

## PONTESBURY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022 in the Public Hall

Present:

Councillors Duncan Fletcher, Nick Hignett, John Pritchard, Lynette Charles, Michelle Trow, David Gradwell, Peter Haywood, Neville Lewis, Roger Evans and Charlie Sandells

Bob Tune, Friends of Pontesbury Library

Tim Barber, Pontesbury Sports Association

Liz Knowles, Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group

1. Apologies. Apologies were received from Councillors Allan Hodges, Sharon Davies, Neale Manning and Doug Jones.
2. Welcome. Councillor Duncan Fletcher, as Chairman of the Council, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He read out a statement, sending support to Ukrainians and Russians who do not want the war.
3. Minutes of the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting. Following a proposal from Cllr N Lewis, seconded by Cllr D Gregory, it was RESOLVED that the minutes from the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 be duly accepted as an accurate record of that meeting.
4. Shropshire Council Report presented by Councillor Nick Hignett

Pontesbury Parish area is represented by Myself and Councillor Roger Evans, and we work together for the good of all residents.

I am presenting this report, so any errors are mine, but We are both available to answer questions raised during the Meeting, or afterwards;

CORONAVIRUS—After another 12 months of difficulties associated with the Pandemic, I am hopeful that the end is in sight, and We can return to a more “normal way of living”. I would like to thank all Council Staff, Councillors, NHS Staff, and Care workers for their dedication and commitment during the Pandemic.

UKRAINE---Shropshire Council has been watching the events in Ukraine with horror and bewilderment, and stands ready to support those fleeing the awful events that are unfolding. The Council will continue to work closely with the Home Office and the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership to offer assistance and Humanitarian Aid when possible. I know that there are a number of Local fundraising Initiatives already taking place in the Area.

BUDGET---Shropshire Council was disappointed with the single-year spending round announcement provided by Central Government. This means that certain assumptions have to be made, when planning for future years. The Council continues to battle with a £50M structural funding gap, that cannot be addressed sustainably without a review of the Local Government funding approach, to reflect the cost drivers more reasonably, in large rural counties like Ours. At the last Full Council Meeting, the budget for 2022/2023 was set, as well as projections for funding and expenditure over the next 5 years. An increase of 3.99% was voted through, the maximum allowed. This means that a band D property would pay £1,561.11 this year---last year the amount was £1,501.22. Adult and Children’s Social Care costs in Shropshire are growing at an unsustainable rate; soon 85% of the budget will be

spent on Social Care. The number of service users accessing Social Care remains close to 10,000, representing 3% of the population of Shropshire—based on a figure of 323,000. The other 97% DO access other services, such as Highways, Transport, Public Protection, Leisure, Parks and Open Countryside. These Facilities are more important than ever, yet the funding is constantly under pressure.

**SUSTAINABLE WARMTH PROGRAMME**---The Council has been successful in bidding for funding under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery and Home Upgrade Grant. The scheme aims to improve the energy efficiency of fuel-poor homes, and target properties with the lowest energy efficiency ratings. At the last Council Meeting it was agreed for Shropshire Council to operate as the Accountable Body for the green homes grant, Local Authority delivery phase 3, as well as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. Shropshire has higher than average levels of fuel poverty----over 12.3% of all households.

**OTHER DECISIONS PASSED AT THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**---It was agreed to go Digital (i.e. Paperless) whenever possible. All Agendas and information for future meetings will be provided online. Paper copies will only be provided on request.

It was voted to ban Sky Lanterns and Balloon releases from all Shropshire Council Property. A media campaign will aim to ensure that Members of the Public are aware of this new ruling. Town and Parish Councils will be encouraged to follow this lead.

**AMBULANCE SERVICE**----Shropshire Council expressed concern regarding the current situation, and supported a campaign to return the Ambulance Hub to Ludlow, as well as Bridgnorth, Craven Arms, Oswestry and Bishops Castle. It was agreed to write to West Midlands Ambulance Service.

**SHOPPING CENTRES AND SHIREHALL**---Darwin Shopping Centre is now at 97% occupancy. Indicative plans for redevelopment of the Riverside Area of Shrewsbury have been approved By Council. This involves Demolition of Riverside and Pride Hill Shopping Centres, Demolition of Raven Meadows multi-storey car park, replacing with Multi-Agency Hub, Hotels, Travel Hub, Residential Units and a “Riverside Realm”. This will be linked to the Disposal of the Shirehall Site. Possible completion could be as early as 2026.

