

Pontesbury Parish Newsletter

March 2024

Issue No: 306

Community Orchard

Many thanks to the local volunteers and to the Shropshire Council Tree Officer who came along to plant the 20 fruit trees (plum, damson, apple & pear) which were donated by Shropshire Council. The Orchard is at the bottom of the large public open space on Cricketer's Meadow. This will be a sister project to the Community Garden being built at the top of the estate, behind the Ark nursery. There will be talks on pruning and tree care, and in the future, juicing days when the trees bear fruit. The trees will also provide a wonderful display of blossom in the Spring. There has been an initial meeting about what to do with the rest of the public open space where ideas such as a wildflower meadow and a pond, were discussed. If you have any other ideas or would like to get involved please contact the Parish Clerk clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk



Debbie Marais & Siobhan Reedy



Ken Jenks, Rob Dixon & 2 helpers



Ken Jenks & 2 helpers

**Public Meeting
about Hall
Bank
Improvements
– new date
Monday
18th March
6pm at
The Pavilion**

People from outside the Parish are interested in what's going on in our vibrant parish, so please bring your newsletter back to the Pavilion to be reread. Many thanks

PONTESBURY PARISH COUNCIL

At the February council meeting the councillors received an update about the proposed traffic calming measures in Pontesbury and a new date for the public meeting – this is to be Monday 18th March at 6pm at The Pavilion. This is your chance to hear about the responses received to the consultation and an update on the plans. A Shropshire Council Highways Officer will be in attendance.

Repair works along the A488 postponed

Councillors discussed the impact of the planned much-needed pre-surfacing repair works along the A488 and the lack of notice of these proposals. The council wrote to Shropshire Council expressing their concerns and these works have now been postponed to allow further discussions and use of local knowledge to come up with a plan to minimise the impact on local residents.

Local housing for local people

The allocation of housing on the development off Mount Way, for local people was also discussed. Councillors felt very strongly that these houses should be allocated to meet the needs of residents of Pontesbury Parish in the first instance and have written to Shropshire Council to seek reassurance that this will happen. If you are interested in one of these properties either to rent or in a Shared Ownership capacity, please see below

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All properties will be allocated in line with the criteria set out in the S106 agreement and advertised on Severn Homes' website, including important details about **Shared Ownership** products. Please visit <https://www.severnhomes.co.uk>. Please also visit Steps to Buying a Shared Ownership Home

Housing to rent

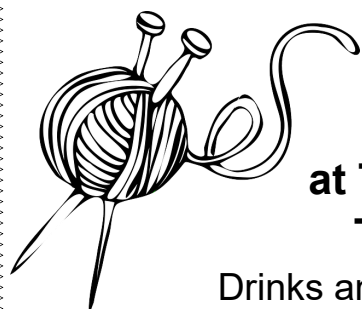
In line with the S106, all properties will be allocated via Shropshire Council's choice-based lettings website, named Shropshire Homepoint. Shropshire Council is responsible for assessing applications submitted on Shropshire Homepoint and awarding a band (Band 1 to 7) to each applicant. All interested applicants must be registered on Shropshire Homepoint (preferably prior to the point the properties are advertised on the website). Once registered (if not already) the applicant can place a bid on a suitable property when advertised. However, be aware that applicants are restricted by Shropshire Homepoint on the suitable/size of property they can bid on, e.g. a family needing a 2-bedroom house will not be able to bid on a 3-bedroom house. See Shropshire Homepoint's guidelines for further details.

2024-25 Budget

The parish council is delighted that they have managed to keep the precept increase to 3.86% for 2024-25, which is equivalent to an increase of 11p per week on a Band D property.

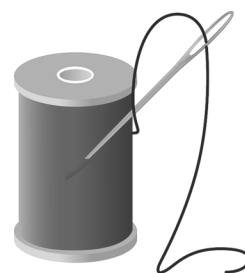
The **next parish council meeting** is the **Annual Parish Meeting** which will be on **Monday 11th March 2024** at 6.30pm at Pontesbury Public Hall. This is the meeting where residents can hear reports from a selection of groups in the parish and a round up of parish council activities over the previous year.

The next **Planning Committee meeting** will be held on **Monday 4th March 2024** at 6.30pm at the Pavilion.



We hope to see you at the
‘Get Creative groups’:

**at The Pavilion from 11am to 1pm on
Thursday 7th & 21st March 2024**



Drinks and biscuits are provided and there is no charge.

Bring along any project you are working on and have a chat with fellow creators.

Everyone welcome.

