

Pontesbury

ONLINE



March 2021

Issue no. 273

Newsletter



Community Hub and Library
Serving Pontesbury and the wider Rea Valley communities

There is still time to join our 'Spring Blossoms in the Pavilion Secret Garden' community art project and make flowers, insects, birds, bees etc. to decorate the garden for when we can open the building again in Spring. Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far, we have had flowers, butterflies, ladybirds, bees and many more, made from plastic, wood, wool and almond shells – we can't wait to open up for you to see our Spring garden.

Check out the Pavilion website www.pontesburypavilion.co.uk for ideas of what to make and more information about how you can get involved and to find out when the garden will be open.

During the current lockdown the Library is running a Ready Reads (Click & Collect) service, although the building is closed to the public. More information about this can be found on the Shropshire Library Service website www.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries. The building continues to provide support for the Community Good Neighbours Scheme Pontesbury and Rea Valley (as a

postal address and for DBS checks for volunteers) and as a venue for St Barnabas debt advice sessions. The Friends of Pontesbury Library (FoPL) library lottery is open again for business along with some exciting online entertainment. Check out the FoPL website for more information. www.pontesburylibrary.co.uk/

FoPL



Pontesbury Parish Council

Join us this month for the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday, 8 March 7pm. This is a chance to find out about different community groups and organisations and about parish council activities throughout the preceding year. As the meeting is on zoom this year we won't be reading out lengthy reports, instead they will all be on the parish council website for you to read beforehand and you can join the meeting and ask questions of either the parish council or the participating groups.

The link will be available on the parish council website, along with the agenda. www.pontesburyparishcouncil.org.uk

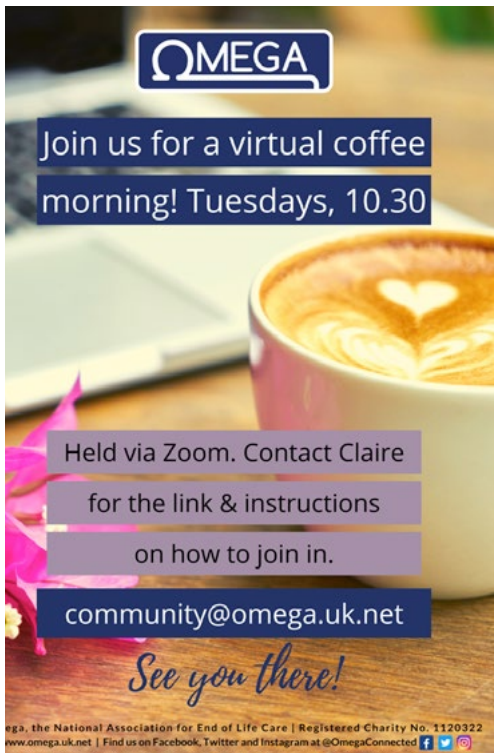
If you wish to comment on a planning application please use the Shropshire Council planning portal at pa.shropshire.gov.uk/online-applications/. Or pass your comments through Cllr A Hodges at ahodges@pontesburypc.org.uk. All new planning applications for the area are listed on the parish council website. There will be a Planning Committee meeting held on Monday, 1 March at 6.30pm on zoom. Again, the invite will appear on the parish council website.

Debbie Marais, Parish Clerk

Closing date for copy for the **April** edition is **March 10th** (please include a contact phone number)
Email contributions to pontesburynewsletter@gmail.com or hand in at the Post Office.
Advertisers – See inside for details of how to place your ad.

Getting Support in Pontesbury

<p>Community Good Neighbours, Pontesbury and Rea Valley Tel: 07944 891953</p>	<p>General Get in touch with a local Good Neighbour for a friendly chat, small errands and support to stay active and connected within the community. Phone messages will be responded to within 2 working days</p>
<p>Pontesbury Community and Care Co-ordinator h.tazewell@nhs.net</p>	<p>Assistance for Pontesbury patients of all ages in need of help, support and advice by signposting to other useful services.</p>
<p>Coronavirus Helpline 0345 678 9028</p>	<p>Covid-19 Shropshire Council helpline for all non-health COVID related enquiries.</p>
Food	
<p>Shrewsbury Food Hub Shrewsburyfoodhub.org.uk</p>	<p>Surplus food share tables across Shrewsbury</p>
<p>Shrewsbury Food Bank 01743 343336</p>	<p>Food parcels, debt advice, returning to work, digital inclusion, lifeskills. Referral needed.</p>
Money, Utilities	
<p>Local Support & Prevention Fund 0345 678 9078</p>	<p>Council helpline which can help with essential living costs such as food, housing and bills.</p>
<p>Citizens Advice Shropshire 0344 499 1100 Universal Credit Helpline 0800 144 8444</p>	<p>Confidential advice and help to solve problems with debt, benefits, housing, legal matters & employment. Need help claiming Universal Credit? Call their dedicated Help to Claim helpline.</p>
<p>Keep Shropshire Warm 0800 112 3743</p>	<p>Advice and grants for people struggling with heating and energy bills</p>
<p>Shropshire Council Housing Support 0345 678 9005</p>	<p>Housing Support on all housing matters particularly rentals and homelessness.</p>
<p>Sevenside Housing 0300 300 0059</p>	<p>Housing association. Advisors may also be able to help with debt, employment and benefits.</p>
<p>NHS Referrals & Advice Line 0800 196 4501</p>	<p>Mental Health, Drugs & Alcohol For local mental health services</p>
<p>MIND helpline 01743 368647</p>	<p>Mental health support</p>
<p>Shropshire Recovery Partnership 01743 294700</p>	<p>Drugs and alcohol support</p>
<p>Shropshire Rural Support 0300 123 2825</p>	<p>Mental health support for farmers and the rural community</p>
<p>Samaritans 116 123</p>	<p>Free 24/7 helpline</p>
<p>Shropshire Domestic Abuse Helpline 0300 303 1191</p>	<p>Families and Relationships Support for anyone suffering from domestic violence</p>
<p>West Mercia Women's Aid 0800 783 1359</p>	<p>24hr helpline for women and children suffering from domestic violence.</p>
<p>Crossroads Together 01743 341995</p>	<p>Wide range of support for unpaid carers.</p>
<p>Age UK Shropshire Telford and Wrekin 01743 233123</p>	<p>Confidential advice for older people, their families and carers.</p>



OMEGA

Join us for a virtual coffee morning! Tuesdays, 10.30

Held via Zoom. Contact Claire for the link & instructions on how to join in. community@omega.uk.net

See you there!