Finally—**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**-----This is being undertaken during the years 2021-2025, with changes due to take effect from May 2025. Its purpose is to seek recommendations from Town and Parish Councils, to enable more effective representation of Their populations, and strengthen Their positions within the Local Government Hierarchy. An explicit requirement was to absorb Parish Meetings (of which We have some 35 in the County) with Neighbouring Parishes, and encourage more Warding of Parishes, so that They retain Their distinctiveness, in the event of a merger. There is also a Local Government Boundary Review, starting in October 2022. The draft proposals for this have to be taken to Full Council, followed by Public Consultation. Any Changes are to be laid before Parliament in October 2023.

5. Local Policing Team Report – read out by Deputy Clerk

I have been in post now for just over 7 months. We still have CSO Sarah EDWARDS and CSO Jacqueline BALDWIN joined us from the East team a couple of months after I landed. We have been working hard on your charter priorities of Speeding, Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and Drugs and have been carrying out speed monitoring and enforcement within the village. We are also carrying out regular foot patrols to disrupt the ASB and drug dealing

within the village. In particular we have been making both the Bus Stop and the Ship a regular feature of our foot patrols.

We have also been working in partnership with Mary Webb School in terms of identifying the individuals responsible for low level ASB. A number of ASB warning letters have been sent out in recent months, as well as face to face interventions where we have met with young people and parents to address their behaviour. We have quickly developed a really good working relationship with the senior leadership team at the school which is really positive.

As regards the bus stop at the top of Hall Bank I can see this issue becoming a long term one. Please can the parish council discuss the options in terms of removing the sides / front of the bus shelter. We often find that this eliminates ASB issues overnight in a particular spot as it makes the area far less appealing to youths. I appreciate there is a trade off with making it more exposed for people to use but if we have residents avoiding it because of the ASB this becomes a moot point. In terms of stats ASB has fallen over the last 3 months however this is likely as much to do with the weather as anything else. As a team we plan to be out as much as we can in the evenings as the days get longer and warmer.

We are very stretched as a team, one PC (me) one part time CSO and one full time CSO. So trying to cover approximately 300 square miles of rural Shropshire and approximately one fifth of Shrewsbury town (Cophorne, Gains Park and Frankwell) is a fairly daunting task. Any help you can offer in terms of managing expectations would be gratefully received.

**Neighbourhood Matters** is a Police initiative to find out what's really happening in your area and keep in touch with West Mercia Police through our free messaging service.

The Neighbourhood Matters messaging system enables residents, businesses and community groups to keep in touch with local policing teams. You can receive updates on crimes, latest information on on-going incidents and learn more about what we're doing in your community.

You're invited to sign up and become a registered recipient of messages of information, crime alerts or witness appeals local to the area in which you live or work by email, text or telephone.

Don't worry, we won't bombard you with every incident. You can choose exactly the type of alert you wish to receive.

We'd really like to hear from you so why not ask your family, friends and colleagues to register too? Let's get talking!

Please note that this service is not for reporting crimes or incidents – to make a report please contact West Mercia Police via the West Mercia Police website or dial 999 in an emergency. [www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk)

## 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. I am going to start with how I finished my report last year, I quote:

“this has been a most difficult year and I am sure as a community as we emerge from this pandemic, we will maintain all the support and help for each other and a huge thank you to everyone over the last year. We look forward to reconnecting in person to celebrate a return to normality over the coming months.” We are now returning to our new normal way of life, rebooting our projects, having face to face meetings (although Zoom will still be part of our communications) and can look forward to some larger events such as our Platinum Jubilee party in June of this year.

I shall now cover Parish Matters in my report, bearing in mind the Pontesbury Village Newsletter has provided updates on the monthly Parish Council meetings and all of the activities throughout the last busy year, so trying to keep it brief!!

In April 2021 we appointed a Deputy Clerk, Nicki Young, who has settled in with the Parish Council and become a valuable member of our team bringing a wealth of knowledge of working with both town and parish councils.