Pontesbury Carers Support Group

Last Friday of each month
NO MEETING IN MARCH
(Bank Holiday)

10.30am - 12 noon
Free to attend, with
refreshments



Wednesdays 10-12am –
Sea Change Trust
Family Drop-in & Craft –
FREE Term Time Only



**Pontesbury Dementia
Support Group**

Alternate Wednesdays in the
Pavilion

6th & 20th March @ 11.30am



Pontesbury Library Opening hours

Monday	10am -1pm	
Tuesday	10am -1pm	2pm - 5pm
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday		2pm - 5pm
Friday	Closed	
Saturday	10am -1pm	
Sunday	Closed	



www.shropshire.gov.uk
General Enquiries: 0345 678 9000

Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Hapus

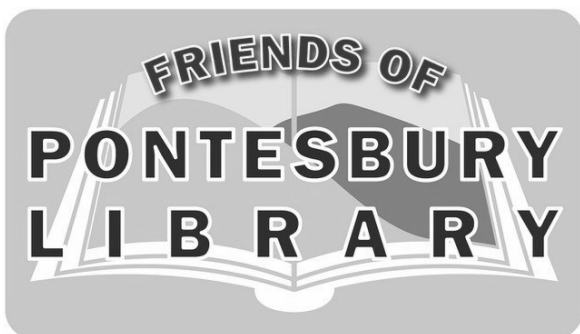
Spring has sprung when the daffodils are out ready for the 1st March and St David's day. Being so close to the border I'm sure many of our customers will be celebrating with Welsh cakes or Bara brith. We have a copy of the Mabinogi in our poetry section if you fancy reading a short translation.

We will be marking International Woman's Day, 8th March, with some displays of inspiring woman, chosen by our Friends. This year March is even busier than last with events, Happy St Patrick's Day, Mother's Day and wishing you all a beautiful sunny Easter.

Rhyme Time will be 14th March at 2pm- 2.45.

The Library Owl





News from the Friends of Pontesbury Library

It's hard to extol the joys of Spring without descending into cliché, but birds are everywhere, sap is rising, and it all feels so heart-warming. It is good to know that our library is currently in a reasonable financial position, but only for as long as Shropshire Council continues to fund libraries in their budget, and nothing is guaranteed; we may well be subject to further cuts next year. This is why we continue to fund-raise and lay on events that involve all ages in our community, as only with strong community engagement do we have a chance of keeping our library open and thriving, and being able to adapt to change as it arises. Friends volunteers are running literacy visits, when children from Pontesbury and Minsterley Primary schools visit for an afternoon and discover all the many things on offer in addition to books. At our monthly coffee morning (on the first Saturday) we always announce three new lucky lottery winners, in February these were:

1st Lindsay Hughes-Roberts, 2nd Allen Marsden, 3rd Janet Walsh.

There will be three more lucky winners drawn this month – if you're not already a member pick up a form at the Library and join for a chance of a share of the prize money.

On 6th April we have a joint coffee morning with PCEAG, who will give a presentation about the exciting community growing project on Cricketer's Meadow.

Our annual Plant and Book Sale is always hugely popular. This will be held alongside the coffee morning on Saturday May 4th, and we will welcome donations of books and plants, so think ahead as you are sowing and planting, saving extras for the sale.

Our AGM will be held in June and we are planning an exciting speaker, to be announced in due course.

FoPL has a lively committee but we are always looking for interested volunteers and we need officers to step up and take on roles that have been held by the same people for many years, namely Secretary, Bookkeeper, Chair and Vice Chair. None of these roles are arduous, and if you think you might be interested, have a word with any of our Librarians who can put you in touch with a member of the committee. If you are new to the village, or returned having grown up here, it is a great way to be involved and get to know people.

London Marathon 2024 - A Personal Story from Stuart Thomas Back in December 2009 my son Sam was born severely premature at 26 weeks weighing a mighty 2lbs. He was born on the 21st December and had a due date of 27th March. It was an incredibly traumatic time in life (full details in the link below) but thankfully had a happy ending. As a family we remain eternally grateful to the support received from BLISS and our local neonatal ward at Shrewsbury hospital. BLISS are the UK's leading charity helping babies born premature or full-term, but sick. One in every 7 babies born in the UK will need specialist neonatal care, which means thousands of babies and their families seek information and support from BLISS every year.

Sam has just turned 14 and is a fit and healthy young man. To mark the occasion, I am running the London Marathon on April 21st with the hope of raising a serious amount of money for BLISS and the outstanding charitable work they do across the country. I am running as a celebration of life and the power of the human heart and soul to survive, recover and flourish.

My training programme is going well, and at present I am running approximately 25 miles a week. The heart and lungs feel strong the body less so. Apparently the "40 something" age bracket is prime for marathon running. I beg to differ!

If you'd like to make a donation, please visit: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/stuart-thomas31>



Community
Good
Neighbours
Pontesbury & Rea Valley District

News & Events

March 2024

Future Events

For all upcoming events & updates please view our Facebook page.



Coffee Morning - Friday 8th March 2024

10:30am to 12:00pm - Plough Inn

All are welcome to come along.

Next Luncheon Club - Friday 22nd March 2024

11.45am to 1.30pm - Public Hall

Two course lunch for £8 - tickets from Hignett's or coffee mornings at The Plough - entrance with Tickets Only please

Gentleman's Club

Play cards, read the paper and catch up with other men. Call Rob Davies on 07720 010353 for more info.



