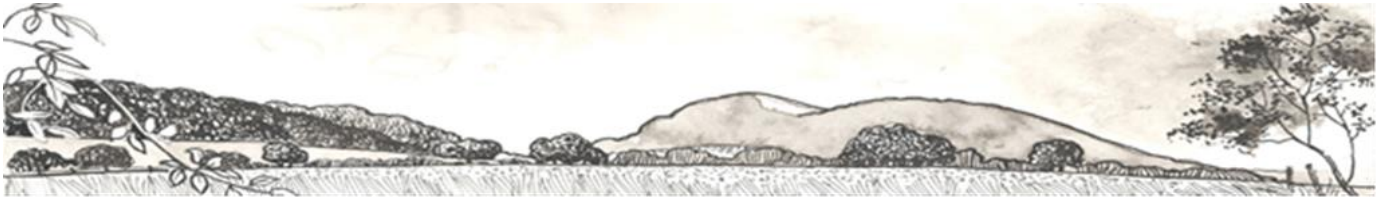


PONTESBURY PARISH COUNCIL



Minutes of the Pontesbury Annual Parish Meeting held in Pontesbury Public Hall on 13th March 2023

1. **Apologies** were received from Councillors A Windows and P Heywood. The Clerk's apologies were also received.
2. **Welcome from Chairman** Pontesbury Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Duncan Fletcher, welcomed everyone to the meeting, The Chairman's report followed at Item 6.
3. **Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 14th March 2022.** After a proposal from Cllr Gregory, seconded by Cllr Evans, it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous Annual Parish Meeting be accepted as a true and accurate record.
4. **Shropshire Council Report – a report from Cllr R Evans**

The Pontesbury Parish Area is represented as many know by two Shropshire Councillors, Councillor Nick Hignett and Cllr Roger Evans. This report is prepared by Cllr Roger Evans and any errors or omissions are mine.

The area of the parish covered by Cllr Evans is largely north of the village, Cllr Hignett represents the main village plus Habberley and areas to the south of it. Cllr Hignett will answer questions about his area.

It is good and important for this parish that we all work together to help residents. The Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) project, with 3 parish councils, the Police and Shropshire Council working together, is a prime example of this.

It is also good that meetings are now being held in person as the threat of COVID diminishes. It would be good, however, to have the option to also hold hybrid meetings where needed, especially should one be needed when most roads were impassable due to snow.

There are several areas to be covered:

Council Finances. The Council Tax Precepts will shortly be delivered, and residents will see that the Shropshire Council proportion will be increased by the maximum permitted, 4.99%. I voted against the increase, not because of the increase but because the number of cuts included in the motion lacked details and included hiring consultants at a projected cost of £1m per year to examine how the council operates. Many of the proposed cuts also lack any details about what they actually mean.

The Council's **Budget** for the current fiscal year, 2022-23 will, according to "best estimates", be overspent by £10m. Councils must achieve a balanced budget. This means that £10m will have to be taken from reserves. This will then leave them at an unsafe level of around £5.5m. This amount is not acceptable or safe, when the total council budget is £650m and a nett one of £250m.

For this next financial year, the budget papers include a list of cuts and efficiency savings totalling £51.1m or in other terms, the council must reduce its costs by around £1m per week. This reduction is a mixture of both cutting or reducing some services currently provided, whilst increasing the charges it makes for others.

Shropshire Council is not alone in having to do this. Other councils in England are also in similar positions. The much-promised fair funding review now seems to have been set aside and there is some doubt it will now happen.

So overall, even with the increasing cost of living we are all experiencing, there is a need to increase the Council Tax by 4.99%. If residents want more information, this is available in the papers for the Shropshire Council meeting held on 2nd March 2023.

All Shropshire Council finances referred to above, relate to revenue, or day-to-day expenditure.

Shropshire Council also has a Capital Programme which, legally, it is not allowed to use on revenue (day-to-day) expenditure. At present Capital Programme cash in the bank is around £114m. The

present capital budget includes several spending commitments, asset sales, expected grants from Central Government and developer contributions. The most controversial is the North West Relief Road. A planning application, after many delays, has now finally been submitted and is expected to be determined later this year. A fully-costed business plan will be submitted towards the end of this year. It has been confirmed that around £20m has so far been spent prior to the planning application being submitted. Some estimates of the cost of this road have increased by around £35m. Council sources are stating that no application will be made for an increase in the government contribution until this new road has planning permission and the business plan is updated.

Shropshire Council submitted bids to the government for funds during both of the recent so-called Levelling-Up consultations. These were for grants for over £100m. The first round resulted in zero funds being allocated to Shropshire, whilst the second grant application resulted in promises of two grants worth £18m. One is for updating access to the railway station and the second to provide funding towards the cost of renovating the area around Smithfield Road. The main grant that failed was to help increase the provision of an improved local bus network. This is of concern as more and more requests for financial help is being received from various bus companies. The present Shropshire Council bus subsidies are only guaranteed until the end of summer 2023.

Cost of Living Help. Shropshire Council has several different schemes available to provide help to those in need, rather than try and list them, if you need assistance please contact Cllr Evans or Cllr Hignett in confidence. Pontesbury Parish Newsletter also lists various helplines that can be contacted by either telephone or email.