We had an uncontested election in May and 3 of our serving Councillors decided to stand down, Cllr Richard Martinelli, Cllr Brian Morris and Cllr Susan Lockwood. I am sure you all want to join me in thanking them for their contribution over the years and still retaining a keen interest in the running of our Parish. We are fortunate to have Cllr Michelle Trow stand in May for Cruckton Ward and shortly afterwards we co-opted Cllr Lynette Charles and Cllr Sharon Davies for the Pontesbury Ward. Cllr Bradbury resigned at the beginning of July and Cllr Neale Manning was co-opted to the Council. All of our new councillors have brought great enthusiasm and a desire to be involved in the running of the council.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Cllrs Nick Hignett and Roger Evans, who were re-elected as Shropshire and Parish Councillors. They are both committed, very hard-working and approachable and I am grateful for all the work they do in our community and particularly for our parish council. We are very fortunate to have such a strong team of councillors who all share the same ideology of working for our community. The role is increasingly more time-consuming and complex, and their commitment is, I am sure, appreciated by the community as well as by myself. This year we decided to have 2 vice chairs, Cllr Hignett and Cllr Pritchard and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their help and support.

### **The Pavilion**

The Pavilion Community Hub and Library, despite somewhat of a stop – start approached governed by the pandemic, is now rapidly moving forward as a vibrant cultural and support hub.

Anna Lawson, our Building Assistant, continues to be the public face of the Pavilion. Anna works closely with the Deputy Clerk and is taking the role forward, managing the ever-increasing number of bookings. There will be a separate more detailed report about activities at the Pavilion.

We now have a Pavilion Working Group, to make management decisions about the building and also site meetings with our neighbours (the Ark Nursery and Pontesbury Coop) to ensure we have good communication channels and 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. They 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 Chair. Yvonne will be standing down at the FOPL annual meeting.

### **Finance**

The Parish Council is committed to being prudent with public funds, however there are several large costly projects which we advised about last year, which have either been completed or are still being worked on:

- Setting up the community hub building

- Replacing older style SOX streetlights with LED lights (complex project) and looking to complete in the near future.
- A tree inspection survey has taken place and we are working on the recommendations within the report.
- 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 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 later this year and developed for wildlife and public open spaces.

All these larger projects are on top of the normal running costs of the Parish Council, the Parish Council draft Strategic Plan (on the parish council website) covers 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 £179,424.00 for 2022-2023 which is an approximate increase of 46p / week (for an average band D property).

Grants have been awarded this year for:

- The upkeep of Poles Coppice
- Remembrance wreath
- Christmas lights for School Green and the area outside the Pavilion

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Cllr Trow for taking over the quarterly checking of our accounts and Cllr Heywood for previously undertaking this task 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 balances the role of the 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, considering the extra work he has undertaken with the Neighbourhood Plan.

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 with 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:

The solar lighting project on the Pontesbury/Minsterley cycle way was completed last year and has proved to be a great success and shows how successful two parish councils

working together can be, linking the two villages. The solar lighting has led to an increased in the use of this path and local residents being more active.

The Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan involves creating a strategy for development in the local community and is a way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. It is a community-led process to create a shared vision for our neighbourhood. Cllr Allan Hodges chairs this group and has provided a separate report on our progress and there will be an opportunity to ask questions about the plan later.

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 when this 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 neutral by 2030. Regular meetings and online talks have been taking place and the groups 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, despite difficult circumstances, have continued to help to develop the footpaths in the parish and I am sure we all wish to thank the volunteers for all their hard during, including Richard Martinelli and Chris Hearn. 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 activities, including an afternoon tea for everyone here in the Public Hall.

The relationship with our local policing team continues. We now have PC Simon Lewis and his colleagues based in the Pavilion and so have successfully retained a local police presence. We have an excellent relationship with the local policing team and the close working from the same base and local knowledge has already paid dividends when supporting local residents. PC Lewis has sent a report for this meeting and a big thank you to Simon and his colleagues.

We are working the Police on tackling the speeding issues in the village along with the neighbouring parishes of Minsterley and Hanwood. We have liaised with the community speedwatch team (thank you for all the work they do) and we are now looking to install ANPR cameras in Minsterley, Pontesbury and Hanwood. This is a successful joint project involving three parishes, Policy, Shropshire Council and expert advice from Charles Pedrick from Rodborough Parish Council, Gloucestershire. This project is well on its way to being implemented and the cameras should be operational this spring.

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. Thank you also to our professional editor, who works hard to prepare each interesting edition, liaising with local groups and advertisers.

