLIFE partners: Tony Juniper, Sir David Henshaw, Chair Natural Resources Wales, Richard Grindle, CEO Shropshire Wildlife Trust
- 11:40 – 11:50 Official NNR Declaration and photographs
- 11:50 – 12:30 Lunch in marquee – local produce from The Pastry Box, Wem
- 12:30 Board coach vehicle convoy to Morris' Bridge (2.5miles)

Guided walk -

- 12:45 2 Groups – as allocated at registration, Guided circular walk-in opposite directions
- 14:45 Bus to Manor House – dropping those who wish to leave; carrying on to the Old Railway Line to see forestry work; bunding examples and the Bronnington Manor Drain diversion
- 16:30 Arrive back at Manor House. Depart



A Bug Safari on the Mosses

Saturday 11 September 2021 / 11am - 1.15pm | Suitable for families

Morris' Bridge , Whitchurch

Join ecologist Phil Playford for a walk on the Mosses in search of the weird and wonderful invertebrates that live there.



Peat-surface-sky: Banners celebrating the Mosses created by Wem Youth group

Saturday 11 September 2021 / 10am - 4.00pm | Suitable for families

Morris' Bridge , Whitchurch

Come and see the 3 enormous 7 meter banners, created by Wem Youth Club, which celebrate the world of the Mosses. They will be installed at the Mammoth Viewing Tower surrounded by the landscape...



A late summer walk with Stephen Barlow

Saturday 11 September 2021 / 10am - 1.15pm | Suitable for all

Morris' Bridge , Whitchurch

Stephen Barlow is an expert guide to the Mosses. He will lead you on a walk exploring what lives on this precious peatland as we move from summer to autumn.



Art Trail of sounds and sculpture- a guided tour with lead artist Andrew Howe

Saturday 11 September 2021 / 1.15pm - 4.00pm | Suitable for all

Morris' Bridge , Whitchurch

Andrew Howe, lead artist for the Mosses and Marshes project, will guide you out onto Whixall Moss to talk about this international collaboration and its links with the Macquarie Marshes in New...

www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/events

Mike Crawshaw

Engagement Officer

Seconded to Marches Mosses BogLIFE Project

West Midlands Team

Natural England

Clerk's Report

Correspondence

1. **Platinum Jubilee Beacons**

Organisations are being encouraged to take part in the lighting of beacons on 2 June 2022 in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. If members wish, this will be added to a future agenda for consideration.

2. **Highways**

Cllr Steve Charmley (Shropshire Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways) wrote to Town & Parish Councils outlining the Council's revised approach to highway maintenance/management (circulated by email).

Steve Smith (Shropshire Council Assistant Director of Infrastructure) wrote to T&PCs explaining the rationale behind the closure of Bridgnorth and Hodnet Highways depots (Circulated by email)

3. **Memorial Service**

On 12 September at St Mary's Whixall, a memorial service is being held to commemorate the bravery and service of William Reeves of Whixall who fought in the Napoleonic Wars and fought at the Battle of Waterloo. A memorial stone has been prepared by the Shropshire arm of the Coldstream Guards Association, and a number of family members will be attending the service.

Bill Cliftlands, Secretary of St Mary's Church contacted the Clerk to invite the Parish Council to send a representative. Cllr Harris will attend.

4. **SALC / NALC**

Information bulletins and emails have been forwarded by email as necessary.

Other Matters

1. **AGAR**

The period of public accountability (14 June to 23 July 2021) has now passed. No members of the public requested access to the financial information.

2. **Vacant Seats**

At the time of writing, the Council still has three vacant seats that can be filled by co-option. As stated previously with agreement of the Council they can be filled at any time without needing to advertise. Members are advised to consider how these seats can be filled.

3. **Policies and Procedures**

There has been time over the summer to review existing policies. This is an ongoing piece of work and any updated policies will be brought to members for approval as the agendas allow.