Climate Change. This continues to be progressed, albeit slowly – Shropshire Council's financial problems having rather taken centre stage.

Local Plan. Recently the Planning Inspectors appointed by the Government have ruled that the plan is legal. This followed a legal challenge made some months ago by the owners of Weston Park, and included their wanting to build a new village, including employment opportunities near Junction 3, M54. The inspectors have questioned how and where the 1,500 houses Shropshire Council have committed to provide and to help the nearby local authorities of Walsall, Wolverhampton, will be built. The danger is whether this will mean an increase in the number of houses allocated to some hubs that are in this revised updated Local Plan. Adoption of the Local Plan may not be until 2024. The recent notification of housing land supply states Shropshire Council now have over 7 years. The Government states that Local Plans should have a life of at least 15 years, the new Local Plan covers from when adopted to 2038.

Electoral Boundaries. Various proposals have and are being made which cover the areas that the elected MPs and Shropshire Councillors represent. The Westminster review of MP boundaries has now been completed and various alterations have been agreed.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England are reviewing the boundaries Shropshire Councillors represent. The second phase finished in January 2023 and the Boundary Commission will be publishing their recommendations in around 6 weeks' time. Shropshire Council and several parish councils submitted responses during the last consultation stage. Shropshire Council's submission, which was agreed by over 95% of present Shropshire Councillors, included various alterations to boundaries plus increasing the number of Shropshire Councillors from 74 to 75. All submissions can be seen on the appropriate website.

Following this review, Shropshire Council has stated it will examine the town and parish council boundaries that lie within its area. Dates for this consultation have not yet been announced. The results will be implemented from May 2025.

Other issues covered in the last 12 months and which are likely to need decisions or further consideration include, within Shrewsbury, the Quarry swimming pool, the Big Town Plan, the main bus station, main council offices and where staff work and for Shropshire, including Pontesbury parish, how road maintenance is carried out.

Finally, and important to some of our local communities are the request to have some side roads labelled as 'quiet lanes' whilst another community wants both speed limit and HGV restrictions put in place. How and what CIL can be used for is still not resolved.

Lastly, both Councillors Hignett and I wish to say thank you to Pontesbury Parish Councillors, its Clerks and all the other various volunteers who help us both to represent and do the work within the community.

5. Local Policing Team Report PCSO Jackie Baldwin reported the following:

- There is a temporary Sergeant, Sgt Gary Lansdale.
- Crime noted
 - since Christmas there had been 2 burglaries
 - 7 suspicious circumstances
 - 6 abandoned calls
 - 11 highway incidents – road traffic accidents, flooding and trees in Hanwood and Pontesbury
 - 2 animal welfare reports – hunts and dead deer
 - Fly tipping reported in Station Road – this was a crime scene which was perceived as fly tipping
 - £100 cash handed in, found by 2 children, and returned to the owner within half an hour of losing it.

Cllr Sandells reported that 2 people were in custody following rural crime incidents.

Cllr Fletcher thanked the Local Policing Team for all the work they do, stating it is good that they remain within the community.

6. Pontesbury Parish Council – Chairman’s Report

I am pleased to be able to give this Annual Parish Meeting, my Parish Council Chairman’s report. Last year I reported that we were looking forward to returning to our normal way of life after Covid and looking forward to some larger events such as the Platinum Jubilee party. What a day it was!. The whole community coming together. Crowds of local residents lined the streets of Pontesbury to watch the procession and then gathered on the Mary School field for music, stalls and food. A huge thank you to all involved in what was a very special occasion. The event was organised by the Parish Council working committee along with local volunteers. Our thanks go to them and to the local businesses who sponsored the event. A special thank you to our Deputy Clerk Nicki Young and Cllr Sharon Davies who kept everyone on track.

- We were deeply saddened on the 8th September 2022 to hear of the passing of her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and joined many millions across the globe in paying tribute to a much loved monarch, ten days of mourning, and the subsequent proclamation of King Charles III.
- I shall now give a quick summary of parish matters in my report, bearing in mind that the Pontesbury Newsletter has provided updates on the monthly Parish Council meetings and all local activities throughout this busy year. I will keep it brief!!
- The Parish Council is fortunate to have a strong team of councillors who are committed and hardworking, all sharing the same ideology of working for our community. During the last year we had a vacancy filled by Cllr Adrian Windows, already involved with several local groups. We still have one vacancy for a councillor, due to the resignation of Lynette Charles.
- I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our two Shropshire Councillors, Cllrs Nick Hignett (also vice chairman) and Roger Evans. They both work very hard for the local community and are very approachable. I am grateful for all the work they do in our community and particularly for our parish council.
- I would like to thank Cllr Pritchard who has decided to step down from his role as vice chair, for his advice and support over the last eight years which has been greatly appreciated.
- **The Pavilion** - The Pavilion Community Hub and Library, has continued to develop into a vibrant cultural and support hub which is now being used by many organisations on a regular basis. Anna Lawson, our Building Assistant, is the public face of the Pavilion. Anna works closely with the Deputy Clerk in managing the ever-increasing number of bookings and the running of the building, my thanks to them both for all their hard work. There will be a separate more detailed report about activities at the Pavilion.
- The **Pavilion Working Group** has now become The Pavilion Committee (made up of councillors and representatives from local groups). The Committee has delegated authority to make certain management decisions about the building reporting monthly to full council. We have continued to have site meetings with our neighbours (the Ark Nursery and Pontesbury Coop) to ensure good communication, we work together well, keeping the site vibrant and safe.
- **The Friends of Pontesbury Library** continue to raise the profile of the library within the Pavilion. FOPL put on a full programme of cultural and fund-raising events and a separate report about their