Rea Valley
foodbank

The Rea Valley Foodbank supports anyone unable to meet their food bills and will provide a weekly parcel of food and other essential household goods until financial circumstances improve. The Foodbank is available to people living within the Rea Valley ie, Hanwood, Pontes-

bury, Minsterley, Hope, Worthen, White Grit, Brentlawnt, Yockleton, Westbury, Habberley, Snailbeach, Stiperstones, Brockton etc

You need a referral to ensure that your parcel meets your needs, but it's really easy, just call

Greg 07902 794653
Richard 07922 830488



Alternatively. GP's and schools are able to make referrals

As we continue to extend the work of the Foodbank, we welcome new **VOLUNTEERS**. If you would like to know more about volunteering then please contact::

Jon Newson 07973 209856 or email him at jnewson@daimon-bs.co.uk

DONATION APPEAL

As with every other Foodbank in the country, donations are getting less and less as everyone is affected by the high cost of food and energy. We desperately need in-date tinned and packet foodstuff, toiletries, cleaning products, pet food and nappies. If you are able to donate and can help us to help others in our community please drop off at the following venue.

Pontesbury Co-op – we are really grateful to both the Co-op management and people who donate. All donations which go into the Co-op donation bin are collected on a Sunday and are solely for our **local Rea Valley Foodbank**.

If you would like more information then please email support@reavalleyfoodbank.co.uk

St. George's Church
www.st-george.org.uk

Services and activities for March 2024

3rd 10.30am All Age Worship
5th 2.30pm Tea Service
10th 10.30am Holy Communion (Mothering Sunday)
17th 10.30 am Holy Communion
24th 10.30am Dramatised Passion (Palm Sunday)
28th 7pm Group service at Holy Trinity Minsterley (Maundy Thursday)
29th 10.15 am Children's Activities
2.45pm Act of Witness School Green. (Good Friday)
7pm Tenebrae at Holy Trinity Minsterley
31st 10.30am Holy Communion (Easter Day)

Pontesbury Congregational Church
Services for March 2024

3rd March 10am Deacons
10th March 10am Rev. Debbie Martin
17th March 10am Jan Hocking
24th March 10am Rev. Debbie Martin
31st March Easter Service arrangements to be confirmed

Wednesdays 10.45 – 12 Noon

Warm Space

Tea and Coffee and Fellowship all are welcome

Pontesbury Baptist Church

www.pontesburybaptist.co.uk

We have services twice every Sunday – at 10:30am and 6:30pm – where we sing hymns of worship, hear the Bible read, pray, and listen as God's Word is preached.

	10:30 AM	6:30 PM
Sunday 3rd	March Mike Wells	SONGS OF PRAISE
Sunday 10th	Mike Wells	Mike Wells
Sunday 17th	Rob Jack	Mike Wells
Sunday 24th	Mike Wells	Gheorghe Scurtu
Easter Sunday 31st	Mike Wells	Martin Wells

Special Service: Good Friday 29th March (11:30 am):

Preacher: Mike Wells

Everyone of all ages is very welcome! You don't have to book ahead, and there's no dress-code - please just come as you are. We run a creche for toddlers and a Sunday School for children under the age of 11 during our morning service.

In addition, every service is streamed live via our church website, and recordings of previous sermons are available on the website and our YouTube channel.

If you'd like more information, please email:
info@pontesburybaptist.co.uk

The Methodist Services for the February 2024 are:

3rd Mar 10.45 am with Rev. Brian Spencer, to inc. Holy Communion

10th Mar 10.45 am with Mr. Wesley Morris

17th Mar 10.45 am with Mr. Andy Skitt

24th Mar 10.45 am with Mrs. Helen Pearson

31st Mar 10.45 am with Rev. Brian Spencer

Come and listen to the Gospel Story on Sundays throughout March 6-7pm In the Pontesbury Public Hall, Shrewsbury Road, Pontesbury SY5 0QD



ST GEORGES CHURCH
CHILDRENS CHURCH

ALL AGES
WELCOME

EVERY 2ND & 3RD SUNDAY
AT 10:30AM

STORIES, CRAFTS AND ACTIVITIES

Term Time Only

No need to book in advance

In this story of Jesus is a message of hope
EVERYBODY WELCOME

Liz & Anna look forward to meeting you
Liz: 07901 628157. Anna: anarie3@hotmail.com

ADVANCE NOTICE

Pontesbury Congregational Church
will be Hosting a Table-Top Sale
on Saturday 20th April
10am -12 Noon

Any organisation which would like a table (cost £10) to raise funds for their own use please contact the Church Secretary Tel. 01743 790489 or email

janewardropper@btinternet.com
to book a table

Local Support for the Purchase of Minsterley Meadows

On 6th January, well over a hundred people attended a public meeting in Minsterley Parish Hall in order to check out local support for a fund-raising appeal to purchase Minsterley Meadows. As a result of public concern and support a working group was quickly set up with a view to securing the meadows for local people and for the Nation as a whole.

Minsterley Meadows is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and recognised as a site of national importance. Amongst other meadow plants we have thousands of beautiful and rare Green-winged Orchids which burst into a profusion of rich purple flowers in late May.