Omega, the National Association for End of Life Care | Registered Charity No. 1120322
www.omega.uk.net | Find us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @OmegaConnected

More Sources of Support

Financial support for businesses during coronavirus – Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and Public Health England. You can find out more details about the government's support for businesses through this website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

If you are in need of some help with food please either contact the **Community Good Neighbour's Scheme** (see details below) or **Shrewsbury Foodbank** who offer a wide range of support including help with food. The **FOOD BANK AT BARNABAS IS OPEN**: Monday, Tuesday and Friday (not open on Bank Holidays) 9.30am – 12pm. Tel: 01743 343336 / 0742 174 5857.

<https://www.barnabascommunityprojects.org/shrewsburyfoodbank> also lists other support available, such as help with cooking, budgeting and employment.

<https://www.shropshirelarder.org.uk/> also lists support available to you.

Shropshire Council's Covid-19 Helpline 0345 6789 028

This phonenumber is designed to receive enquiries and concerns associated with Covid-19, of a non-medical nature.



Community Good Neighbours, Pontesbury and Rea Valley

If you're alone, elderly or isolated our local volunteers can help with a friendly chat over the phone, collecting your prescription or shopping. Do give us a call on 07944 891 953 and leave your name and number!

You can also follow or contact us on:

Facebook: [Goodneighbourspontesbury.org.uk](https://www.facebook.com/goodneighbourspontesbury.org.uk)

Website: www.goodneighbourspontesbury.org.uk

Email: help@goodneighbourspontesbury.org.uk

March 2021 update. We currently have over 40 volunteers being trained and getting involved in helping around the community and along with the steering group volunteers we have clocked up over 600 hours of volunteering time.

We are still looking for additional members of the steering group to help guide and promote our activities as well as volunteers to help with befriending/delivering. Please contact us on the number below if you want to get involved.

Don't forget to contact us if you would benefit from some help with shopping/prescription deliveries, especially if you are shielding. Please get in touch if you want to discuss our telephone befriending service for people experiencing isolation or other difficulties. You can contact us on 07944891953, by email or now through our facebook site (see web address above).

Thank you to Allcare and the Atherton Trust for their recent donations.

Unpaid carers

Information and support for unpaid adult carers in Shropshire is now being delivered by the new Shropshire Carers team within Shropshire Council. Carers needing information or support can contact the team on 01743 341995 or email the Shropshire Carers at Shropshire.Carers@shropshire.gov.uk You will be able to speak to a trained carer advisor.

Wise and Well Club

www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/individuals/wise-and-well

The Wise and Well Club is free and open to people in Shropshire aged 65 to 95. A fortnightly newsletter includes information and advice on fitness and wellbeing, plus activities for members to try out in the comfort of their own homes.

Test and Trace Support Payment

If you are told by NHS Test and Trace Service to stay at home and self-isolate, you may be able to get a £500 Test and Trace Support Payment. For the qualifying conditions and to apply see here: www.shropshire.gov.uk/benefits/what-help-can-i-claim-from-the-council/covid-test-and-trace-support-payments/

For more vulnerable households either affected financially by Covid or just struggling to meet essential bills over lockdown and over winter, there are Hardship Funds that can help with a wide range of needs. These grants are open to anyone in difficulty and it's not necessary for benefits to be in payment. This money is for Shropshire householders, especially those low-paid working families with children whose finances may have suffered due to the long term impact of Covid.

It is easy to apply over the phone; an adviser will complete the paperwork and a specialist will look to see how residents might be supported and if any further information is needed. So, if you or someone you know, are having difficulty meeting essential outgoings, please call 0345 678 9078.

You can also access these grants and a range of other Covid related support through Shropshire Council web pages: www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/ or via the Covid-19 helpline on 0345 678 9028.



Signal is the only charity in Shropshire that supports people who are Deaf, have hearing loss and experience tinnitus. They are working hard to improve inclusivity of service, information and approach for Deaf and hard of hearing people within the county.

Since March, they have adapted services and responded to the needs of the community. They have worked with the Community Reassurance Team, to ensure that people who are Deaf and use British Sign Language (BSL) are able to access community support.

Signal has also been approached by Roger Belham, Census Engagement Manager Shropshire, to provide support and advice about how to engage and facilitate people whose first language is BSL, with regards to the Census.

Signal work closely with SaTH, in particular their Audiology department, and also with Shropshire Council's Sensory Inclusion Service.

In addition, they currently offer the following services:

- Advocacy service for anyone who is Deaf, has hearing loss or experiences tinnitus (qualified Advocates have BSL skills which is absent in any other advocacy service across the county)
- Outreach support for Deaf BSL users
- Tinnitus Support Groups (currently twice a month and delivered virtually using Zoom). Tinnitus has now been recognised as a symptom of long-covid and the increase in demand for support and attendance to groups has already started to demonstrate this fact.
- Deaf Awareness Training
- British Sign Language Courses
- And when restrictions allow, social and educational experiences for Deaf BSL users
- www.signal.org.uk

Work, Skill, Money Guide

Shropshire Council have recently developed a guide which aims to support residents with matters concerning Work, Skills and Money. The guide covers the whole cycle of job loss, financial support, housing, and upskilling for people who are looking for work. The guide can be located via the following link: www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/work-skills-and-money-guide/

Armed Forces Outreach

The Armed Forces Outreach is designed to provide help and support to all military personnel, veterans and their families. Working with service charities and organisations the outreach can ensure that current and former military personnel have access to the right support. The outreach has close links with businesses, charities and organisations across Shropshire, many of whom have signed the Armed Forces Covenant to demonstrate their support. To find out more, contact: Armed Forces Outreach Support Coordinator – sarah.kerr@shropshire.gov.uk / 07990 085 656 / 01743 255 931

Evolve into Spring

A service aimed at offering low level, gentle and fun physical activity for older people wanting to stay or become active over the winter and into spring 2021.

