

WITHAM'S VOICE

SUMMER 2024

ISSUE 89





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FAREWELL FROM THE PREVIOUS MAYOR

As I have now completed my year as Mayor of Witham, I would like to thank all those who invited me to their events. It has been an exciting time and I have enjoyed meeting many wonderful people in our town and elsewhere.

The support given to me by all of the Town Hall staff has been exceptional. I have had some stand out moments, planting a tree on the river walk in knee deep mud to visiting other Mayors' events.

Thank you for allowing me this year as Mayor, it has been hard work but also extremely entertaining.

Cllr Susan Ager



WITHAM DOG SHOW

Saturday 29th June
10am - 3pm

 **Witham River Walk**

Entry into the competition is £1 a category. Book on the day at our Witham Town Council Stall.

You can enter one of the below categories:

- ✓ Best Rescue
- ✓ Fastest Recall
- ✓ Best Trick
- ✓ Precious Puppy
- ✓ Dog The Judge Would Most Like To Take Home
- ✓ Waggiest Tail
- ✓ Best Paw Shaker
- ✓ Best Junior Handler
- ✓ Looks Most Like The Owner
- ✓ Cutest Eyes



All entry fees will be donated to local dog charities. Full details can be found on our website or visit the Information Centre. Please only enter one contest.

 01376 520627

 <https://www.witham.gov.uk/dog-show>



EVENT

PROGRAMME

Registration open from 09:45am

- 10:15 – Best Rescue**
- 10:45 – Fastest Recall**
- 11:15 – Best Trick**
- 11:45 – Precious Puppy**
- 12:15 – Dog The Judge Would Most Like To Take Home**
- 12:45 – Waggiest Tail**
- 13:15 – Best Paw Shaker**
- 13:45 – Best Junior Handler**
- 14:15 – Looks Most Like The Owner**
- 14:45 – Cutest Eyes**



There will be water bowls available for dogs throughout the event. Witham Town Council would like to remind those attending that they will not tolerate any behaviour that breaches the Animal Welfare Act 2006. Dogs must be kept on leads at all times.

EASTER FUN ON THE RIVER WALK



This year's Easter Trail took place on Witham's River Walk on Saturday 30th March. This was a free event, but places had to be booked for each child taking part.



SAVE THE DATE



The **Witham Music Festival** will return on Saturday 24th August, between 3pm – 10pm, on Witham's River Walk by Chipping Hill.

This is a fun free event for all the family and will include a range of genres to suit all music tastes. There will be a variety of food and drink stalls on site and if you are lucky you may even get to meet a princess or two.





Witham
town council

Help us commemorate the

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D - DAY

JUNE 6TH 2024

The procession, which will be led by the Caledonian Pipe Band, will gather at 8pm and set off at 8.15pm from The Avenue, culminating at the River Walk by Chipping Hill Bridge

There will be a short service to include reading the testimonies of those who took part and the beacon will be lit at 9:15pm



ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

On Monday 8th April 2024 Witham Town Council held its Annual Town Meeting focusing on youth engagement at the Royal British Legion Hall in Witham.

Members of local community organisations were invited to talk and presentations were received from Action for Family Carers, Witham BB, Witham Carnival Association, The Witham Hub, 295 (Witham & Rivenhall) Squadron ATC and Cllr Phil Barlow on behalf of Templars Residents Association.

Representatives from Essex Police also attended to provide an update and answer any questions.

Members of the public were encouraged to attend.

ST PETER'S CLOSURE CONSULTATION

Witham Town Council held a public consultation at New Rickstones Academy on Monday 11th March 2024 to ensure Witham had its say regarding the proposed closure of St Peter's Hospital in Maldon and to demonstrate the Town Council's and resident's concerns.

NEPP PARKING CHARGES

The North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) announced that IT intended to convert current free parking spaces in Newland Street to paid ones, which Witham Town Council took action in actively opposing.

As well as writing to the Braintree District Council Financial Scrutiny Panel querying its agreement with the North Essex Parking Partnership, having heard residents concerns, the Town Council launched an online and physical petition which, combined, generated nearly 2000 signatures.

S106 FUNDING



Witham Town Council are committed to enhancing our open spaces and are responsible for the River Walk, Whetmead Nature Reserve and James Cooke Wood in the town. Other public open spaces in Witham come under the management of Braintree District Council, Eastlight Homes or individual management companies. Recently, thanks to Section 106 developer funding, Witham Town Council have been able to carry out some exciting projects to enhance our public green spaces. We have installed a beautiful boardwalk at James Cooke Wood to improve accessibility, created a bee-friendly planting area on the River Walk and installed new steps, an interpretation board and a fun, interactive children's nature trail at Whetmead Nature Reserve. More information about these projects can be found on pages 10 and 11.

Section 106 funds are contributions paid to the local planning authority, Braintree District Council, by building companies when a new housing or commercial development is agreed. This allows local authorities to enter into agreements with developers to secure contributions to help offset the impact of new developments. It's important to note that Section 106 funds are designated for specific purposes and cannot be used for other projects outside the agreement's scope.

We will be continuing to use Section 106 funds for further enhancements to our open spaces and are currently considering making improvements to some of the paths on the River Walk and the car park at James Cooke Wood but would value your input with what you would like to see. Witham Town Council can only carry out open space improvements on our own land, so the River Walk, Whetmead or James Cooke Wood. Please note that these funds are specifically allocated for open space projects so cannot be used for other community needs like potholes or healthcare.