We have set up an Emergency Planning Working Group representing as many wards as possible to pre-empt emergencies such as flooding which impacts 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.

The Platinum Jubilee Working Group has been set up and a big thank you to the Chair, Cllr Sharon Davies, and all the volunteers for coming forward to help make the weekend's events be truly memorable and a fitting tribute. As part of the 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 Woodmatters and, also, Cllrs Neville Lewis & Geoff Manley for helping plant the tree. The tree will be 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 ensure 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.

Finally, despite the turbulence we have experienced with COVID and troubling times we find the world is in, I am sure we are all proud to be part of our wonderful parish of Pontesbury and as a community we will maintain all the support and help for each other. A huge thank you to everyone who has helped their fellow residents over the past couple of years. The strong community spirit will enable us to bounce back an ever greater and more resilient as a community.

7. P3 Footpath Group – a written report provided by Alan Drury.  
Annual report for year ending December 2021

With a late start to the year due to all of the covid restrictions, which inevitably meant a reduced number of volunteers and in some instances leading to only two-man teams to maintain safe working. However, the group still managed to clock up 426 volunteer hours. Not dissimilar to normal working, so much credit to the P3 group. As always the work was varied between the usual clearing at the start of the year and to making safe no less than 3 footbridges.

8. Parish Village Halls

**Habberley Village Hall** – update by Cllr John Pritchard

The last year has been difficult with many covid rules still in place - the only major function was the harvest supper which was enjoyed by a full gathering. a few other minor events have taken place including reflexology sessions.

The committee look forward to holding a full programme of events including an arts alive concert, beer and skittles, quiz with supper and the renowned barbeque later in the summer

Fortunately, thanks to the lockdown payment from the government, the finances have enabled maintenance work to be carried out as needed. The 100 club has continued monthly which also makes a contribution to funds.

**Pontesbury Public Hall** – update from Richard Martinali

We have complied completely with all coronavirus rules on face masks and sanitation in the hall and will keep sanitisers available for use in the short term.

We are still suffering the effects of coronavirus, our bookings are well down but slowly recovering, we are about £6,000.00 below average for this time of year.

Expenditure this year is £5,750.00 above income excluding grants, include grants of 10,096.00. and this shows net income of £4,346.00. This shows how important it was to receive these grants from Shropshire Council. Village halls depend on grants to continue the good service they provide for the local community.

Let's hope we will soon be back to normal to enjoy all our local facilities.

Many thanks, Trustees

### **Cruckton Village Hall** – update by Cllr Charlie Sandells

Cruckton Village Hall have welcomed back the regular hirers, including Lea Cross WI, Over 55 Club, Arts & Crafts Club, quizzes to name but a few. The Village Hall Committee have provided new blinds and completed repairs to the wooden hall floor. The Committee are also grateful for the CIL funding, which will help replace the flat roof and upgrade the toilets.

### 9. Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan – report by Cllr Michelle Trow

During the past year the Steering Group consisting of residents and parish councillors has, with the help of a planning consultant, worked hard to shape the wishes of the community into a workable Neighbourhood Plan for the whole parish.

The emerging Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan gives its residents the opportunity to influence future development to a much greater extent than previously. Within the Parish is part of the Shropshire Hills AONB, conservation areas at Plealey and Habberley and many other unspoilt, tranquil and beautiful landscapes.

Working alongside the Revised Shropshire Local Plan the Neighbourhood Plan aims to safeguard the beauty and character of the Parish landscape and buildings as well as the opportunity to enjoy them.

Change and future development are inevitable but the scale location and character of these will be influenced by the Plan. Providing that proposed development contributes to beauty, Parish character, well-being and carbon reduction Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan will support it.

Hence the guiding principle of the Plan is BIMBY [ Beauty In My Back Yard ] not NIMBY [Not In My Back Yard ].

Key policies in the Plan relate to services, landscape, housing, movement, business and carbon reduction. Consultation on these policies takes place between 1st March and 12th April 2022. All residents and other interested parties are encouraged to respond to the draft Plan which will be issued with the March edition of the Pontesbury Newsletter. The full Plan may be consulted at [www.pontesburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.pontesburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk)

Anyone who has not received a written copy of the draft summary may request one from [clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk](mailto:clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk)

### 10. Friends of Pontesbury Library – report read by Bob Tune

Friends of Pontesbury Library is a registered charity with the following aims:

- to raise funds to secure and maintain a Library building
- to support and help develop Library services in Pontesbury to serve the surrounding local area
- to develop and promote the use of the library and the value of literacy for the benefit of everyone without discrimination



We now have approximately 500 members. The following is a quick run-down of our events across the year. The report concludes with a look to the future as The Pavilion becomes established.