How will it work?

The experienced and specialist instructors from Evolve Lifestyle will offer a telephone advisory service. The aim is to advise safe and appropriate activity, without putting anyone at risk. This will help people who have deconditioned over the past year and encourage movement for those who are inactive and need guidance.

Who can access this service?

Local older people, carers, other staff or volunteers and family members.

What details do I need to provide if I call?

Just your name and any relevant medical information to ensure the advisors can provide you with safe and appropriate guidance.

If you would like a call back, or request information to be posted to you, we will need your telephone number and address.

NB In line with our GDPR policy, we will not retain any personal information after the call and any information has been sent.

What is the telephone advisory service number?

Tel: 0330 9121500

This number will be available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm but there will be an answerphone for you to leave a message and the advisor will call you back.

How can I find out more?

Contact Christina Morgan, Evolve into Spring Project Officer

Tel: 0330 9121500

Email: christina.morgan@energizestw.org.uk

Happenings at the Library

**'Bad libraries only build collections. Good libraries build services
Great libraries build communities.'**

ZA . . . ZA . . . ZOOM!

The first Library Lottery Live online was a great success. Thank you to the 31 people who braved the technological blips – freeze, unmute, go to speaker view not gallery! – to join us as the winners were announced:

- 1st Marion Vint
- 2nd Victoria Walton
- 3rd P.M.Edwards

You don't have to be a lottery member to join in the fun, but it's easy to sign up via the website (£12 p.a. for one number). The draw was followed by wonderful performances from Sal Tonge, Bob Boden, Gill Scriven, Pam Wyatt, Martin Jones and Malcolm Whittall who entertained us royally with stories, poems, real-life accounts and even a Country & Western song. It brought a smile to everyone's faces – sometimes unintentionally! – and was just what the doctor ordered for these lockdown times. You can get a flavour of what happened by visiting pontesburylibrary.co.uk. Just look under LIBRARY LOTTERY LIVE. The next draw is on Saturday, 6 March at 11 o'clock. The ZOOM link below will be active from 10:45am for you to chat amongst yourselves before the host arrives to draw those lucky numbers. Please look out for posters and social media to find out what the entertainment will be this time. Here's the link to click to join us:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82755756172?pwd=b2JzMjVmRkswbmU5c3ZNa0J3dGxodz09>
Meeting ID: 827 5575 6172
Passcode: 097969

Upcoming Events

(Please note these are subject to changing lockdown restrictions)

- Our annual Plant Sale this year is planned for the beginning of May.

It is always a well-attended, lively event. If, like me, you tend to sow a few too many seeds, then nearer the time FoPL will welcome with open arms any flower, fruit and veg seedlings, cuttings, plants etc you can spare. Plant Sale place, date and time tbc in good time.

- Virtual AGM Thursday, 11 March 7.00 pm

FoPL invites all members to join via Zoom to see how our fundraising is progressing and share your ideas for the future, bearing in mind the many changes in 2020 that have impacted on all of us. The meeting will be followed by a chance to view the local film, 'A Shropshire Field.' (see separate article page 12).

- Fun Cycle Ride in June. Plans are underway to make this an event for all the family. There will be a longer and shorter route, likely to take place on a Sunday, and of course we plan for the weather to be glorious!

FoPL

Pontesbury & Rea Valley u3a



Pontesbury & Rea Valley u3a offers opportunities for new learning in a relaxed and friendly setting. Members are welcome where ever they live as long as they can get to our activities in the Rea Valley. Our Third Age is the stage when we have reduced our working life and have time to spend on existing interests or developing new ones. Our group offers a chance to meet a wider range of people, make new friends and spend some leisure time discovering and acquiring new skills as well as helping others to do the same.

During this lockdown period, our coffee and chat meets fortnightly online as well as groups, such as play reading, are continuing their sessions too. Nothing stops our u3a from meeting, greeting and learning.

To find out more contact Susan Lockwood at susanlockwood345@btinternet.com or phone 01743 791092/07854 110271.

Bereavement Support for Shropshire Residents

Call 0345 678 9028

A new service has been launched to support people who are experiencing and suffering from bereavement and loss. The offer is open to any Shropshire resident who has been bereaved by either a recent death or previous loss. The Bereavement Support Service is operated by Shropshire Council and community voluntary partners Samaritans, CRUSE, Severn Hospice and Crane Quality Counselling. The service can be accessed through self-referral by calling 0345 678 9028.

Bereavement Support Service

‘Mobilise’ carers support

A short blog on dealing with change and uncertainty:

<https://bit.ly/323TIX0>

A guide to some of the routines that helped us get through Lockdown (Pt 1):

<https://bit.ly/324iJS6>

A basic ‘emergency plan’ to get you started:

<https://bit.ly/382F4DI>

James Townsend,
CEO and Co-Founder, Mobilise
james@mobiliseonline.co.uk
07816 779635

Free online mental health support for 14-25 year olds

Whether it’s loss of routine, increased anxiety, or stress at home, we’re supporting young people through FREE video therapy sessions (6pm – 12am).

Email: mhteam@lyfeproof.co.uk
Tel: 0121 622 3603,
TEXT: 07395 629297
[twitter/facebook/instagram](https://twitter.com/lyfeproofUK)
[@lyfeproofUK](https://www.instagram.com/lyfeproofUK)

Dementia Support in Pontesbury

When someone is diagnosed with dementia there are questions, concerns and situations that arise about what to do, how to understand the condition, and where to find answers and support.

The Alzheimer’s Society have local Dementia Advisers who provide personalised one-to-one support for those in Shropshire with a diagnosis of dementia, their family and carers.