Report 1 to Whixall Parish Council by Shropshire Councillors Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers September 2021

Dear All,

Our report this month is briefer, largely because it has been the August holiday weeks. Also, the easing of covid restrictions is being applied with some caution by many....including having meetings! Gradually, however, general confidence seems to be returning in our area - especially where outdoor activities/employment are involved. However, by just moving around it seems that many of our residents are waiting to see the effect on the population as schools and universities now start to return from their summer breaks.

Rachel Robinson, Shropshire Council's director of public health has said "**...we know coronavirus is going to be with us for some time, and our priority is to stop the spread of infection and protect the health and wellbeing of all residents in our community, in particular our most vulnerable. The best protection is still two doses of a vaccine. It significantly reduces your chances of becoming seriously ill if you get COVID-19. All adults aged 16 and over are now eligible.**"

The latest data for ourselves in the period 20-26 August shows there were 1,130 positive cases reported in Shropshire – a slight decrease of 4% on the previous week. Despite this small decline in COVID-19 cases, Shropshire still has one of the highest rates in the West Midlands.

During this last week there were 34 confirmed COVID-19 patients in Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals (SaTH), and we are sad to report that there were eight deaths in hospital.

Whixall Parish, we have:

- had a site visit to meet the applicant and their agent regarding planning applications that are being considered/reconsidered.
- Edward has also had an initial meeting with Nicola Lewis-Smith (Enterprise Manager- West Midlands) of the Canals and Rivers Trust in the area of Roundthorn Bridge on 25th August. Sadly, there was some confusion about this location and other representatives from the Parish couldn't locate where this meeting took place! Hopefully other opportunities will now follow to build on this one. The notes that Nicola took of the main points from our discussions are:
 - **Signage** – look to install new finger posts to connect the canal with the Marlot, it was considered that a sign could be installed next to Roundthorn Bridge (with nearby visitor moorings) to promote the local links and greater visibility for the Marlot.
 - **Towpath** – The towpath leading from Roundthorn Bridge to Morris's Bridge becomes particularly waterlogged in the winter months due to the ground conditions experienced in the area, limiting access for everyone – it is the aspiration of the Trust to secure funding to improve the towpath between the two bridges strengthening links with the circular routes through the Moss.

The distance between the two bridges is c0.8km, with a baseline est. cost of c£125,000 per km. The Trust's design team and engineers have been instructed to produce an outline design and budget cost for the work.

- **Prees Branch** – I have reviewed the Trust's GIS and the Trust is in ownership of the entire Branch. The SSSI had been previously managed under agreement with Shropshire Wildlife Trust, however in recent years it has come back under the direct management of the Trust.

North Salop Wheelers (NSW). Edward chaired (as a Shropshire Councillor) with Peter present, an important meeting held on the 19th August in the Lower Hall of Wem Baptist Church to assist NSW in finding a future starting with a new committee/ officers. It proved a very positive and constructive meeting with a good representation and number attending.

One key decision taken was to hold the delayed 2021 AGM for North Salop Wheelers on Thursday 9th September 2021 at 10.30am in the Lower Hall at Wem Baptist Church, Chapel Street, Wem, SY4 5ER where new appointments can be made and other decisions discussed that will secure the groups immediate future and funding. Local Parish Councillors and Clerks have been invited to this meeting and sent an agenda and minutes of the 19th August meeting, to bring them up to speed beforehand.

Bus Back Better Initiative. We sent you an email on 31st August to give some details related to this. Shropshire Council are conducting an on-line survey that has the 10th September as a closing date. It is part of the National Bus Strategy which is perhaps the greatest change to these services since 'deregulation' was introduced in the Transport Act of 1985 (ie transfer of operation of bus services from public bodies to private companies). As such it is very important that the public take a few minutes to give their opinions as this may well help to improve the sparse situation we currently have locally. It may well also help volunteer transport groups such as NSW Wheelers going forward.

We have not had another full Shropshire Council meeting since the 15th July 2021, so nothing to report this month.

Hopefully this brings you up to date with the key issues affecting us here in Whixall Parish. If there are other matters not covered, or you would like to raise then let us know.

Kindest regards,

Peter Broomhall and Edward Towers

Shropshire County Councillors for the Wem, Wem Rural & Whixall Division