**Beginning of the year – under lockdown** Lockdown from January 2021 effected our ability to organise events and use the Pavilion to hold meetings. Even the outdoor Chip it for Charity – a Xmas Tree chipping fundraiser by Ben Jones, Wood Matters - had to be stood down. Our AGM on 11th March was held on Zoom followed by the film 'A Shropshire Field' shown via Vimeo. It documents the building of Cricketers' Meadow, the building of The Pavilion and has short interviews with the community during the pandemic. Our regular Saturday coffee mornings were replaced with Library Lottery Live on Zoom which often included speakers e.g. Mike Fletcher's bike journey to Helle in Norway to raise awareness of haemochromatosis.

**Spring The Garden outside the library** Volunteers began some serious planting in the garden area, with extra planters either donated by members or funded by FOPL. The garden has been developed in particular by Jenny Wateridge, Imogen Mortimer, Caro Schiansky and Rob Dixon, with extra funding from our local Co-op and support from the Parish Council. FOPL supported the Spring Blossoms crafting project with a slide show showcasing **Signs of Spring photographs** sent in by the community to lift spirits as lockdown restrictions eased. This was the first presentation shown on the FOPL- funded smart tv.

The Library building re-opened with restricted hours and adherence to COVID guidance on Monday 12th April. A system to 'click & collect' books was put in place. FOPL continued to organise via Zoom and events were fundraising & social events were on hold. Spring Plant Sale held in May FOPL was delighted to be the first group to hold an event in the Library garden. In spite of the weather we raised nearly £850 from the sale of plants, books and cakes.

**Summer** FOPL applied to the Co-op Local Community Fund for funding and heard in October that we were successful. We welcomed the new local Co-op Pioneer, Sharon Davies. FOPL were present at the Minsterley Show with their tombola stall. Fliers about FOPL and the Library 2 resources were distributed to the many visitors. The show was a great success and a good PR opportunity for the Library and The Pavilion. **The Reader**, the statue created by Bill Sample and commissioned by FOPL, was cleaned up by volunteers and moved to the front of the building by the PC. It has helped establish the Library's presence in the village, though the road signage is still to be sorted out. **Autumn** Council leaders and officers along with the public and representatives from Shropshire Libraries flocked to the Library to celebrate the community library in its new Pavilion location as there could not be a formal opening. The pandemic had prevented marking the occasion before then. There was music, a special cake and a talk Reading for Pleasure which all contributed to making it a successful fun occasion.

**Winter** FOPL held a successful book sale at the Co-op's Christmas Fair which proved to be a great fundraiser. Nearer to Christmas Star workshops were held for free in the Pavilion Meeting Room and the results were used to decorate the Library. Hanwood and Pontesbury Primary schools submitted beautifully made stars from every child in their schools. These were displayed on the library windows and walls. Santa & his Sleigh visited Pontesbury. A great community event culminating in mulled wine & mince pies at The Pavilion.

**2022** Chip It for Charity was able to go ahead. It was very successful with over 50 trees being chipped. Books have been bought by FOPL to develop a 'mini library' for the local community as targeted resources e.g. read aloud extracts for primary schools and older community members. FOPL was invited to hold a raffle again at each performance of the Players Pantomime Snow White and proved a successful fund raiser. **'Love your Library'** event was organised to coincide with Valentine's Day and a Valentine Quiz. It was very well-

attended. There have been two school visits from classes at Pontesbury Primary school since half term, and another planned for this Tuesday 15th March. These are induction sessions and will encourage parents to enrol their children as members.

**The Future** We look forward to developing a creative relationship with The Pavilion in the coming months. Our organisation depends on volunteers, of whom we're rightly proud and value hugely, as I am sure The Pavilion Management and the Parish Council appreciates. FOPL aims to develop school visits from the other primary schools in the area and Mary Webb Academy. There is a real need to support the most vulnerable pupils with reading in particular following schools being locked down during the pandemic. We also wish to complete the garden planning for a well-being area for mental health, part of our Co-op funding application.