work will follow. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Yvonne Davies for all her hard work during her time as FOPL Chair and we are pleased Colin Sharp has taken over the role and look forward to the continuation of our successful partnership working

- **Finance** - We are delighted that Caroline Higgins has joined the Parish Council team as our Finance Officer. Caroline comes with a wealth of finance and local council experience and has fitted seamlessly into this important role. The Parish Council is committed to being prudent with public funds, however there are several ongoing, large and costly projects:
 - Replacing older style SOX streetlights with **LED lights** (complex project), looking to complete in the near future.
 - The play area – we have a budget for essential maintenance, however we are saving towards replacing and **updating the play equipment** in the future. We have set up a working group to drive this forward .
 - We will be reviewing the **public toilets** over the next 18 months and putting a refurbishment plan in place.
 - The open spaces on the Cricketers Meadow estate will be transferred from Shropshire Homes to the Parish Council shortly and developed for **wildlife and community open spaces**.
- All these larger projects are on top of the normal running costs of the Parish Council, the Parish Council draft **Strategic Plan** (available on the parish council website) covers all of the projects planned over the next 2 years.
- This leads me to the **Parish Council precept** (the council tax rate set by the Parish Council) which has been set at £207,780 for 2023-2024, which is an approximate increase of 32p/week (for an average band D property).
- **Grants** have been awarded this year towards:
 - The upkeep of Poles Coppice
 - Remembrance wreath
 - Shropshire Air Cadets for an outward bound trip to Portugal (6 Pontesbury cadets joined the trip)
 - Tree planting around the parish
- I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Cllr Trow for the quarterly internal checking of our accounts and all members of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** for attending meetings and overseeing the finances of the parish council.
- **The Parish Council Planning Committee** - Cllr Allan Hodges carries out the role of Chairman of the Planning Committee, with expert knowledge. We are very fortunate to have his continued support to undertake this time-consuming role. I am sure you will join me in expressing our thanks, especially considering the extra work he has undertaken with the Neighbourhood Plan (separate report to follow) As a matter of interest, planning applications have reduced by approximately a third in the last year.
- May I also take this opportunity to thank Cllr Neville Lewis for his expertise on the applications for work on trees with Tree Preservation Orders. His knowledge and advice are very much appreciated.
- Following on from my report last year, the review of the Shropshire Council Local Plan (in place until 2038) has now gone to the Planning Inspectors. The proposed Local Plan shows an amendment to the development boundary for Pontesbury. This is to accommodate limited future growth for development, including a proposed site for 40 houses. A further 22 houses are expected in windfall or exception sites.
- May I also thank all members of the Planning Committee for their input at the monthly meetings.
- **Working in Partnership** - The success of what we as a parish council can achieve relies on us working successfully in partnership with residents, businesses and other local and regional organisations. I would like to give you a flavour of some of these successful projects and hard-working groups around the parish.
 - The **solar lighting project** on the Pontesbury/Minsterley cycleway has been completed and has proved to be a great success, showing how successful two parish councils working together can be. The solar lighting has led to an increase in the use of this path linking the two villages, and local residents being more active. We are now looking at developing a joint verges project, planting wildflowers along part of the cycleway to boost biodiversity in the area.