This is the largest site in Shropshire and these orchids are listed as threatened on the Great Britain Red Data List. Believed to have been left untilled for centuries, it is filled with birds, butterflies, bees and other insects. Mature hedgerows at the boundaries create a wildlife corridor whilst the meadows also provide access to Poles Coppice and Eastridge Woods.



This purchase will preserve and protect these rare, ancient Shropshire meadows both for wildlife and the local community; provide a key green space next to a children's play area; secure access for future generations and limit development, as the adjoining field has already been built upon.

Should negotiations be successful, a campaign to raise the money will be launched and we would greatly appreciate any support you can give during the fund-raising campaign.

If the funds are raised and Minsterley Meadows are purchased, the site will be owned by the Middle Marches Community Land Trust; a local community-led trust, the aims of which are to help create an ecologically healthy and sustainable countryside. Working closely with local residents and volunteers, the Marches Meadows Group would manage the meadows.

In the meantime we will keep you informed of any developments.

For further information, please contact info@middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk

See website: <https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/>

Pontesbury Festival Plans are afoot for a Pontesbury Festival in the summer of 2025, involving every community group possible and providing activities for all ages. A first exploratory meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday March 13th at 7 p.m. at the Pavilion. Everyone is welcome to attend. If you would be interested in this venture, but can't attend the meeting please contact Greg Smith at [rector-pontstip@gmail.com](mailto:pontstip@gmail.com)

PONTESBURY & DISTRICT GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on 5 March, at 7.30pm in the Len Simpson Room of Pontesbury Public Hall, and we hope to see more Members attending. Although we are always ready to welcome more helpers on a Saturday morning, and on the Committee, there will be no pressure to do so just by attending the AGM. There will be refreshments available at the end of the meeting where we'll all get a chance to chat and catch up after the winter

At the time of writing vegetable seeds and seed potatoes are selling well, but we should still have a good number of all varieties still available, and it's not too late to get them started. The seed potatoes should be set out in seed trays, or egg boxes, in a light, frost-free room to let the shoots develop so that they have a head start when planted out in late March and early April.

Looking ahead, we will be holding our social evening, Spring in to the Garden on 16 May where you will be able to buy vegetable seedlings if you haven't started your own. There will also be plant stalls with plants for the borders as well as other, garden related, things.

The Trading Post, in Station Road, is open every Saturday from 9.30 to 12 noon until the end of October.



Searching for Jo

A TALK BY VAL
SINCLAIR AND
JO MORRISON

*Sisters who
finally found one
another*



learn,
laugh,
live

OPEN MEETING

Members & non-members welcome

March

20

Wednesday 2pm
Minsterley Parish Hall
A488, Minsterley, SY5 OEH

Refreshments available
Free entrance

u3a

Pontesbury
& Rea Valley



Sheep Worrying (an article from the National Sheep Association website)

National Sheep Association (NSA) and all its farmer-members want everyone to share in the iconic landscapes and beautiful countryside that sheep farming in the UK has played an integral role in creating and maintaining.

Farmers appreciate that lots of people like their dog to enjoy the countryside with them, but as much of the UK's rural landscape is maintained by grazing sheep there is always a strong chance you will encounter some while out with your dog.

This advice will help you and your pet have fun and safe days out without disrupting the important work of sheep farmers. You should also read this advice if you are a dog owner living in or near a farming area, as escaped dogs can be a real problem for farmers.

Valuable Assets Sheep are valuable assets and any harm to them harms a farmer's livelihood.

It is every dog's instinct to chase, even if they are usually obedient and good with other animals. Chasing by dogs can do serious damage to sheep, even if the dog doesn't catch them. The stress of worrying by dogs can cause sheep to die and pregnant ewes to miscarry their lambs.

Sheep fleeing from dogs are often killed or seriously injured by their panicked attempts to escape, causing untold damage to fences and field boundaries in the process.

Dogs chasing ewes and lambs can cause mis-mothering issues, with lambs dying from starvation or hypothermia when they become separated from their mother and fail to find her again.

Dog bites can cause death in sheep or necessitate them being put down at a later date, or in less severe cases considerable veterinary bills and additional welfare issues as a result of flies being attracted to the blood and leading to a nasty health problem in sheep called 'fly strike'. Injuries to sheep can also delay the normal farming routine, be it the mating season or administration of vital medicines and vaccines.

It is an offence to allow a dog to worry sheep. Worrying includes attacking or chasing sheep and, in some circumstances, farmers are legally entitled to shoot dogs if they are endangering their sheep. More information on staying legal can be found on the NSA website. It is vital that you keep your dog on the lead around livestock, even if you can usually trust it to come to call. If you live in or near a farming area, you must make sure that your dog cannot escape from your property, as it may find its way onto land containing sheep.

Thank you

Pontesbury WI

Pontesbury WI met on the 12th of February. Our guest speaker was Pam Thom Rowe, who talked about Folklore and Landscapes of the Welsh Marches. This interesting talk took us through the history of folklore and how the landscape of our countryside led to story tellers over the years developing tales about strange landscapes. Folklore talks about dragons, devils, giants, knights and ghosts, all telling stories linked to the area, many connected to the Welsh Marches. Thank you Pam for an entertaining presentation.