Further information about FOPL & fundraising can be found at [pontesburylibrary.co.uk](http://pontesburylibrary.co.uk)

#### 11. Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group – report by Liz Knowles

The group has been meeting regularly during the pandemic and has attempted to increase its profile in the village. Our aims are:

- to raise the awareness of Climate Change and biodiversity loss and that people can do something about this dual crisis which threaten all of us,
- to actively improve biodiversity in the area by any means possible eg planting hedges and wild bulbs/flowers, verge regeneration
- to encourage people to at least make small changes in their lives which can have a positive effect and reduce their Carbon Footprint and negative impact on nature by:-
- -Developing a logo that appears on signs around the village marking Hedge Planting and Wild Flower Planting and is used to identify our articles in the newsletter.
- Establishing a small garden at the front of The Pavilion with a Christmas tree that has been decorated during the Xmas period for the last two years with recycled materials, and willow stars were added last December.
- -Holding a 'Family Fun Cycle Ride'
- -Supporting the Shropshire Love Nature Festival plus the Climate Change Awareness Fair held at Mary Webb School
- -Establishing contact with other groups, such as Ashton Hayes village, Marches Meadow Group, Shropshire Climate Action Partnership, South Shropshire Climate Action, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, RSVP, AONB.
- -Holding a 'Plant Swap' at the Co-op Fete and subsequently establishing a Plant and Seed Swap at The Pavilion
- -Writing regularly in Pontesbury Newsletter
- -Holding 'Carbon Conversations' at the Library (Ken Jenks)
- -Talks on related topics which have been, so far, held on Zoom and advertised in the newsletter. [ How to make a village carbon neutral, Hedgehogs, AONB]

Our 3 initiatives

#### 1. **Increasing Biodiversity**

-Hedge Planting

- Wild Flower Planting

-Forward planning to support the Restoring Shropshire Roadside Verges project.

-Supporting the establishment of a meadow at the Parish Church cemetery

-Surveying the area for potential Tree Planting

## **2. Cycling**

-Promoting the idea of cycling/walking instead of taking the car

-Talks with Shropshire Council about making a safe cycle route to the schools and throughout the village.

-Making enquiries about the possibility of establishing a cycle route along the Old Railway Line

## **3. Carbon Footprint**

-Looking at and discussing about several models used for the measurement of a personal Carbon Footprint

-Encouraging local people to reduce their carbon footprint by articles in the newsletter.

-Starting the Carbon Conversations at the Library

- articles and tips in the Pontesbury Newsletter

### **Cycling group report, February 2022**

The cycle group has 2 projects:

- 1) making it safer for more children to cycle/ actively travel to school
- 2) A safe active travelway between Pontesbury and Shrewsbury

Our aim to get more people back on their bikes and encourage more children to cycle to school, at the same time making it safer for everyone to move actively in the community. It will provide a more affordable healthy way for people to travel to work or college. It will enhance leisure in the community. This will reduce carbon footprints, improve air quality in the village and improve the health of residents who use these safer routes. It will improve the learning and concentration of the children that actively travel to school.

In 2021 we walked between the end of the established cycle way (between Minsterley & Pontesbury) and the schools, writing a proposal for ways to make this a safe continuation for children to cycle to school. **We invited the highways department and the secondary school to look at our proposal. We arranged meetings** with the new Active Travel Manager.

We established that the council owns a section of the old railway line. We lodged a written suggestion that as the next building project is built (opposite the Horseshoes) it incorporates an active pathway through the estate and onto the old railway line.

We also met with David who manages a team keeping pathways clear. He is willing to help keep routes along the old railway line clear. Part of this was a well supported bike ride for all in September, along the railway line and on to Lulu Reynold's Climate event day at Mary Webb School.

We have also met with Mathew Mead and discussed the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plan (LCWIP). Pontesbury has not been listed as one of the 7 main Shropshire towns being focused on, but we have lodged an interest to be included in the LCWIP process with a hope that their aim to create "spokes" into the main towns becomes a real possibility in the future. We have resurrected a feasibility study that was done a few years ago showing the justification for the active route between Pontesbury and Shrewsbury.

This year, we have two significant events in March:

On Wednesday evening 16th March we have a presentation by Professor John Whitelegg about reducing the default 30mph to 20mph in residential streets. The aim of this is to make it safer for everyone that is actively travelling around the village as the risk of death or serious injury is reduced by 30%. County council cabinet members with responsibility for climate change, transport & infrastructure, children, also physical infrastructure have been invited to this virtual meeting. (We do hope that they will attend and be part of the conversation).