- The **Hall Bank development** has now been completed and we have been working with Shropshire Council Highways department, and their consultants WSP, looking at improvements for the junctions at the bottom and top of Hall Bank. The parish council have been consulted on the provisional plans and are awaiting to see further proposals and a date for when the work can be started. We have always identified pedestrian safety as a priority. We have also been working with Shropshire Council Highways and the Flooding Officer, and Shropshire Rural Housing to look at flood alleviation measures needed within the village. We are awaiting a report which will look at medium and longer-term measures, some of which will be incorporated into the works done on the junction at the bottom of Hall Bank.
 - The **Climate Emergency Action group** is working hard in partnership with the Parish Council, supporting the declaration of a climate emergency and producing an action plan to ensure the council and parish are carbon netzero by 2030. Regular meetings and online talks have been taking place and the group continues to grow and develop. Liz Knowles, who chairs this group, has provided a report on the progress of the group and is happy to answer questions later.
 - The **P3 group**, continue to develop the footpaths in the parish and I am sure we all wish to thank the volunteers for all their hard work. A report from Alan Drury will be given at this meeting.
 - Many thanks to the **Good Neighbours Scheme**, who have continued to grow and put on more social activities for local people, their commitment in supporting local residents has proved invaluable and a huge thank you to all the volunteers. Chairman's Report 2023 Annual Parish Meeting
 - The relationship with our **local policing team** continues. We have an excellent relationship with the local policing team and the close working from the Pavilion and local knowledge pays dividends when supporting local residents. PC Richard Walters and PC Simon Lewis have sent a report for this meeting and a big thank you to Richard, Simon and their colleagues for all their hard work.
 - Last year I reported that we were looking to install **ANPR cameras**. This successful joint project has involved three parishes, Pontesbury, Hanwood and Minsterley, along with the Police, Shropshire Council and expert advice from Charles Pedrick from Rodborough Parish Council, Gloucestershire. We have set up our Safer Speed Shropshire group and we are already seeing a reduction in speeding. Information is collated on a weekly basis and a big thank you to our team who give their time to collate this information. We will be looking to send out a monitoring report in the near future.
 - A big **thank you to Jonathan Walton and Christine Day** and the great team of volunteers who ensure the newsletters are distributed through the Parish. This year our editor stood down from the role and we are grateful for her contribution over the years. Our Deputy Clerk, Nicki Young, has taken over and we are very grateful for the seamless transition.
 - The **Emergency Planning Working Group** continues to meet, representing as many wards as possible to pre-empt emergencies such as flooding, which impact on the parish. Thank you to all those involved, particularly Cllr Jones with his expert knowledge on matters relating to flooding, Cllr Gregory on health and safety issues and Cllr Sandells on his local knowledge of issues affecting Cruckton.
 - As well as my previous thank yous to the team who brought us the Platinum Jubilee celebrations, I also wish to thank Shropshire Council for providing the beautiful **new oak tree for School Green** and to Siobhan Reedy (Shropshire Council tree team) and Ben Jones from Wood Matters and, also, Cllrs Neville Lewis & Geoff Manley for helping plant the tree. The tree has been registered as part of the Queen's Tree Canopy project on the national website.
 - May I, on behalf of us all, **thank our Clerk**, Debbie Marais, who ensures we have a professional well-run parish council, which as you can see from my report has an increasingly large amount of work and responsibility. It is at the annual meeting when her work can be acknowledged by us all.
 - Personally, may I take this opportunity to thank her and also for her help in writing this report. If I have missed anyone out or not reported a matter, please accept my sincere apologies. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our deputy clerk Nicki Young for all her help and assistance.
- Finally, I would like to finish by thanking all the many volunteers in our community who give their time freely and are involved in the many activities taking place in the parish. I am sure we are all proud to be part of our wonderful parish of Pontesbury and as a community we will work hard to continue to support and help each other. I am proud to be part of such a thriving and vibrant community.

7. P3 Footpath Group Report from Geoff Cummings, P3 Group Coordinator

Annual Report for year ending Dec 2022

This year saw the group returning more or less to normal after the Covid interruptions. We have had 2 new members join which is always very welcome. The Coordinator role has been taken over by myself while another of the new members John Warburton has taken on the role of communications & publicity for the group.

Man-hours worked in 2022 were 578. In this we have covered path surveys, stile repair/replacement, vegetation clearing, bridge and gate repair, signposting & waymarking.

In order to coordinate with other local groups we have been in communication with the Friends of Pontesford Hill Group this year to see if there are any common points where we can assist each other. Also we have produced an information poster, publicising the P3 Footpaths Group and asking for direct referrals of problem paths with position references and from the public.

Although we concentrate on the Pontesbury/Minsterley core area, we have also worked out this year to Hanwood, Hope, Wagbeach, Stiperstones, etc. - wherever we can help.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who give up their Tuesday mornings to work for the group come whatever the weather, the farmers and landowners for their co-operation in helping us access the routes on their land, and also Helen Beresford at Shropshire Council Rights of Way Office for all her help and assistance given to us.

8. Parish Village Halls – reports from representatives:

Pontesbury Public Hall – report from Cllr Lewis

I am very pleased to report that the PPH has had a good year, picking up well after the Covid problems, when we were closed for such a lengthy period. We have been lucky that we have retained most of our regular lettings, with the exception of a few like Broadplace, which had served its purpose very well, with exceptional help and work for the community, by Mr Robert Pither for many years.

We have gained a number of new classes such as yoga and some new exercise classes. We are getting a good few numbers of children's parties and adult parties and concerts etc, and Pontesbury Players with their productions. We have a new organiser of the bar facilities at the hall, being very well run by Amy Brookes of the Plough Public House and very much helped by Derek her father.

We are very pleased that we have been able to host, free of all charges, the full use of the public hall to the Good Neighbours Scheme as a warm place and for their very successful lunch club, where they have produced a full hot meal now for up to 50 people. The facilities for this are being extended by the purchase of a hot mobile cupboard which has been purchased jointly by the Atherton Trust and the public hall trustees from a legacy left to the hall by the late Mrs Kathleen Hartshorne, a much respected trustee of the hall and very much a pillar of the Pontesbury community for many, many years.

Cruckton Village Hall – report from Cllr Sandalls.

Cruckton Village Hall enjoys the following regular bookings; Lea Cross WI, The Art Club, the Craft Club, the Over 55 Club.

