

**Withington Parsh Council**  
**Chairman's Report**  
**May 2025 – April 2026**

The year began with a new face joining the team; in June, Sasha Griffiths joined as Withington Parish Council (the Council) Clerk. This followed a period in which Councillor Brenninkmeijer had worked behind the scenes to fulfil the Clerk's duties on a voluntary basis.

As new Clerk, Sasha has been quick to review processes and help us to continue to reduce overhead costs in order that as much of the precept is allocated to value adding expenditure for the benefit of the village.

So it seems appropriate that we emphasise our gratitude to Bruno for his efforts during this period and to Sasha for supporting the Council's work through the year.

The Council **held 6 public meetings** in May, June, September, November, January and March.

### **Financial Management**

The Council has appointed a new accountant who has quickly helped the Council reduce accountancy overhead costs as well as introduce efficient VAT recovery processes. In addition, the Council has now successfully switched to on-line banking, which has reduced manual processes and further reduced costs, at the same time speeding up payments to contractors.  
(see separate Finance report).

In January it was agreed that it would be necessary to recommend small increase in precept of 1.99% to ensure that the Council has sufficient funds to cover the increased costs of ongoing commitments, as well as allow for upkeep and replacement of assets.

### **Village School**

In September 2025 the Parish Council, along with the whole village, learnt of proposals to close the school due to the dwindling number of registered pupils, loss of staff and the school's subsequent inability to meet the statutory requirements for learning, and development. The Council, along with an overwhelming number of respondents to the consultation, opposed the proposal and worked closely with the school to see the proposal withdrawn and to support efforts to secure a long-term future for the school. During this

period a number of residents were appointed to positions on the Board of Governors including the role of Chair. Despite that initial promise, in March 2026, the Governors informed the Council that they had reached the conclusion that they had no alternative but to temporarily close the school and seek places in local schools for the remaining pupils and to recommend permanent closure.

The Council expressed gratitude for openness, honesty and tireless work of the Chair and fellow Governors in what will sadly mark the end of an important and historical element of village life. Hopefully, the pupils will reach their full potential in their new schools.

### **Playground**

The Parish Council and Village Hall Committee (VHC) have continued to work closely together with the creation of a joint sub-group to focus on forming detailed plans to improve the Playground facilities in the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field. The group has been active in seeking expert advice to scope ideas for new improved equipment and to raise funds in support. To date the Parish Council has allocated £11,500 from retained CIL funds and retained funds. In addition, we were successful in being awarded £3,500 from the Grassroots Neighbourhood Fund (GNF) to bring the current total to £15,000.

The group is now focused on securing further funding from a range of sources which we hope will help us to introduce an exciting range of new equipment. Over the next year there will be further community engagement to raise awareness and inform designs.

I would like to express my thanks to the team for their work throughout the year as well as Cllr Paul Hodgkinson for supporting the allocation from the GNF.

### **Defibrillator**

Following a proposal by BT to close the public telephone box opposite the Mill Inn a consultation was conducted to identify potential to convert the box to a community asset. Whilst the proposed closure was successfully overturned following the Council's objections, there was overwhelming support for the installation of a second defibrillator in the village. Subsequently, the Council agreed to work with volunteers to raise funding and install a new defibrillator.

I would like to thank Eleanor Fee who has worked quietly through the complex process of seeking expert advice, identifying suitable equipment, location and gaining the necessary listed building consent for an installation at the Mill Inn.

I would also like to express, on behalf of the village, our gratitude to Halewell who have generously agreed to fund the equipment and installation, as well as Samuel Smith's Brewery for granting permission to host the equipment at the Mill Inn. The project is ongoing and we hope to see the project concluded in the coming months.

Meanwhile, the Council is now seeking assurances that BT will honour their commitments to properly maintain the Grade II listed telephone box at the Mill Inn which has clearly been neglected; early success has resulted in broken window panes replaced.

### **The road safety**

Its been a full year since the Council's campaign for road safety improvements to the A436 between Seven Springs and Shipton Olliffe, which resulted in chevrons at the Kilkenny Junction, prominent signs to highlight the number of serious incidents, and the installation of average speed cameras and associated warning signage.

Although we are yet to receive any formal analysis, the Police have confirmed that the combined measures have resulted in a significant reduction in traffic speed and in the number of incidents on this stretch of road. I'm sure residents will have noticed the improvement for themselves.

The Council also received confirmation that Withington will be in the second wave (2027-28) of the Count Council's roll out of 20mph speed limits in a number of villages.

### **Environment: River Coln**

Throughout the year the Council has been proud to continue support for the Coln River Guardians with the purchase of digital sampling equipment that has enabled the community of volunteers to improve the effectiveness of their sampling and testing regime. I would like to express gratitude on behalf of the Council for Margaret Wright's updates throughout the year as well as her efforts, along with the community of volunteers, to help improve the condition of the river.

