

Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group Report to the Parish Council 2023

The group has met monthly throughout the year.

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 land owners 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 there, 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 Crickets 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.

Liz Knowles, Chair.

February 2023.