The hall has also hosted the annual harvest supper. The parish council organised defibrillator and first aid training which were both well supported. Other events include a local history evening, quizzes and other ad hoc bookings. Moving forward the village are planning on taking part in the Kings Coronation Big Lunch celebration and will be using the hall on Sunday 7th May to host the Big Lunch.

The committee are planning to replace the flat roof over the toilets and storeroom, plus general maintenance to the main roof. The toilets are due an upgrade and it is hoped that CIL Neighbourhood funding will help towards these costs.

The village hall committee are committed to keeping the building in good condition using funds from both reserves and grants. This will ensure there is a nice Hall for the local community to use at an affordable hire fee.

Village Halls are an important part of the local community and is important they are run properly, maintained well and supported by the local communities and councils alike.

Habberley Village Hall – report from Cllr Pritchard

The hall survived the COVID restrictions thanks to the generous handout that was given and is now moving forward with increased impetus to a committee comprised of people from many walks of life who have fused together.

Thanks to past efforts the Hall has been maintained in a good state of repair and decorative order considering it was a former Army hut places on a brick plinth.

The committee meet monthly and organise a variety of functions throughout the year, in addition to the small number of private hirings. In common with many rural villages a harvest supper is held in the early autumn, which is well supported, as is the BBQ which is held earlier. Flicks in the Sticks and Arts Alive events are held during the year, the latter bringing into the rural area, entertainers of many types, some of whom are invited back. Skittles, plus an annual flower how are also held during the year.

Recent closure of the White Horse in Pulverbatch has seen the Probus Club meet in the Hall, with refreshments provided by the new licensee of the Mytton Arms.

We look forward to the future, but costs of both maintenance and entertainment provision will have a bearing on what we are able to do.

9. Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan – a report from the Chairman, Cllr Hodges

During March and April 2022 each household in the Parish was consulted on the draft Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan via a 12-page summary insert in the newsletter accompanied by a drop in facility on Saturday mornings at The Pavilion. The Steering Group appreciated the many comments submitted to them and in response made numerous amendments to the draft policies.

Shropshire Council conducted their own consultation of Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Plan during November/December 2022 and the proposed plan was sent in January 2023 to the Independent Examiner, Tony Barton, who will decide whether the plan is sound and can therefore be recommended for a Parish referendum later this year.

10. Friends of Pontesbury Library - no report received.

11. Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group – a report from the Chairman, Liz Knowles

The group has met monthly throughout the year – the report provides information on the following projects:

- **Transport**

A public zoom meeting was held in March 2022 with Professor Whiteleg speaking on the “**20 is plenty**” national campaign. All parish councillors were invited to attend as well as being advertised in the Newsletter. Unfortunately as Shropshire Council has not adopted the plan very little could be done to adopt it in Pontesbury in spite of the advantages of greater pedestrian safety and less air pollution from vehicles.

A **cycle event** was held in March 2022 attended by Shrewsbury Cycle Hub, members of South Shropshire Climate Action, and “Doctor Bike.” This was well attended by the public, several bikes were mended and the electric bikes on display trialled by anyone interested.

The group has not abandoned the idea of **campaigning for the old railway line to be made into a cycle/walkway** to Shrewsbury, but necessary funds from Shropshire Council have not been forthcoming. Our Shropshire councillor, Nick Hignett has had conversations with landowners along the line of the footpath about future possibilities.

- Climate issues / public awareness / recycling

A **Repair Cafe** has been established in the village, a joint project spearheaded by Di Carrington and supported by St George's Church and the vicar, Greg Smith. The first Repair Cafe was in July 2022 and there have been several since. They have been well attended both by the public and helpers offering various skills. The church has donated their space for free and provides tea and cake on the day. These will be on-going in 2023, helping people with repairs to save money and the earth's resources, and to highlight the extend of waste in our present economy.

Two of the group, Bob and June Tune, have been placing short **articles in each Pontesbury Newsletter** on simple ways to help individuals and households reduce their carbon footprint.

Another member of the group, Ken Jenks, spent many Saturdays in the cafe area of the **Pavilion** having "**carbon conversations**" with members of the public.

A **recycling event** was held at the Pavilion attended by staff from Veolia to inform the public of which materials can be recycled and which cannot.

One member of the group from E4Environment is launching the company's scheme, "**Cool Shropshire**" in the Pontesbury area. This is designed to help small businesses reduce their carbon footprint as painlessly as possible.

- **Biodiversity / Nature**

Hedging provided by Shropshire Council has been planted outside the nursery building and more recently at the back of the Cricketer's Meadow estate. More will be planted here when we have whips to do it with. This February CPRE assisted with planting and have promised more stock and volunteers in the future.

More **planting and regeneration work** will be taking place on **Cricketers Meadow** when the land is handed over legally to the Parish Council. Plans include more hedging, trees and a mini-meadow. A plan for the meadow, and assistance with necessary activities and machinery has been provided by Marches Meadow's Group.

Four **Liquid amber trees have been planted on Brook Side**, permission from Shropshire Council granted through Tree Officer Siobhan Reedy. One was almost immediately uprooted but has been replanted and so far seems to have survived.