If you want to talk with them and have their support then call the Dementia Connect Supportline on 0333 150 3456.

On a low budget? Want to save money?



Visit shropshirelarder.org.uk

to find out about low cost or free food and help with debt, benefits, housing and more in Shropshire

Support for carers - also see above

Shropshire Council have recently launched a new partnership with Mobilise online to provide additional support for carers in Shropshire.

Mobilise, the online community created ‘by carers, for carers’, will now offer its range of free online support to Shropshire residents with caring roles. Mobilise support includes regular contact through emails, ‘virtual cuppas’ and even face-to face coaching sessions, also run virtually.

Here is the link to the service: <https://www.mobiliseonline.co.uk/shropshire> – we encourage you to take a look at what support is available, share the link with carers you know and send any thoughts on the service to Margarete Davies, Carer Lead, Community Partnerships, Shropshire Council Margarete.Davies@shropshire.gov.uk

Litter Letter 6 from The Recyclers

BE RESPONSIBLE



We've been out there again, collecting those bits and pieces of rubbish in the verges – and there are plenty. It may seem insignificant to drop one little piece of litter – 'it doesn't matter, it will be picked up by somebody, it will rot down in time'. But every bit of rubbish adds to the pile and if everyone tries to make a difference then, as with other things, small beginnings can build into something really worthwhile. We would then all see a change and we would all feel better about our environment.

Each household has its black box and blue bag. Let's use them.

There is currently a shortage of recycled cardboard due to the number of boxes being in use for online shopping! If you're hanging on to that bit of packaging from your latest shop make sure that it gets into that Blue Bag. Think of all the trees you'll be saving!

Recycle your plastic too. Make sure that all plastic bottles/containers, yoghurt pots and those clear plastic fruit and vegetable boxes [clean, of course] end up in your Black Box. The council will provide you with more black boxes if you need them. Hard plastic is best taken to the recycling centres such as Battlefield as it needs special treatment. Sadly, polystyrene trays, cups, food containers and packaging are best put into the black wheelie bin at the moment as it remains uneconomical to recycle this type of plastic.

We haven't mentioned the obvious – use your Black Box for glass bottles, jars and cans – we're sure you do this already.

BUT REMEMBER – it's sensible to try to use less non-recyclable packaging in the first place– you'll find that it makes supermarket shopping very interesting!

Keep Britain Tidy

If you have

Paper, plastic or tin

Help save the Earth

Use a recycle bin

[thank you Joyce Paultre]

On behalf of Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group



SPREAD THE WORD, DON'T SPREAD LITTER

Are you fed-up with doing the same old walks?

Walking in Shropshire (www.walkinginshropshire.co.uk) is the website for you!

With hundreds of walks to download and print, free, it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group all the information is there in one place.

John said 'There is so much walking information on the web but it is difficult to find. Walking in Shropshire (part of the Walking in England suite of websites (www.walkinginengland.co.uk) – one for each county in England) has brought it together in one place so whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a walk suitable for you'.

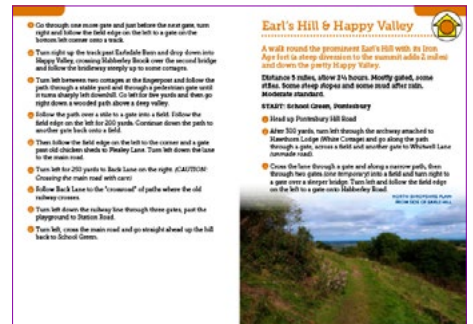
With walks from half a mile to twelve miles plus long, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone can find a walk to enjoy.

So home or away, check out the websites and get walking!

John Harris

www.walkinginengland.co.uk

email: john@walkinginengland.co.uk



St. George's Church Services for March

Due to the continuing uncertain situation, notices re March Services will be displayed on the noticeboards situated at the church gates and on the website www.st-george.org.uk

Keeping happy

Action for Happiness is an organisation which puts on all sorts of interesting talks, videos, resources and tools for keeping us upbeat. Visit the website to see what they have on offer. <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/>

ACTION CALENDAR: MINDFUL MARCH 2021

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1 Set an intention to live with awareness and kindness	2 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world outside	3 Start today by appreciating your body and that you're alive	4 Notice how you speak to yourself. Try to use kind words	5 Take three calm breaths at regular intervals during your day	6 Bring to mind people you care about and send love to them	7 Have a 'no plans' day and notice how that feels
8 Eat mindfully. Appreciate the taste, texture & smell of your food	9 Take a full breath in and out before you reply to others	10 Get outside and notice how the weather feels on your face	11 Stay fully present while drinking your cup of tea or coffee	12 Listen deeply to someone and really hear what they are saying	13 Pause to just watch the sky or clouds for a few minutes today	14 Find ways to enjoy any chores or tasks that need doing
15 Stop, breathe and just notice. Repeat regularly during the day	16 Get really absorbed with an interesting or creative activity	17 Look around and spot 3 things you find unusual or pleasant	18 If you find yourself rushing, make an effort to slow down	19 Cultivate a feeling of loving-kindness towards others today	20 Celebrate the International Day of Happiness dayofhappiness.net	21 Listen to a piece of music without doing anything else
22 Walk a different route today and see what you notice	23 Tune in to your feelings, without judging or trying to change	24 Appreciate your hands and all the things they enable you to do	25 Focus your attention on the good things you take for granted	26 Notice when you're tired and take a break as soon as possible	27 Have a device-free day and enjoy the space it offers	28 Appreciate nature around you, wherever you are
29 Notice what is working today and be thankful that this is so	30 Mentally scan down your body and notice what it is feeling	31 Notice the joy to be found in the simple things of life	"Mindfulness means that we commit fully in each moment to be present" - Jon Kabat-Zinn			

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

Learn more about this month's theme at www.actionforhappiness.org/mindful-march

Happier · Kinder · Together

Keeping active

Energize, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin have links to many ways to keep yourselves and your families active from their website – www.energizestw.org.uk/energize-resources including the 'everyday challenge' shown below.