Our hostesses this month were Sandra Gray, Mary Crowther and Irene Windows. We had some really great cakes, my favourite being the lemon drizzle.

Our raffle prize was donated by Sue Ward - Maxine Pittaway won a beautiful plant. The flower of the month prizes went to Sue Ward 1st. Lena Rowson 2nd. Maxine Pittaway 3rd.

After our meeting we held a bring and buy event. Thanks to everyone who donated items.

Our WI meeting next month is on 11th March, where our speaker, Sue Ord, will be looking at Graphology, the secrets of handwriting. We are all looking forward to having our hand writing looked at.

We meet at Pontesbury Public Hall at 2pm on the second Monday of the month. Why not join us and see if you would like to become a member. You can attend 3 meetings without being a member.

The WI craft club will be held on the 19th of March. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 10am to 1pm at The Cock Inn Hanwood.

Please contact Irene Windows President on 01743 791903 for further information.

Maxine Pittaway. Events Organiser.



Pontesbury Women's Club

If you would like an entertaining Tuesday evening come along to our meetings

Tuesday 12th March

Janet Carleton will tell us about the 'Dignity & Freedom Network'

Tuesday 9th April

Annual General Meeting
And Social Evening

PWC meets at 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month at Pontesbury Public Hall

Rea Valley Probus Club - 2024 meeting dates

All meetings are at Arscott Golf Club, on the second Wednesday of each month, at 1pm.

13 March 2024	14 August 2024
10 April 2024	11 September 2024
8 May 2024	9 October 2024
12 June 2024	13 November 2024
10 July 2024	11 December 2024

West Shropshire Flower Club On a cold January evening Kathleen Russell gave her demonstration 'Out of the attic', inspired by a variety of containers that she had collected over the years. Her Constance Spry arrangement with white roses, gerbera, carnations and lilac radiating from a classic urn started off the evening, along with amusing memories of her time at the Constance Spry Floristry school. We then had a guess the thing, when she started an antique coloured arrangement in a clearly old, wooden trug affair with 4 sections, that turned out to be an antique Greek bread proofing box. Apricot stocks and tuberose, were arranged in the sections in a parallel design with phlox, snapdragons and gerbera. Then the contemporary look, with orange gerberas cleverly arranged to look like a bunch placed horizontally on top of a terracotta urn. Her spring basket was a mixture of cut flowers- iris, snapdragons, phlox, roses, and potted spring plants - daffodils, hellebores, grape hyacinths and primulas, that could be replanted for continued enjoyment, then placing a kneeling female sculpture within a bower of greenery and yellow flowers, alstroemeria, freesia, roses and gerbera to create a magical classic arrangement, whilst telling the most hilarious story of a wardrobe malfunction!

Meetings are at Westbury Village Hall starting at 7.30pm, visitors welcome.

The next meeting of the West Shropshire Flower Club is on 27th March – Club evening – Pavé design

Tai Chi There will be no Tai Chi class in Pontesbury on Tuesday 12 March or Tuesday 2 April, otherwise classes will be as usual, two o'clock until four, on Tuesdays up to 21 May. In addition there are workshops at Mereside Community Hall on the last Saturday of most months - 30 March and 25 May (none in April).

PONTESBURY SPORTS ASSOCIATION FUN DAY

Saturday 13th April

Rounders Comp starts at 11am

Funday starts at 12 noon

Softball Cricket

Market Stalls

Ice Cream van

1st Rea Valley Scouts

Treasure Hunt for Children

Lucky 100 Number Board

3pm Mixed Football anyone over 16 can take part

Cake Stall, Tombola, Barbeque & Bar

Come Along & Support your Local Sports Club & See what sports are on offer.

No Parking on site – walk up & enjoy the Afternoon

Worthen Jr Ladies are a newly established ladies team & in the last year have already achieved a league win, which was the Shropshire Women's Summer League.

Manager: Paul Chilton, who has coached for Worthen for over 25 years! This team consists of many past players from previous junior teams over the years, which Paul has managed to great success. The ladies don't just play for the team on a Sunday but they do it for 'The Boss'.

Coaches: Rian Lenc & Colin Fisher, who have both coached under Paul for the junior teams and successfully lead them to great results.

Admin: Tia Lewis & Wayne Walton. Tia, who plays for the ladies herself, runs all things social media/fundraisers & Wayne, who does the 'behind the scenes' tasks, is always available to help when possible, which he does for many Worthen teams.

It's an amazing achievement to have a Worthen Jr Ladies Team, as there are a lot of young girls who play for the juniors, who now have role models & a future to look forward to. Thank you to all who helped to make it possible! The ladies are also thankful for all the local businesses that have sponsored a player this season & to The Horseshoe Inn for hosting the team back at the pub.

Please support the Ladies at their HOME games.