Parts of the **Verge between Pontesbury and Minsterley** alongside the A488 will start a **regeneration project** this coming year, after nearly 2 years of discussion. A five year plan has been drawn up by RSVP / Stepping Stones and agreed by the parish councils. This project involves both Pontesbury and Minsterley Parish Councils as well as Stepping Stones / RSVP, Marches Meadows Group and Shropshire Council Highways department. This year short sections will be cut and the cuttings removed, scarified in late summer and yellow rattle planted as stage one of the regeneration. Volunteers will be sought for grass removal if necessary and seed collection from local fields.

A talk by RSVP (Janet Cobb) was held last year at the Pavilion. This was not well attended, but more advertising and information about the regeneration of the verges will occur later this year to inform the public of what is happening and why, and to ask for volunteers.

Looking ahead we have a "**Get Growing**" **event in April** at the Pavilion to encourage people to grow their own food and in a sustainable way, to "sow the seeds" of a garden sharing scheme and the idea of community food growing.

- **Future of the group.**

The group needs more members so that we can become more effective in our community.

We have had discussions concerning the nature of the group and have decided to form ourselves into an "unincorporated association." This will allow us to apply for funds when available independently of the parish council. We are now looking for a treasurer so that we can apply for a bank account.

12. Pontesbury Sports Association – report by Tim Barber – Vice Chair Pontesbury Sports Association & Secretary PCC

2023 will see changes to the executive committee of the PSA as the Chairman (Roy Picken) and Treasurer (David Wilson) have decided to stand down. Roy and David have served since the formation of the PSA in the mid-1980's – they will be a tough act to follow!

We are currently looking for volunteers to join the SPA committee, which will have many exciting projects to plan for to take sporting provision on in the community forward for many years to come.

4x4 We are looking for a 4x4 to pull our gang mowers around the sports field. An MOT failure would be fine as it would only be used on the field.

During 2022 sporting activities at the Pontesbury Sports Ground (PSG) were able to take place unrestricted. These activities included junior football, cricket, bowls and rounders.

Pontesbury CC

Clubmark - We are pleased to report that we have been re-accredited for ECB Clubmark.

Juniors

We were able to run coaching sessions from May through to September staggering sessions on a Monday and adding a session on a Friday evening so we could manage the groups and maximise the opportunity for children to participate. This included boys and girls from 4yrs to 15yrs.

We were able to run the ECB national programmes (AllStars 4-7-year olds and the Dynamos programme for 8-11-year olds). The girls only sessions proved very popular with 18 girls participating in Dynamos.

We were able to field an U13 Girls Softball team which competed in and won the County U13 Lady Taverners Title at Wellington.

We have juniors playing for the County teams (1 x girls U11, 3 x girls U13 and 1 x boys U12)

To support the continued growth of our junior section we now have two more coaches who have just completed their courses this February.

Matches were played during the summer for U11 and U13 against local clubs.

Women & Girls

The Women & Girls section continued to go from strength to strength with over 30 ladies playing softball cricket at the 6-a-side festivals and in our 10-a-side league team.

In 2022 our ladies also launched a hardball team.

Seniors

Shrewsbury and District Evening Cricket League. We ran two teams in 2022, one of which was a development team to introducing juniors to adult cricket.

The Shropshire County Cricket League ran a full programme in 2022. Two teams playing Saturday and one on a Sunday. Availability proved an issue throughout what proved to be a challenging season for all three sides.

County Cricket @ Pontesbury

We continued to host County Age Group games at Pontesbury (in 2023 we will host a boys U12 and girls U13 that will hopefully feature Pontesbury CC players).

In 2022 we staged our first Shropshire Over 50's game.

Walking Cricket

We are exploring funding / additional coach support for piloting Walking Cricket (softball) this summer. This increasing the opportunity of all ages and abilities to participate in cricket.

Sports Pavilion Project

This project to look at making improvements at the pavilion to make sure that it's fit-for-purpose. The Shropshire Cricket Board (ECB) are aware of the intention of PCC to kick-start the project during 2023.

We are applying for an ECB County Grant Fund (£10,000) which will help us with phase 1 – the internal reconfiguration of the changing rooms / toilets / showers to create a new changing room for women/girls and juniors. We have received a quote for this for approximately £16,000.

Phase 2 would be to expand the pavilion. The cricket club will engage with interested stakeholders during the coming months to plan the best way forward.

Flooding - We have been fortunate that we have not experienced any significant flooding in the last 12-months. A new drainage ditch has been dug around the bowling green which has helped to alleviate flooding on the wood side of the playing field.

Worthen Juniors

In 2022 Worthen Juniors have run boys U12 and girls U12 teams at PSG. Worthen have also launched a ladies team, who have been playing friendlies so far.

For the 2023/4 season Worthen will run the ladies team and a new adult team (mostly U18) from the PSG so the pitch will revert to full-size.

With a ladies football team there is additional incentive to improve the changing facilities.

Bowls Club - Bowls continue to struggle for numbers so are likely to only run two or three teams in 2023 on the PSG green.

Mytton Rounders - The ladies continue to use the PSG and played a full season of fixtures

13. **Pontesbury & Rea Valley Community Good Neighbours Scheme** – report from Chairman, Cllr Sharon Davies.