Energize Active Families Challenge

To help keep your children motivated to stay active, we have compiled a range of challenges for you to undertake each day. Each week we will update the weekly challenges with different activities for you to try.

www.energizestw.org.uk/active-at-home ideas for Staying Active at Home. This month they are also

Motivating Monday	Try It Tuesday	Wild Wednesday	Thoughtful Thursday	Fruity Friday
Play Just dance with someone in your house – aim to choose 2 songs each, link below.	Time yourself to see how many star jumps you can do in 1 minute. Repeat this 3 times today to see if you can get any better!	Explore in your garden or nearest open space and see if you can find 3 different leaves. Collect them and try to identify them when you get home.	Start a gratitude journal – try and write 3 good things that have happened to you today.	Make yourself a kebab using 3 different fruits and a straw or skewer.

launching exercise activities for older people.

Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group

Pontesbury Climate Action Group is forming working groups looking at different aspects of our lives that can help us on the road to a zero carbon Pontesbury. This road may seem long and difficult, but as the famous quote from Lao Tzu points out, “the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”

We would like to invite all of you to join us on this journey.

We have three working groups at present, each one creating a plan to help our community. If you are interested in joining any of these groups please get in touch.

The biodiversity group

Thanks to a very generous donation from a Pontesbury resident we will be able to purchase some native bulbs and seeds for the Hall Bank footpath. Some parts of this area will be planted with native perennials, some with bulbs that will grow under the trees like bluebells, and other sunnier parts with annuals that benefit pollinators as well as cheering up us humans.



An appeal for snowdrops

Many of you with snowdrops in the garden will be separating them ready for next year's display about now. If you can spare any of your bulbs for planting please can you let us know?

During February and early March we need to prepare this area for planting, and any offers of help with this will be gratefully received.

We have had our application for hedgerow plants approved by Shropshire Council and these will be planted along Hall Bank in front of the new nursery building.

Look out next month for news of our hedgehog campaign supported by Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Phase 1 of the project will be a questionnaire distributed through the door, and phase 2 will be contacting those households who wish to be involved with helping hedgehogs in their neighbourhood with options of resources and information.

Climate Action Cycling Group

“Summer 2020, I learnt to ride a bike! I had a lesson and began enjoying the benefits of both fresh air and exercise and better still I saved money as I no longer need to drive my car to get to places. Even better I have lowered my carbon footprint to help the climate crisis. I am 65, I would love to inspire others, age is only a number.”

On 10 February, a small group of like-minded people held the first cycling group meeting (a sub group of the Pontesbury Climate Action Group). Their initial aim is to make it safer for school children to cycle to school, with the bigger goal being to develop a cycle pathway between Pontesbury and Shrewsbury, enabling people to commute to work, to cycle to school and to travel between these main locations safely. This will reduce the need for cars, take traffic off the roads, reduce our carbon footprint and enable our population to become healthier through exercise and reduced air pollution. The benefits will include saving money for individuals. This is something that everyone can engage in and have fun doing.

The group have some great ideas; they are linking with FoPL who are organising a cycle event; they are also linking to a countywide project which is very exciting . . . more about that in the next Newsletter.

This is a great time to look at a future that is healthier, fun and saves you money,

As H. G. Wells said:

“Every time I see a person on a bike, I no longer despair for the future of the human race.”

Carbon zero sub-group

We are hoping to link with Shropshire Climate Action Group in launching a carbon footprinting tool that we can use and work together as a community to support each other in calculating our footprints but more importantly to engage together in ways that reduce our carbon footprints. More news about this in the April Newsletter.

The next meeting of the Climate Action group will take place on Zoom on Wednesday, 10 March at 7pm. Contact the Clerk at clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk to be added to the mailing list for information and meeting dates.



The Shropshire Cycle Hub

This amazing enterprise was set up only 14 months ago at a small unit in Belle Vue, Shrewsbury. The aim was to take in donations of unwanted bicycles, revive and service them and then give them away to those who needed them. At the start this included refugees newly arrived in the area. Then COVID19 hit and we extended the scheme to offer bicycles to all key workers including of course those working all hours in our NHS during the pandemic.

It wasn't long before the old centre was completely outgrown – but thanks to a generous, albeit short term arrangement, with Shropshire Council a move was made to the downstairs floor of the old Wilco store in the Riverside shopping centre. This is short-term, pending redevelopment of this centre.

In April 2020, the initiative became a fully documented charity and after some excellent publicity the incoming stream of bicycles became a raging torrent. In the early days almost all work was done by volunteers – but this had to change so (thankfully) now the Hub has two full time staff. In addition, around 20 volunteers come in when they can – some to get their hands dirty and repurpose bicycles and some come in to help with the inevitable administration. However, at the moment, only four can work at any one time for COVID19 reasons.

Thankfully, the new centre is large so everyone can work away at their own repair bench fully socially distanced from everyone else. There is even space indoors for a circular test track about 100 metres long!

All our cycles are donated – the people of Shropshire have reacted superbly to the appeal and have found literally hundreds of bicycles of all shapes, sizes, vintages and condition. Some are beyond repair but yield a useful supply of spare parts – some are superb modern go-faster machines that have been lovingly looked after but for whatever reason are not wanted any more.

To date, over 400 bicycles have been given away. I have spent a number of hours on various projects at the Hub, all very satisfying.

Two incidents spring to mind. Two young ladies rang the bell – I let them in. One of them explained that she had made an appointment to see about getting a bicycle – was it OK that she had brought a friend along too – they both worked in The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital but lived a couple of miles away. Colin, the Hub's manager, took over; they looked at all the cycles that had already been completed and their faces started to smile – and the smiles grew ever wider as they were both fitted with a bike. Clearly they had assumed there was some sort of catch – but there is no catch! They cycled away very happily.

And then there was an 18-year-old. He had started work a few months ago in a care home. He lived with his mum – no car – and had been walking the 6 miles each way to and from work since he started his job. Well over 3 hours every day just to get to work – in all weathers. I don't know who had the bigger smile, him or his mum, when he left 40 minutes later complete with a serviceable bicycle and necessary extras.