- Pontesbury Sports Ground

Home Fixtures:

28/01/24

04/02/24

18/02/24

03/03/24

17/03/24

28/04/24

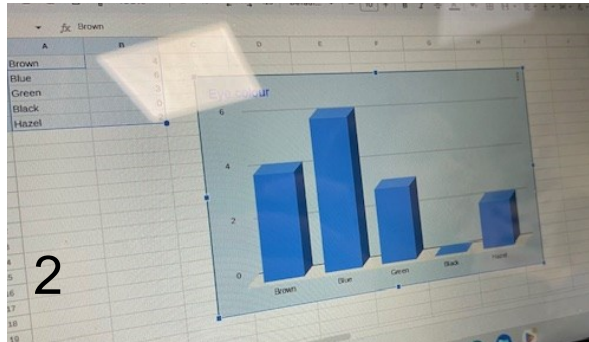
#LetGirlsPlay



Pontesbury Primary School

We've started 2024 with enthusiasm and lots of learning. These are just some of the things that the children have enjoyed.

- 1 – Children exploring magnetic fields in Year 3.
- 2 – This is one of our computing lessons where the children in Year 4 collected data based on hair/eye colour and created bar charts.
- 3 – These are a few of the vehicles that our Reception class have created ranging from hot air balloons to buses.



Dvořák

Stabat Mater

Song to the Moon ~ Slavonic Dances

Marches Choir and Sinfonia
Alistair Auld - Conductor

Caroline Clarke (Soprano) ~ Stephanie Windsor-Lewis (Mezzo)
Andrew Morris (Tenor) ~ Nicholas Morris (Bass)

Saturday March 16th
7.30 pm
St John's Church, Bishops Castle

Tickets £15 on 07806 433394
and from TicketSource
Children and Students FREE
www.marcheschoir.org.uk



The Marches Choir present a stunning Dvořák concert

The Marches Choir present a stunning Dvořák concert – Saturday 16th March.

As a prelude to this wonderful concert of Dvořák's music, the Marches Sinfonia will perform two of Dvořák's popular and exciting Slavonic Dances. A true Bohemian, Dvořák was inspired in his music by Slovakia. He looked to Slavic music for its harmonic modes, unusual modulations and its wealth of rhythms and melodic turnarounds. These are brilliantly displayed in the dances.

The choir, together with the Marches Sinfonia and four professional soloists, will present Dvořák's intensely moving 'Stabat Mater', alongside 'Song to the Moon' from his opera Rusalka, two of his popular and exciting Slavonic Dances, and the beautiful solo Meditation from the opera Thais by Jules Massenet. Musical Director Alistair Auld says "Dvořák is one of my all-time favourite choral composers. His music is brimming with passion and deep expression. Our programme embraces folk dances, opera and sacred choral music all in one. A real treat for music lovers!

St John's Church, Bishops Castle, 7.30pm. Tickets £15 (children and students free) from 07806 433394, online via www.ticketsource.co.uk, or on the door."

Pursued by a bear...

Pontesbury residents Catherine May and Ollie Hall are among the cast of Shropshire Youth Theatre who are starting their 31st year of productions with a performance of Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale" on 13th & 14th March in Theatre Severn's Walker Theatre in Shrewsbury. The twenty-four-strong cast includes 3 other students from Mary Webb school as well as students from many other local schools. Despite being one of Shakespeare's lesser known plays, The Winter's Tale tells the story of jealous King Leontes of Bohemia (played by Ollie) falsely accusing his wife Hermione of infidelity with his best friend, King Polixenes of Sicilia. Angry with his wife and his friend, Leontes asks his cup bearer, Camillo to poison Polixenes. Camillo and Polixenes escape the King's wrath and Hermione dies. Leontes exiles his newborn daughter Perdita, who is raised by shepherds for the following sixteen years and falls in love with Florizel, the son of Leontes' friend. After this time, Perdita returns home to court to build a relationship with her father, a statue of Hermione "comes to life", and everyone is reconciled.

SYT is a student-led company whose senior cast (aged 13+) stage a major performance each year in the Walker Theatre, with past productions including The Tempest, Pride and Prejudice, The Importance of being Earnest and a lockdown production of Romeo and Juliet as well as last year's critically acclaimed "Animal Farm". SYT provides opportunities for children from the age of 6 to develop skills for acting, devising and directing.



The beginners (6+) and juniors (9+) often create sketch shows from their own wild imaginations. There are a number of seniors who regularly help direct these scenes and work collaboratively with the younger members to bring these scenes to life. SYT is an inclusive theatre company that encourages all its members to be themselves. For more information on SYT, please see our website or find us on Facebook. For tickets for The Winter's Tale, please see the Theatre Severn website or scan the QR Code.

Hedge Planting in Pontesbury

More hedging was planted on 28th January at the back of Cricketers Meadow by Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group and local residents. Many thanks to those who took part.

The 240 new hedge plants were provided by Shropshire Council and Pontesbury Parish Council. They will enhance the "wild area" linking space behind the housing and the footpath along the old railway line.

The whole space is designed for all Pontesbury residents to enjoy plus encouraging nature to thrive in our local area.

Another work party is arranged for Sunday March 3rd to remove grass from around the plants and mulch with wool fleece donated by Gill Otto. Please come along to assist if you can, on site at 1.30pm.