Pontesbury and Rea Valley Good Neighbours Committee have organised a large number of events and activities during 2022, bringing the community together and helping those who are alone, most vulnerable or just in need of a cup of coffee and a chat!

Coffee mornings have been held at The Plough every month during 2022, giving an opportunity for those who do not get out and about very often to meet new people in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. We would like to thank Amy, Derek and Ali for all their support throughout the year and for allowing us to hold the coffee mornings at The Plough.

Several coffee mornings have been held in Minsterley too, to help those who wish to attend in that area. Thank you for the support of Minsterley Parish Hall who have waived the cost for these events.

Smaller “**coffee and chat**” groups and a **Gentlemen’s Club** have also been arranged during 2022, with great success and wonderful support from the community. If you have attended, our thanks go to you all.

In addition, the Good Neighbours committee have an “**On Call**” phone, which has enabled the team to respond to requests for prescriptions and medication, access to help lines for energy issues, mental health agencies and assistance, help with shopping, access to local food banks – even finding a mobile hairdresser for a lady who was unable to leave her home.

A **coach trip** was arranged for those unable to get out and about themselves, to Charlie’s Stores at Coed-Y-Dinas. This was very well attended and all guests enjoyed themselves on a lovely day out.

The **Befriending service** has been operating all year, some by telephone and some involving home visits from Good Neighbours volunteers – whatever the individual requests. Matching the individual with a regular volunteer visit or call has helped to break the loneliness and vulnerability that some of our residents are feeling, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Good Neighbours have been able to organise several “**Pop Up Larder**” events in both Pontesbury and Minsterley. Offering more than just a food bank, these events have been extremely well received by those who are struggling with the rising costs of everything. The committee would like to say a massive thank you to a local couple who asked for donations to the ‘Pop Up Larders’ in lieu of gifts for their wedding. We were overwhelmed with the donations of food, cleaning items, baby food, nappies and much, much, more and a generous donation of £150.00. We would also like to thank anyone who has donated food via Hignetts or Pontesbury Co-op to the Pop-Up Larders held during 2022 and to both Minsterley Parish Hall and Pontesbury Parish Council for waiving the costs.

The first **Luncheon Club** event has taken place, which was a roaring success, with 31 people enjoying a superb hearty two course hot meal, for only £5. We would like to welcome our volunteer ‘chef Jolly’ without whom this event would not have been possible. The next luncheon club was held on the 20th January 2023, this is in conjunction with Age UK. Thank you to the Public Hall for their continuing support.

Following the success of the “**100 Club**” this year, the committee will be running the club again in 2023. For a cost of £12 per year, each member of the club is allocated a number, and monthly draws give cash prizes to those whose numbers are drawn from the hat. Should you wish to become a member and purchase your own lucky number, please get in touch with the Good Neighbours.

Our **Christmas Lunch** event at Conover Golf Club was fully booked, with 80 guests travelling by coach over to Conover all organised by volunteers.

None of this would take place without the generosity of Pontesbury Parish Council, the community, local businesses, Severn Rotary Club and our devoted volunteers on the committee.

The committee would like to say a huge THANK YOU to all our volunteers, who give their time and energy selflessly throughout the year.

To contact the Good Neighbours, to get involved in any of the above events or clubs, to volunteer your services to help us, please call 07944 891953.

We are also very grateful to receive donations to The Pontesbury and Rea Valley Good Neighbours, whether this is food or money. Without these donations and support we would not be able to operate. Please join our ‘100 club’ this brings in much needed funds to support our activities.

The Committee and Volunteers look forward to 2023.

14. **The Pavilion** – report by Deputy Clerk

2022-2023 has been the first complete year when the Pavilion Community Hub & Library has been completely open for the community to use.

Throughout the year, more and more community groups have used the building, and this is demonstrated by the monthly event sheet which is now published; then distributed via an email list and put up on the noticeboard - anyone can put their email forward to receive this information.

New groups who have started to meet - to name a few:

- Wine-tasting group (with over 18 members) (Oenological Research Group)
- Age UK STW - Dementia Support Café
- Monthly Carer’s events
- Get Creative group, which meet on 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month
- u3a have group meetings for specific interest groups
- Community Good Neighbours now run a Men’s Group, also pop-up larders and grief chat sessions
- On a Monday the Pavilion is a Warm Place on the village weekly rota

Planters for Community Use. Planters were purchased for community use. One was provided for the Age UK STW Dementia Café to plant & it really did provide a colourful display of beautiful sunflowers, sweetpeas, ox-eye daisies, alongside other plants sown throughout the year

In time for the Climate Change event, a **bike rack** was installed at the front of the building. This is much used and a welcome addition to the fabric of the Pavilion.

Feel-Good Fridays - a few Friday events have been held over the last year.

- One during Carer's Week, which has resulted in Shropshire Council, Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Community Care Coordinator & Pontesbury Parish Council, all working together to run a monthly Carer's Group in the Pavilion.
- A further Get Creative Feel-Good Friday event was held in October 2022. Following this we ran a crochet workshop, and then set up a Get Creative group, which now meets twice monthly.
- The next Feel-Good Friday is 24th March 2023 with the theme 'Get Active'. Come along and see what groups are available locally to take part in.