The Shropshire Cycle Hub also sells re-built cycles to help fund the project and we have been awarded a number of grants from various sources. The total number of bicycles worked on since the start (up to 29 January 2021) is 583. Colin and Alex, the two members of staff, are assisted by up to two other volunteers at a time, each with their own work space, who usually come in for a half day shift. Around 20 cycles are brought back to life in a very professional way every week – the outflow of bikes given away and sold is just keeping pace with the inflow of new donations. “We sell bikes in order to give them away” sums up the way it all works.

In addition to the volunteers restoring donated cycles there are “Dr Bike” sessions every Saturday where members of the public can make an appointment to bring their bike into the hub and get a free service.

All the work the Cycle hub does can be viewed on its website. www.shropshirecyclehub.uk. This includes making appointments for “Dr Bike” as well as a list, with pictures, of all bikes waiting to be sold.

If you want to get any information, either visit the website or contact the Hub manager, Colin on 07485 212320. Opening hours are 9 to 5, Tuesday to Saturday. Because of the current pandemic it is appreciated if you can call Colin to say you would like to visit the hub – we work very hard to maintain a COVID19 secure workspace. Alternatively you can make contact by email; shropshirecyclehub@gmail.com.

And if you have an old bicycle that you don't have a use for – bring it into the Shropshire Cycle Hub. You will have the satisfaction of knowing it will be used and appreciated.

Even better, dig out your little used bike, get it serviced and start riding! We are blessed with so many lovely roads in Shropshire, many with remarkably little traffic.

If you are reading this in our Pontesbury Village Newsletter and have any questions, feel free to contact me, jonathan@the-waltons.co.uk and mobile 07970 702084 or contact the Hub direct.

Jonathan Walton





As a parish council, we continually have reports of dog faeces not being picked up, but also recently we have had reports of full bags being put down drains, particularly around Pontesbury Hill. Please pick up after your dog and then take it home or to one of the litter bins provided around the village. Thank you.

Cycling training on offer

We are blessed with some lovely roads, many of them with little traffic, in this area. Over the last year the number of cyclists out riding has increased significantly.

However, parents and children are often very cautious about starting cycling on open roads – all too often traffic conditions create a lot of anxiety. However, there are free cycle training sessions available within Shropshire, open to everyone.

These sessions can be to learn to ride, to improve skills or to help riders have the confidence to ride safely and assertively on the roads. Visit the website and take it from there. www.learnicycling.com/free-family-cycle-training

Another option for information is to contact Gill Otto (one of the cycling instructors) who lives in Pontesbury. Email: family@the-ottos.co.uk if people want more information or a chat. Or ring Gill on 07813 297161.

March's Newsletter

The Parish Council has taken the decision, following Government guidelines, to only produce an online version of the Newsletter for this month. If you know of any of your immediate neighbours who don't have access to a computer, please feel free to print a copy and give it to them using gloves. Thank you.

News from the Library



Optimistically, we'll be opening soon, and everyone will be able to enjoy the spectacular flower display in the 'Secret Garden'. Lots of people have put in a great effort to create the crafted flowers and insects (see page 1). They have told us how nice it's been to join in with a creative community project, at a distance, keeping them busy and motivated.

I must admit, I consider myself an optimistic person but also know I am prone to moments of cynicism. The last year has been very strange, testing us all, but the library has kept going in some form or another. I have used my kindle a lot more for ebooks and listened to a lot of audio books. Some from our library, some from the BBC. I follow some authors on Instagram and can be comforted by their inspirational posts. A new one I have discovered recently is Matt Haig, author of the Midnight Library. Most of his books are on our elibrary, look here to see what is available.

"Life is waiting for you. You might be stuck here for a while, but the world isn't going anywhere. Hang on in there if you can. Life is always worth it." Matt Haig, *Reasons to Stay Alive*.

Ready Reads are still available as click and collect from the front door.

Email pontesbury.library@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel. 01743 250610

Pontesbury Library Opening hours		
Monday	10am -12pm	
Tuesday	10am -1pm	2pm - 3pm
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday		2pm - 4pm
Friday	Closed	
Saturday	10am -12pm	
Sunday	Closed	


www.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries
 Follow us on Twitter @ShropLibraries
www.shropshire.gov.uk

The Library Owl

Launching 'A Shropshire Field'

Wednesday, 10 March, 7pm

In August 2018 Yvonne Davies, BAFTA award-winning local filmmaker, began photographing a Shropshire field. Located at Hall Bank, the resulting series of images captured the field's gradual evolution into a thriving community of new homes and have now been developed into an original film, "A Shropshire Field". Yvonne and Shropshire Homes Ltd invite Pontesbury residents to enjoy the free online live premier on Wednesday, 10 March at 7pm. Contact mike@pontesburylibrary.co.uk to find out more. Limited edition souvenir DVDs will be available to purchase for £5 after the online event.



Shropshire Climate Action Partnership (SCAP) for a Zero Carbon Shropshire

The plan can be viewed in full on our website: <http://www.zerocarbonschropshire.org>

Shropshire Climate Action Partnership

Our Ambition for Shropshire

Each year starting right away
Shropshire will need to achieve the following:

- 20,000 homes** insulated to high standards suitable for switchover and switch from gas or oil heating to using heat pumps
- Investment of £200M** in Shropshire renewables
- 500 acres of solar farms** (or wind farm equivalent) installed and powering the grid and private wire demand
- 2,000** electric car charge points for community car share and car club vehicles
- 8,000 acres of Shropshire marginal land** re-wilded or planted with woodland
- 10% reduction of car use** by shifting to active travel public transport and reduced commuting
- 10% reduction in waste collection volumes** by reducing short life purchases and single use packaging and promoting re-use of materials
- Recovery, renewal and protection of 10% of Shropshire peatlands and wetlands**
- 10% of highways budgets** dedicated to shifting from car to prioritise active travel
- 500 miles** of new hedgerow laid

For Shropshire Climate Action Partnership by Neil Holmes, Arts Empower © 2020

Volunteers needed for the Feed the Birds Project Pontesbury and Minsterley



Bird watching is one of the simplest ways to engage with nature. The Feed the Birds project trains and matches volunteers with someone identified as lonely within their local community. Volunteers then visit each week to top up the bird feeders and chat about the garden birds – but it is much more than this. It gets vulnerable people on to the radar of services to support them and helps to make their lives easier and more enjoyable through regular social contact with a friendly volunteer.