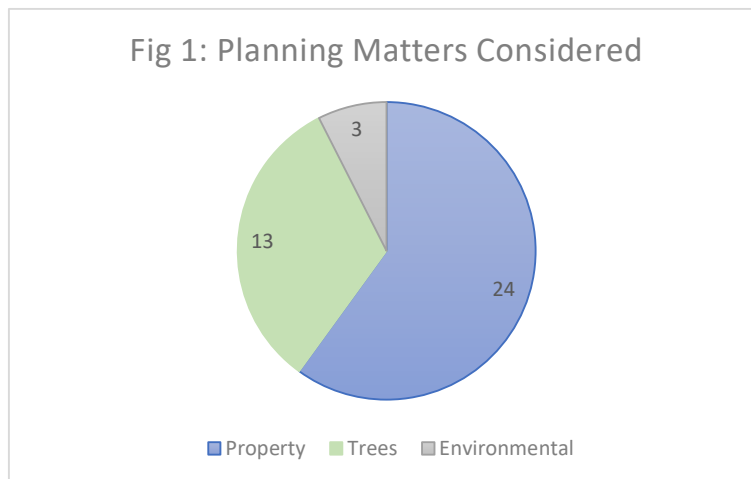
### **Environment: Trees Officer Report - Bruno**

The Council dealt with 14 tree work notifications in the last financial year with far more tree maintenance works are being undertaken as opposed to removing trees in their entirety. The Parish Council advocates that any tree that

is removed is replanted with a hardwood species. Current Regulations state that owners must get permission to carry out any work on a tree which is covered by a TPO; the village only has one tree with a TPO which is located at 6 High Street. Within the Conservation Area permission before working on any trees also required unless: Trunk has a diameter of less than 75mm at 1500mm height above ground level, the tree is commercially cultivated for fruit, there is evidence that the tree was dangerous, diseased or dead may be required, or it forms part of the hedge of two or more trees. Applications must be made in the six weeks in advance for any proposed tree work to allow CDC to assess the contribution the tree makes to the character of the of the Conservation Area

## Planning

The Council handled 40 (Appendix A) planning applications in 2025/26, broadly in line with the previous year, categorised as shown in fig 1:



Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for the hard work of our Parish Councillors whose work goes largely unnoticed and is conducted on an entirely voluntary basis. Also to thank our District Councillors Paul Hodgkinson & Jeremy Theyer for their continued support throughout the year.

**Dr David Craig**  
**Chair Withington Parish Council**

## Appendix A: WITHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL - PLANNING APPLICATIONS 2025/2026

1. Compliance with conditions Fulford Withington Road Andoversford Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4LL
2. Reduce 4 Lawson Cypress Trees. The Close Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BB
3. Definitive Map Modification Order Application Fulford Withington Road Andoversford Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4LL
4. Crown lift away from road and reduce Lime Tree Daffodil House Chedworth Road Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BN
5. Reinstatement of North Field Barn (partially retrospective) North Field Barn Chedworth Road Withington Gloucestershire
6. Variation of Change of use from Public House to a single dwelling house Kings Head Inn Kings Head Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BD
7. Certificate of Lawful Proposed Use or Development Riverside Cottage Woodbridge Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BP
8. Installation of oil tank. Hawthorns The Farthings Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4DA
9. Tree Works Manor Hall Chedworth Road Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BN
10. Removal of tree to ground level Woodcot Chedworth Road Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BN
11. Variation of condition The Old Rectory Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BG
12. Erection of rear extension Mulberry Harnham Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4DD
13. Erection of porch and conservatory Woodbridge Cottage Woodbridge Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BP
14. Conversion of existing barns to single dwelling Northfield Farm Withington Road Andoversford Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4LJ
15. Compliance with condition Westview Woodbridge Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BA
16. Variation of conditions Change of use from Public House Kings Head Inn Kings Head Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BD
17. Compliance with conditions Conversion of barn to a residential dwelling Fulford Withington Road Andoversford Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4LL
18. T1- Copper Beech- Reduce Crown back Heystone House Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BE
19. T1- Silver Birch- Reduce crown Old May Pole High Street Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BQ
20. Installation of a defibrillator Mill Inn Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BE
21. Removal of trees Amberdale Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BE
22. Removal of trees Manor Hall Chedworth Road Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BN
23. Lime tree - Reduce height The Close Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BB
24. Part-retrospective replacement and relocation of both the oil tank and oil-fired boiler. The Garden House Woodbridge Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BP
25. Reconfiguration of entrance and gates Manor Hall Chedworth Road Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BN
26. Compliance of - Conversion of barn Fulford Withington Road Andoversford Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4LL
27. Reconfiguration of entrance and replacement of existing gates Manor Hall Chedworth Road Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BN
28. Installation of 1250 litre oil tank Hill Barn Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BH

29. Demolition of existing garden room and erection of extensions Thornhill Withington Road Andoversford Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4LL
30. Compliance with condition Change of use from Public House Kings Head Inn Kings Head Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BD
31. Erection of outbuilding carport, garden store and home office Riverside Cottage Woodbridge Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BP
32. Diversion of the high voltage (HV) overhead lines at Willowside, Withington to an underground route and subsequent removal of a section of OH line and poles
33. Fell Two Pine trees Kingston House Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4DA
34. Compliance with condition Erection of two-storey extension The Old Rectory Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BG
35. Upgrading of rooms, walls and floors in compliance with fire regulations, Mill Inn Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BE
36. Removal of trees Manor Hall Chedworth Road Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BN
37. Erection of a single-storey rear extension Westview Woodbridge Lane Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BA
38. Removal of tree Mill Cottage Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BE
39. Removal of tree Withington Court Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BE
40. Compliance with conditions - Erection of single storey lean-to The Old Rectory Withington Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL54 4BG