For more details contact Liz: elizabethknowles1@gmail.com





arts **alive** FLICKS IN THE STICKS

The Man in the Hat

Cert: 12a - 95 mins



Fri 15th Mar - 7.30 pm

Marton Village Hall

Admission: Adults: £5 Child: £2.50

All Enquiries To: 01743 792790 or 07810 230860

Film only £5. Film and Fish & Chips £10.

(Fish & Chips must be pre-ordered)

Bar and refreshments available from 7.00p.m.

The Man in the Hat journeys through France in a Fiat 500 accompanied by a framed photograph of an unknown woman. He is pursued by five angry men in a Citroën Dyane. Why are they chasing him? And how can he shake them off?

Starring: Ciarán Hinds, Sylvain Thirille, Conor Lovett



Habberley Village Hall
Sunday 24th March, 7.30pm

Tickets £12 / £6

www.artsalive.co.uk | 01743 790179



A blockbuster, adventure and rom-com rolled into one

DESERT ISLAND FLICKS

Arts Alive is proud to present Spiltmilk Dance's Desert Island Flicks at Habberley Village Hall on Sunday 24th March at 7.30pm.

Two leading ladies take on a century of cinema, reimagining, remaking and spoofing 90 of the most memorable movie moments of all time in just 90 minutes, taking on all the lead roles, stunts, and special effects!

Spiltmilk Dance sticks a big fat ray of sunshine into the world of contemporary dance.

Following incredibly successful tours of their shows Spiltmilk Say Dance and Blast from the Past, and The Little Love Cabaret, the company will embark on a tour of their brand new show this spring.

From timeless classics to modern day marvels, Desert Island Flicks celebrates how iconic characters and thrilling plot twists have captured imaginations the world over, bringing people together to laugh, cry, and cheer along in a room full of strangers.

Somewhere between a dance performance, sketch show, a night at the movies and an epic game of charades, Desert Island Flicks shines a spotlight on life lessons learnt from the big screen, all set to a sensational soundtrack.

Desert Island Flicks comes to Habberley Village Hall on Sunday 24th March at 7.30pm. Tickets are £12 for adults and £6 for children (aged 8+). For booking visit www.artsalive.co.uk or call 01743 790179.

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in concert

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doors open 7:30pm

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Minsterley Eisteddfod 2024

Minsterley Eisteddfod takes place on the weekend of Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th of March at Minsterley Parish Hall and is open to the public at all times. Saturday is the day of competitions with classes starting in the morning and carrying on through the day and into the evening. Competitors will perform instrumental solo's and group pieces, solo singing in many different genres, group singing for choirs and musical theatre groups and spoken recitations and individual speaking. There will also be a display of all the written works entries including stories with the title 'Old Shoes', poems entitled 'In the Mist' and limericks starting 'They wanted to drill for more oil.....'

Our competitors are as young as four and as old as... well there is no limit to enjoying the arts. Our professional adjudicators give constructive and encouraging advice to all who have entered to enable our performers to improve on their performances in the future. A number of our past regular competitors have gone on to pursue careers in their chosen fields at some of the most prestigious music colleges in the country.

This fantastic showcase of talent is open to the public to enjoy, and all are welcome to join in the fun and encourage these brave competitors as they take to the stage. Parking is readily available, and refreshments can be found in our café.

On Sunday we host a concert given by Cantores Beati, mixed chamber choir under the baton of James Llewelyn Jones with guest accompanist Sara Wilander, guest soloist mezzo soprano Motje Wolf and introducing local Shrewsbury musician Ben Richards on cello.

Tickets are available by phoning Jill Blyth on 01743 791908 and all details of our event can be found on our website:
minsterleyeisteddfod@gmail.com



EASTER SUNDAY

Sunday 31st March

Services at 10:30 am & 6:30 pm

You don't need to book ahead,
just come as you are!

All are welcome!

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Website: www.pontesburybaptist.co.uk

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NATURAL ENGLAND

Notes from the hill

Each month this year I am featuring one of the twelve species for which action plans have been produced by the Stepping Stones Project. These plans can be found on the Middle Marches community Land Trust web site. Each of these species now has a champion that will encourage the delivery of the actions within these plans.

The species I am featuring this month is the willow tit. Like all of our tit species it is a resident bird, staying with us all year. In looks it is almost identical to the marsh tit and indeed it was only identified as a separate species in 1897. Compared to some of the other tits it is relatively dull having a brown body with a large sooty black cap and white cheeks. The only distinguishing feature that can sometimes be seen in the field is a pale panel on the top of the wing.

Willow tits are naturally much scarcer than marsh tits, however the numbers of both species have plummeted recently and they are both listed on the UK red list of threatened birds. The decline in the population of willow tits has shown particularly dramatic declines in the UK, with a decrease of 83% between 1995 and 2017. It now has the unfortunate accolade of being our most threatened resident bird.