Shropshire Wildlife Trust is holding a series of short training sessions throughout March, April and May this year. If you would like to get involved, or if you know of anyone who may like to have someone visit, please contact clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk, Tel: 01691 661157.

*Feed the Birds Pontesbury & Minsterley team
This local project is part of the
Shropshire Wildlife Trust's 'Feed the Birds project'
funded by the National Lottery Building
Communities Fund*





Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan/March update Has Pontesbury Got Character?

Yes, of course it has! When asked, most people agree that it is a caring, friendly community. But if we ask the same question of the place rather than its people the answer is more elusive. However defining the character of Pontesbury does matter because its future development depends in part on answering this question. Residents refer frequently to the variety of materials and building styles as a defining characteristic of its appearance. Certainly there is a different ambience and outlook from Mount Way compared with Shrewsbury Road; not better but different. Perhaps here lies the answer – different parts have a different character based on their history and geographical location.

Professional people who make decisions on our future development are required to ask what is distinctive about Pontesbury so that its spirit of place and our sense of belonging can if possible be safeguarded. This is even less easy to answer. Its setting beneath Pontesford and Earls Hills and their dominance in views approaching and from the village may be part of the answer. The important answers need to come from the village otherwise what is appreciated and valued by local people may well be overlooked by an outsider with limited local knowledge. So, answers to the above questions really matter and will be gratefully received by the Parish Clerk.

Debbie Marais, Parish Clerk
clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk



census
2021

Helping
everyone
take part in
Census 2021

The 2021 Census is coming soon

The census is a snapshot of our country, its people and their lives that takes place every 10 years and the next one is on the 21st March. The census in England and Wales is conducted by the independent Office for National Statistics.

Libraries and census support

Households across Shropshire will soon be asked to take part in the Census 2021. It will be the first census run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

Shropshire Libraries will be offering support in completing forms digitally with over the phone, guidance in completing forms and form filling on behalf of the person, virtual guidance via Microsoft Teams and one to one support depending on restrictions. Paper forms will be available for those people that are unable to complete the census online.

The information that the census provides is important for national, local government and charities. The ONS ensures all the data is confidential and protected. No personal information is released for 100 years.

The ONS is obviously aware of the implications of Covid and its teams will be complying with all regulations so that the public is protected. Some people ask why the census is still going to take place against the background of Covid? The answer is that it will be more important than ever to record the impact of this exceptional virus upon the population, our lifestyles and jobs among other factors.

We all have to complete the census by law. The Shropshire team will support households, those in care and anyone that requires help to complete the census. We will have six Census Support Centres (see libraries above) throughout the county and helplines will also be provided. In the coming weeks more information about the census will be provided on television, the radio and through social media. It's a great opportunity for us all to help plan our future.

To find out more please visit our website <https://census.gov.uk/>

Roger Belham
Census Engagement Manager for Shropshire
roger.belham12@field.census.gov.uk

NATURAL ENGLAND

Notes from the hill

To add to the usual work on the hill at this time of year, such as tree clearance and gorse cutting, the prolonged snow cover has meant that we have had to regularly take hay out to our flock of sheep and ponies. The hay that we feed to our animals comes from the hay meadows that we manage at Pennerley. These fields are managed firstly as flower rich habitats and secondarily for their crop of hay, so we do not add any manure or fertiliser to them as this generally reduces the diversity of plants within them. Usually they provide us with plenty of hay last us through the winter, however this year for the first time we have had to buy in some hay to see us through.

One of our main winter jobs is clearing sapling trees from the heath, which if left would allow the internationally important heathland on the Stiperstones to succeed to woodland. However it has been a nice change this year to also be planting some trees in the form of hedges at Rigmoreoak. If time allows we might even be laying a previously planted one. We received a grant from the Woodland Trust for the trees (search for MOREhedges) and with help from our volunteers have planted over 250m of new hedge.

Hedgerows are excellent habitats in their own right, but particularly with hedgerow trees they provide a network of wildlife highways across the countryside. Woodland wildlife in particular can use them as a link between woods and copses, but with their grass and flower edges they are also used by a whole range of different wildlife. Unfortunately we are still seeing a loss of hedgerows across the countryside and a survey of hedgerow change, carried out by the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, revealed that between 1984 and 1990 hedgerow length in England had declined by 20 per cent and in Wales by 25 per cent. Much of this loss is a result of lack of management rather than removal, since if the hedge is simply allowed to get old whilst being subject to grazing animals it will deteriorate to the few remnant old hawthorn trees commonly seen around the hills today.



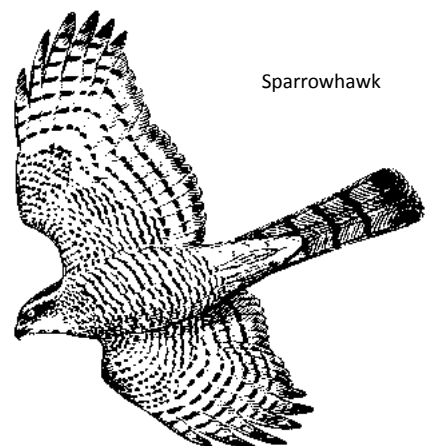
Yellowhammer

Hedgerows offer many benefits in addition to the wildlife corridors that they provide. They act as windbreaks, and farm animals use them for shelter against wind and rain, and when the snow is drifting the drifts are reduced in areas where there are multiple hedges. In the summer hedges and hedgerow trees offer shade for grazing animals, which is increasingly important with climate change and can prevent some of the grass burning off in drought periods. The shelter from the wind prevents erosion of soil and if planted along contours can help surface water soak into the ground and thus prevent soil erosion through water runoff.

