

Swynnerton Ward

Swynnerton Ward is the largest ward in geographical terms. It lies approximately five miles north-west of Stone, and comprises the whole of the western Parish Council boundary and is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. It is divided by the SE/NW routes of the A51 and the A53 and the NE/SW orientated A519. Minor roads link the principal settlement of Swynnerton village in the south of the ward to the A51 and the A519. The M6 motorway follows the eastern ward boundary for most of its N/S length but there is no access to the motorway until Junction 15.



View to Welsh hills from Swynnerton toposcope



Swynnerton Hall and War Memorial

This early Saxon manor settlement has seen many changes. Post Norman Conquest the Saxon owners were ousted in favour of Robert of Stafford as tenant-in-chief with Alan of Swynnerton holding it from him as detailed in Domesday Book in 1086. Robert de Swynnerton was granted a Charter by Edward I in 1306 enabling the village to hold weekly markets & an annual fair. In 1550 Elizabeth Swynnerton married William Fitzherbert and since then the Fitzherbert family have owned the manor house and estate. A considerable amount of the land area of the ward is still part of the Fitzherbert Estate with further stretches of woods managed by the Forestry Commission. Swynnerton is the largest settlement with numerous small hamlets and isolated farms scattered across the whole of the Ward which is largely agricultural in nature.

In 1645, during the Civil War, the Roundheads burnt the manor house to the ground and the present Swynnerton Hall was eventually rebuilt between 1750-1800, in a style similar to Chatsworth, but half a mile uphill from its original site, next to the beautiful Norman church of St. Mary. The hovels of the villagers spoiled the new southern view so the village was moved en masse to its present position behind the hall. The Catholic chapel and presbytery beside Swynnerton Hall were added 1867-1870. The core of the village today comprises the two churches, the Fitzherbert Arms pub and restaurant, a garage and a shop/Post Office, which were originally the old blacksmiths and wheelwright's premises, in addition to tenant housing and thatched cottages. The old wooden Women's Institute of the 1930s has moved and become the modern Village Hall on Early Lane. The village school closed in 2007.

The importance of the historical nature of Swynnerton has been recognised by the establishment of a Conservation Area to protect the village centre from inappropriate design and over development. It includes ten listed buildings two of which are Grade I, the historical park attached to the Hall, groups of trees in the Park, the churchyards and along the main road through the village.

The bulk of modern expansion throughout the Ward has been largely confined to land around Swynnerton village and has taken place post WWII. The redevelopment of the 1940s hostel, Frobisher Hall, which housed workers from the Munitions Factory at Swynnerton Army Camp, and the old Walled Gardens of Swynnerton Hall added 300 houses carefully hidden by trees to the west of the Conservation Area. More recent developments are the closure and demolition of the Catholic Primary School which has been replaced by a rural exemption scheme of mixed housing by Stafford and Rural Homes, and a private development of rental-only properties carried out by the Fitzherbert Estate on the northern edge of the village.