One of the distinguishing behaviours of the willow tit is that it always excavates its own nest hole, so if you see a tit excavating a hole in deadwood (not just enlarging a hole) then it is a good way of identifying a willow tit. It excavates a new hole each year in small rotting deadwood and stumps, often in quite small dead trees or tree limbs. It prefers birch and willow which are relatively quick to become soft once they have died. This is often the sort of material that is cleared or tidied up in the modern countryside. The National Trust are experimenting with artificial nest sites at Barns Farm, but the best way to help these birds is to leave areas of wet woodland and scrub undisturbed and allow dead trees to remain where they are.

Nesting in fragile rotten wood is a risky strategy and the adults do not visit the nest as often as other birds to reduce the likelihood of predation, however as their habitat has diminished it is likely that predation by great spotted woodpeckers and grey squirrels has increased and this may be a factor in their decline.

Due to the difficulty of identifying Willow tits they are likely to be under-recorded in the area, so a survey has been developed using their calls which can be quite distinctive. As the birds are more territorial early in the year, the surveys have already started this year, but if you would like to get involved in future surveys, please get in touch with the Stepping Stones project.

On the Stiperstones we have been blocking forestry drains within the woodland at the Gatten which is creating wetter conditions, where there will be more deadwood which should be suitable for willow tits. Hopefully the action plan will help to encourage the appropriate management of wet habitat across the Stepping Stones area resulting in the survival of this great bird which has now become extinct across a lot of its former range in southern England.

Simon Cooter and the Natural England staff at Rigmoroak

Hello everyone

Submissions to Pontesbury Parish Newsletter are increasing month on month at the moment, and this issue is a bumper edition with 4 extra pages just to include everything submitted.

Therefore, when writing an article please can you remember the newsletter criteria:

- information & posters for activities and events from groups within the parish will be prioritized, followed by the areas of Minsterley and Hanwood. Dependent upon space within the newsletter, information from outlying parishes will be included - first come first served.*

- to write in the region of 250-300 words per article (no more than half A4 page)*

- to include at least one photograph with each article, more can be provided to the editor to choose the best*

With many thanks, The Editor



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to the April issue of Pontesbury
Newsletter is:

Monday 11th March

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MARCH 2024 DIARY

Date	Time	Event	Venue
Every Mon	6.30-7.30pm	Pontesbury Runners (advanced/intermediate runners)	Meet corner of Brookside & Minsterley Road
Every Tue	10am to 1200	Rea Valley Foodbank	Holy Trinity Minsterley
Every Tue	10.30am-1200	A Welcome Brew	Baptist Church
Every Tue	2pm	Tai Chi	Public Hall
Every Wed	1000-1200	Sea Change Drop-In for parents/carers of under 5s - free session with refreshments	Pavilion - Term-time only
Every Thu	1000-1200	Rea Valley Foodbank	St George's Church
Every Thu	7-9pm	Badminton Club	Mary Webb School
Every Fri	1000	Walking Local Footpaths	Meet at School Green
Sat 1st	10.30am	FoPL Coffee Morning	Pavilion
Sun 3rd	6.30pm	Songs of Praise	Pontesbury Baptist Church
Mon 4th	6.30pm	Pontesbury Planning Committee Meeting	Pavilion
Tue 5th	7.30pm	Pontesbury & District Gardening Association AGM	Public Hall
Thu 7th & 21st	1100	Get Creative Group - free, refreshments provided	Pavilion
Fri 8th	1030-1200	Good Neighbour's Coffee Morning	The Plough Inn
Sat 9th	7.30pm	Tin Soldiers Gig	Hope Village Hall
Mon 11th	2pm	Pontesbury WI	Public Hall
Mon 11th	7pm	Pontesbury Parish Council Meeting	Pavilion
Tue 12th	7.30pm	Pontesbury Women's Club	Public Hall
Wed 13th	1pm	Rea Valley Probus Club	Arscott Golf Club
Wed 13th	7pm	Pontesbury Festival 2025 - Inaugural Meeting	Pavilion
Fri 15th	7.30pm	Flicks in the Sticks - The Man in the Hat	Marton Village Hall
Sat 16th	7.30pm	Marches Choir presents a Dvorak concert	St John's Church, Bishops Castle
Sat 16th	10am	Pontesbury Potter	Mary Webb School
Sat 16th & Sun 17th	Various	Minsterley Eisteddfod	Minsterley Parish Hall
Mon 18th	6pm	Hall Bank Improvements Consultation	Pavilion
Wed 20th	2pm	u3a - Searching for Jo	Minsterley Parish Hall
Fri 22nd	1145-1300	Good Neighbour's Luncheon Club	Public Hall
No meeting in March	10,30 - 1200	Pontesbury Carer's Support Group	Pavilion
Sat 24th	7,30pm	Desert Island Flicks from Arts Alive	Habberley Village Hall
Sat 6th Apr	10am	Community Food Open Day 	Pavilion & Crickerter's Meadow

From Pontesbury Parish Council & us all in the Pavilion



Closing Date for submissions for April 2024 edition of Pontesbury Parish Newsletter is Monday 11th March 2024. Please send all articles to deputy@pontesbury.pc.org.uk.

Please use the same email address if you would like to advertise and we will send you a form.