Many farmland birds use hedgerows both for feeding on invertebrates and nesting. One of these is the yellowhammer which is now a red listed bird due to having suffered a 55% decline in breeding numbers during 1970-2010.

One bird that seems to benefit from poor gappy hedges is the sparrowhawk which can more easily ambush its prey when there is less cover for small birds to escape into. You will often see them flying along hedges and quickly flicking over to the other side to surprise an unwary blue tit.

Due to last year's lockdown we didn't get much heather burning in last March. Hopefully this year will be different if things dry up, as it is an important management technique not only for the heathland plants but also to prevent wildfires in our ever hotter summers.



Sparrowhawk

Simon Cooter and the Natural England staff at Rigmoreoak.

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Longmynd Travel is offering free transport for anyone over 70 or in a vulnerable group who needs help getting to their Covid-19 vaccine appointment.

Once you have booked a date and time for your vaccine appointment, please call Val on **01743 861999** to book your free transport.

Shropshire Council is also providing free transport <https://newsroom.shropshire.gov.uk/2021/01/coronavirus-free-transport-to-help-shropshire-residents-get-vaccinations/>



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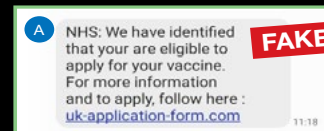
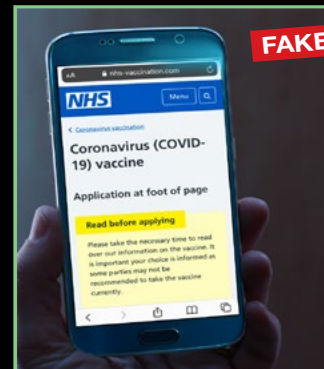
BE ALERT TO VACCINE FRAUD

Criminals are using the COVID-19 vaccine as a way to target the public by tricking them to hand over cash or financial details. They are sending convincing-looking text messages letting people know they are eligible for the vaccine or phoning people directly pretending to be from the NHS, or local pharmacy.

PEOPLE ARE WARNED TO BE ALERT TO THESE SCAMS

The **NHS** will:

- ⊗ NEVER ask for payment - the vaccine is free
- ⊗ NEVER ask for your bank details
- ⊗ NEVER arrive unannounced at your home to administer the vaccine
- ⊗ NEVER ask you to prove your identity by sending copies of personal documents such as your passport



FURTHER GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT



National Cyber
Security Centre

If you receive a call you believe to be fraudulent, hang up. If you are suspicious about an email you have received, forward it to report@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to the number **7726** which is free of charge.



If you believe you have been the victim of fraud or identity theft, you should report this directly to Action Fraud either online; actionfraud.police.uk or via phone **0300 123 2040**.



If you have any information relating to vaccine fraud you can stay 100% anonymous by contacting Crimestoppers COVID Fraud Hotline online; covidfraudhotline.org or phone **0800 587 5030**.



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STEP UP SHROPSHIRE



Food provision during lockdown

Shropshire Council's Community Reassurance Team is here to help all residents across the county during the pandemic

Did you know there are lots of local groups and services available to help you access food parcels, secure delivery slots and other essentials:

Shropshire Larder – www.shropshirelarder.org.uk

Call Shropshire Council's COVID-19 Helpline for help to access food phone 03456 789 028

Mid-Counties Co-Op also offer delivery slots – call 0800 435 902 to book

For all other food and support needs visit – www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/ or call 03456 789 028

For further support visit www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or call the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Shropshire Council Helpline on 0345 678 9028




www.shropshire.gov.uk



STEP UP SHROPSHIRE



Looking after your mental health during lockdown

Shropshire Council's Community Reassurance Team is here to help all residents across the county during the pandemic

Looking after your mental health is important, and there are lots of local services available to support you and your loved ones:

www.togetherall.com – an online community for Shropshire residents who are stressed, anxious or low

Shropshire MIND – Call 01743 368647 or email: manager.shropshiremind@gmail.com

Samaritans – call 116 123 for a confidential safe place to talk about whatever is getting to you

Young Minds Parents Hotline – 0808 8025544 (9.30am – 4.00pm) free, confidential online support any adult worried about the mental health of a child or young person

Free bereavement counselling – 0345 678 9028

Kooth – free safe and anonymous online support for young people: www.kooth.com

Childline – call 0800 1111

For further support visit www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or call the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Shropshire Council Helpline on 0345 678 9028




www.shropshire.gov.uk



STEP UP SHROPSHIRE



Financial support during lockdown

Shropshire Council's Community Reassurance Team is here to help all residents across the county during the pandemic

If you need financial support, help is available:

Test and Trace payments of £500 are available for people on low income who need to self-isolate

If you are of working age and receive council tax support, you have been awarded up to an additional £150 hardship payment on your council tax bill

If you have been financially affected by coronavirus, you may be eligible for grant funding

Call us on 0345 678 9078 to find out more

Visit www.shropshire.gov.uk/benefits for further information

For further support visit www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or call the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Shropshire Council Helpline on 0345 678 9028




www.shropshire.gov.uk



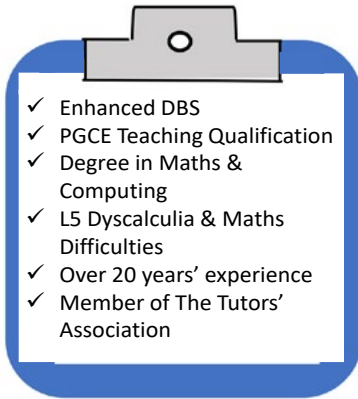
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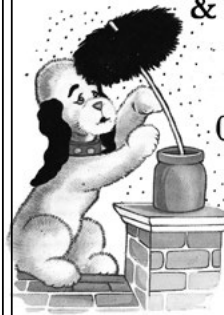
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