Recycled plastic tables & chairs were purchased for the patio, along with the all-important parasol umbrellas. They look great and are well used in the good weather. The patio is such a sun-trap that the parasols provide welcome shade.

Christmas was a celebratory time in the Pavilion. Decorations were put up internally by Anna and Bev, from the Library, and the Parish Council provided a Christmas tree once again for the central space between all buildings. This was decorated by stars and lights, and a big thank you to Brian Simmonds, who put up all the lights outside the Pavilion and on the Christmas tree, your voluntary work is very much appreciated.

Day-to-Day Running of the Pavilion

Both the Deputy Clerk and the Building Assistant continue to work closely to run the behind-the-scenes operations of the Pavilion.

The Pavilion Committee have had discussions with the Shropshire Council Area Library Manager, and shelving has been swapped about, to enable Pontesbury Parish Council staff to more easily move the shelving for events and activities. Thanks go to Beverly Link, Library Manager, and Anna Lawson, for moving all the books around, maintaining the order and for continuing to offer a great Library and great community building.

The Pavilion Committee continues to meet on the third Monday of each month and is chaired by Cllr Duncan Fletcher, with Councillors, Nick Hignett, Roger Evans, Sharon Davies and Adrian Windows as Committee members.

The Pavilion Committee oversee the work in the Pavilion, along with receiving reports and quotes for larger projects. This committee has delegated responsibility for up to £5,000 project spend, with all other projects with a higher spend, along with contractual agreements being recommended to full council for formal resolution.

2022 saw national celebrations for the **Queen's Platinum Jubilee**. The Pavilion joined in with the village scarecrow creativity, Cllr Sharon Davies and Anna, the Building Assistant, made Bill and Ben, the Flowerpot Men, which was proudly displayed outside the Pavilion.

Following the sad announcement of the death of Queen Elizabeth II, the Pavilion became a focal point where people could sign a book of condolence. These books of condolence are held in the Royal Archives for posterity.

The Crochet Workshop and members of the community knitted, crocheted and hand-crafted pumpkins for a lovely autumn display in the Pavilion patio. FoPL also provided a huge real pumpkin and people were invited to guess the weight.

Room Hire

In FY 2021-2022 Pavilion room hire income was £1,134. The budget for FY 2022-2023 is £2,500 and to date (10th March 2023) the Parish Council have received approximately £3,848.62 income for Pavilion room hire.

Hiring of the rooms has also increased, the total number of room bookings in 2021-2022 was 126, this includes paid hiring and hiring not paid for, ie, for Council meetings, Council events, Friends of Pontesbury Library bookings. From 1st April 2022 to 10th March 2023 there have been a total of 397 bookings, with an average of 450 people visiting the building per month, this includes Library visitors.

| Financial Year | No of Bookings | Income from room Hire |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 2021-2022 | 126 | £1,134.00 |
| 1 Mar 2022 - 10 Mar 2023 | 397 | £3,848.62 |

A snapshot of bookings was taken for the month of February 2023, with the following results:

| | No of people attending | No of hirings |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| February bookings | 275 | 34 bookings |
| 1 Mar 2022 - 10 Mar 2023 | 526 | 22 events |

The Pavilion Committee have now agreed **Partnership Hire Agreements** with Friends of Pontesbury Library (FoPL), Pontesbury & Rea Valley Community Good Neighbours Scheme (CGNS) and Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group (PCEAG). This Partnership Hire Agreement has laid out specific hire rates with all three organisations in recognition of the special partnership that the Parish Council has with them.

Therefore, in the coming months the Pavilion income will slightly increase. This increase of income will help greatly with the payment of utility expenditure, due to the rising energy costs.

Income is also received from:

- Shropshire Library Service = £5,000 per annum to hire the Library shelving space and office during Library opening hours (18 hours per week)
- West Mercia Police = £4,000 per annum for rental (plus a percentage of running costs as a service charge) of the dedicated Local Policing Team office and 24/7 access to the building.

Promotion The staff team continue to work to raise the buildings profile, advertise events on the SMART TV (donated by FoPL with Coop funding), noticeboards, promotions in the Village Newsletters and on a dedicated Facebook page, which has 626 followers.

Climate Emergency The Pavilion Committee are working with Marches Energy Agency who are providing support to Town and Parish Councils to baseline and develop their own Net Zero Carbon plans. This is an ongoing project, with a view to installing alternative means of generating energy for the Pavilion.

Summary The Pavilion use has increased and many more people are now visiting this lovely community building. In recognition of the building & the promotion, the Council is being approached by more and more business and departmental training hirings, along with more regular hirings and services being provided for the community. The Pavilion continues to be an asset for Pontesbury.

15. **Matters of interest or concern to the parish of Pontesbury from the electors of the Parish:**

An elector raised the matter of salting Pontesbury Hill and requested salting lorries to salt the lane.

16. **Date of next Annual Parish Meeting** will be Monday 11th March 2024.

The meeting closed at 1952

Chairman: Date: