

Update from your Grimley Parish Councillors

Grimley Parish Council serves (in no particular order) the communities of Grimley Village, Monkwood Green, Sinton Green, Oakall Green, Birchall Green, Moseley, Worlds End, Dark Lane, Walton Lane, Camp Lane and all inbetween!

Chair Adam Collett (MonkWGreen)	P. Ayers (MonkWGreen)	S. Wilson (MonkWGreen)	R Woodhouse (Grimley village)
A. Sinclair (MonkWGreen)	G. Moore (Grimley village))	G. Probert (Wider parish)	.

Summary of planning input by the parish council in 2023.

20 planning applications were responded to, either within the permitted timescale or, later than the official deadline in agreement with the district council via provision of an extension.

Supporting comments made by parish councillors included:

- Support for planning applications that are of benefit to the parish and support local jobs.
- Suggestion for inclusion of renewable energy technologies as part of home improvements or new builds.
- Praised the care and commitment to maintaining existing public right of way through/adjacent to properties.

Parish councillor comments that asked for further consideration or rejection by the district council included:

- lack of justification for a new dwelling in the open countryside.
 - lack of analysis/protection of impact on nearby ancient /historical landscapes.
 - request that settlement boundaries be respected and adhered.
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- In one case parish councillors were unable to comment and requested clarification because maps were unclear and details had not been included.
 - In one case parish councillors could not find that the site notice of the application was properly displayed outside the property for the public to see.
 - Other comments included requests for impact on water tables, requests for traffic surveys and mindfulness of existing school bus routes.

We are not required to keep track of our input in this way, but it is important for residents to see how much thought and care the parish council takes in responding to all applications, even if it is 'no comment' in the end. A parish council does not have a final say in any planning applications and is only one of many consultees. Primarily the parish councillors are guided in their responses by existing national and county planning policies, whilst balancing local opinion and the needs of the community. One thing we cannot ask is for existing county planning policies (signed off by the secretary of state for example) to be ignored. Nor can we consider one planning application in the light of/anticipating future applications or circumstances. We often get correspondence from residents about planning applications and theses are always passed on to the parish councillors for them to think about.

Fees for planning applications made to district council will likely as not go up in 2025 (the amount is yet to be set - a national consultation is underway at present). District councils currently charge less than £200 for a basic application and this rarely covers the cost of admin and processing etc. The parish council is asking questions to ensure that the increase cost is necessary and will be retained within the department to ensure the funding of any necessary planning enforcement - we have received positive assurances in this respect.

Grimley Parish Councillors continue to:

- Pursue Severn Trent for a resolution to the water leak down Dark Lane. – You might have seen the road closure signs which are in place as I write (05/09/24). Hopefully they find the leak! Next steps will be to check the road surface and the ditches and grips etc and then to request clarification of the winter gritting route along Dark Lane and Walton Lane and enquire why the school bus route is neglected in favour of other routes.
- Establish the cause of road and home flooding in Worlds End. A Parish Council Working Party is pursuing enquiries about ditch and drain ownership and has written to the land owner to ask for urgent action before winter.
- Write to the County Councillor to ask for a roll out of the Worcestershire on Demand dial a bus service.
- Work to get the Monkwood Green defibrillator repaired. The phone box was heavily flooded in the winter of 2023 and the electricity supply has been intermittent ever since. The Heart Beat Trust has been assisting and providing an engineer and new parts. We hope that this unit will be back up and running asap. If, in an emergency you think you may require a defibrillator, call 999 and they will direct you to the nearest working unit and give you the access code to the security box.
- Work with the community at Sinton Green to try to resolve all concerns. Business owners, Worcestershire Regulatory Services and our PCSO have been in touch with the parish council and we try to mediate to preserve all our valuable local business assets and make all residents feel like they are listened to and can approach the parish council for advice on all matters.
- **Ongoing care of Monkwood Green Common** – the plants on the Common and SSSI are visibly changing (species and number) as a result of the wet conditions since October 2023. The Petty Whin (miniature gorse plant) in particular is just hanging on and contractors have been out carefully strimming round these endangered plants to try to hold back the encroaching grasses. We are looking carefully at the drainage on site, but ultimately climate change is affecting the plants and wildlife quicker than we can keep up. Councillors continue to debate how to best manage this evolving, man-made but wildlife-appropriated environment. Regarding recent mowing, Councillors followed a correct tender procedure and eventually arranged a cut meeting Natural England regulations and saving a significant amount of money – something that is ever important given how much the parish council has spent on commissioning responses to planning applications in the last few years. Next steps will be to conduct a survey of how the plant species on the Common are responding to annual cutting rather than grazing, and then an assessment in spring 2025 of how to continue to manage the Common and SSSI. Past contractors will be given more opportunity to get involved in 2025 and a more persistent approach will be used to check whether they wish to be quote. If you are a local contractor and wish to receive information about how the parish council cares for Monkwood Green Common and SSSI and how to quote for future works, don't wait to be asked, please get in touch: clerkgrimleypc@gmail.com

The Peace Hall is busy advertising some forthcoming events. Please give them your every support.

We are busy recruiting and co-opting some new Cllrs. More details next month when I hope to be able to introduce them to you.

Thank you, Parish Clerk on behalf of *Grimley Parish Councillors*

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