If you have ideas for open space improvements outside of Witham Town Council's authority, these can also be taken into consideration and passed on to Braintree District Council to be included in the Potential Open Space Improvements document for the future. The full document can be found here-

<https://www.braintree.gov.uk/directory-record/1060313/potential-open-space-improvements-february-2024-formerly-open-spaces-action-plan->

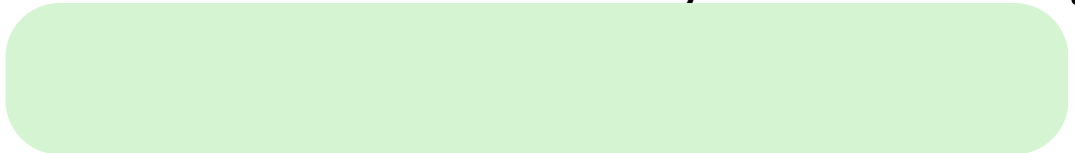
Please help us by providing input with potential future projects on Witham Town Council's public open spaces. Your feedback will help us prioritise future projects to consider using Section 106 funds. **Please rate the following ideas in order of importance 1 (most) - 6 (least)**

- Improvements to the footpaths, cycleways and bridge surfaces on the River Walk -
- Improvement to the car park at James Cooke Wood -
- Enhancements to the River Walk duck pond to increase biodiversity and create nature habitats -
- Improvement to the car park area at Whetmead Nature Reserve -
- Further bee-friendly planting areas or habitat creations -
- Introduction of hedgerows to increase biodiversity and improve boundaries -

Please use the space below to share any other ideas or comments about open space projects that you would like considered on the River Walk, James Cooke Wood or Whetmead Nature Reserve.



You can also tell us about any other open space projects that you would like considered in other areas of Witham and we can pass these on to the relevant authority.



Please note that funds available for open spaces projects do not cover potholes as these come under the responsibility of Essex Highways.

Please send back completed forms to Witham Town Hall, 61 Newland St, Witham, CM8 2FE or by email to deputytownclerk@witham.gov.uk.

Thank you for your help.

BANK REINFORCEMENT

Our Operations team have been busy at Whetmead Nature Reserve working on a part of the river bank which has been eroding. The area has been filled with sand bags to protect the remaining bank and finished with top soil.



BEE FRIENDLY PLANTING AREA

Witham Town Council, in partnership with The Bee Friendly Trust, has created a bee garden on the edge of the River Walk near River View. The haven includes bird boxes, 3 bee hotels for solitary bees, rosemary bushes, olive trees, skimmia, euphorbia, cytissus ivy, verbena, cornflower, sunflower seeds and geraniums together with an information board of bee facts. This beautiful area with its proximity to the river makes it a perfect spot for bees.

This exciting project has been funded with developer Section 106 money from Braintree District Council which was specifically allocated for landscaping in this area. It is designed to provide much needed support for nature, in particular bees whose populations have been in decline worldwide as a result of habitat loss, pesticide usage and climate change.



BECOME A WITHAM WILDLIFE WATCHER



Take part in our new nature trail! Head down to Whetmead Nature Reserve to find all the nature/wildlife posts and collect a brass rubbing at each one.

Whetmead Nature Reserve can be found off Maldon Road or by using the What3Words: [grounding.estimated.dugouts](https://www.what3words.com/grounding.estimated.dugouts)

Workbooks are available to buy for £2.40 from Witham Town Hall Information Centre.



JAMES COOKE WOOD BOARDWALK

Witham Town Council is thrilled to announce the completion of a boardwalk installation in James Cooke Wood. Located on the edge of Witham off Maldon Road (What3Words:allow-line-that), James Cooke Wood is a cherished natural asset which Witham Town Council created when they purchased the land back in 1993 and subsequently planted 6,000 trees forming the community woodland.

The new boardwalk, funded by S106 developer funds, has been installed in a boggy part of the site which has now improved public access and is part of ongoing efforts to improve James Cooke Wood where tree thinning has also been carried out to enhance the health and biodiversity of the woodland.





TOWN HALL AND INFORMATION CENTRE

**61 Newland Street, Witham, Essex,
CM8 2FE**

Witham Town Council Offices are open
Monday – Thursday 9:00AM–5:00PM and
Friday 9:00AM–4:00PM.

The Information Centre in the Town Hall
is open from 9:00AM–4:30PM Monday,
Tuesday and Thursday, 10:00AM – 4:30PM
Wednesday and 9:00AM – 3:50PM Friday.

Both are closed weekends and Bank
Holidays.

Meetings of your Town Council are open
for you to attend.

Full details are displayed at
www.witham.gov.uk/committees

Agendas are on display on the
noticeboard in Newland Street attached
to Fenn Wright.

Meetings usually begin at 7:30PM and
Planning & Transport Committee
meetings at 6:30PM. These are held in
the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

**For further information please contact
the Town Hall:**

Information Centre: 01376 520627 (Op 1)
infocentre@witham.gov.uk

Office: 01376 520627 (Op 2)
townclerk@witham.gov.uk

YOUR COUNCILLORS

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