On Saturday 19th March we are holding a cycle event in the village inviting Doctor Bike from the Shrewsbury cycle hub in town to attend. This is a chance to get bikes fixed, encourage more people to cycle rather than drive especially on short trips such as going to school or the shops. Radio Shropshire have offered to promote this event.

Both these events are putting Pontesbury on the map in the county and nationwide showing our strong need and desire to help more people get out of cars and move actively in a safe way, cycling or on foot. This all goes in the direction of reducing our carbon footprint, a vital step towards helping the climate crisis.

#### 12. Pontesbury Sports Association – report by Tim Barber.

Despite the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, sporting activity was able to proceed at the Pontesbury Sports Ground (PSG) with each sport adhering to it's respective Covid-19 protocols. In 2021 we welcomed back bowls after their break in 2020. Worthen Juniors, Mytton Rounders and Pontesbury CC ran as 'normal'.

The pavilion continued to be closed throughout the season other than for access to toilets and first aid. Players and officials had to arrive in their kit and bring their own teas.

For cricket, during matches and coaching sessions, we had to build in regular breaks to sanitise hands and playing equipment but otherwise a full programme was achieved.

Worthen Juniors have been using the pitch for U12/13 boys' and girls' teams and are reviewing whether to reinstate the full-size pitch for 2022/3 season for an U16 team.

With illness and Covid-19 the PSA did not hold full committee meetings in 2021 but it's officers continued to function facilitating sporting activities at the PSG working with the member clubs. Given the improvement face-to-face meetings will recommence in 2022 with the AGM on Thursday 24th March at 8pm.

#### **Pontesbury CC**

Juniors We were able to run coaching sessions from May through to September staggering sessions so we could manage the groups and maximise the opportunity for children to participate. This included boys and girls from 6yrs to 15yrs.

In 2020, we were able to run the ECB national programmes (AllStars 4-7-year olds and the new Dynamos programme for 8-11-year olds) – including a new girls only U11 softball cricket team. The girls only sessions proved very popular with 18 girls participating in Dynamos and playing in the end-of-season Lady Taverner's Festival which we hosted at PSG.

I am pleased to report that we received the support of five of our ladies to undertake the ECB 'Activator' training (coach assistant role for AllStars & Dynamos) which proved to be invaluable. Matches were played during the summer for U11, U13 and U15 against local clubs.

#### **Women & Girls Section**

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 2021 we hosted a festival at the PSG with 12 teams participating. The highlight for the year was at the Shropshire Cricket Board Awards Evening when our ladies section was awarded Best

Women & Girls Club in Shropshire in recognition of the continued development of women and girls cricket at the club, our hosting of the girls Lady Taverners Softball festival and the season ending Shropshire Ladies festival. Our ladies have continued their success during the winter indoor programme by achieving third place in stiff competition from other larger clubs across the county.

### **Seniors**

2021 saw the return of Shrewsbury and District Evening Cricket League. We ran two teams in 2021, one of which was a development team to introducing juniors to adult cricket. The Shropshire County Cricket League ran a full programme in 2021. 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. Hopefully 2022 will be better!

**Pavilion Project** This project to look at making improvements at the pavilion to make sure that it's fit-for-purpose clearly had to be put on-hold for the last two years. The Shropshire Cricket Board (ECB) are aware of the intention of PCC to kick-start the project during 2022. The cricket club will engage with interested stakeholders during the coming months to plan the best way forward. **Flooding**

Flooding is an ongoing issue largely the result of the brook between the playing field and Mary Webb overflowing and the excess water from the drainage ditch at the wood side of the field. The culvert under the roadway regularly blocks and water flows across the carpark and into the garage to a depth of up to 5mm. To date limited damage has occurred to equipment and we have stored playing equipment in the pavilion and stored the specialist mowers on pallets in the garage. The pavilion has frequently been surrounded by water and we have come extremely close to flood water getting into the pavilion on several occasions. Indeed, we have had to clear the culvert twice in the last 4-6 weeks!

### 13. Community Good Neighbours Scheme, Pontesbury & Rea Valley – report on website.

At the beginning of last year we were very busy collecting prescriptions and some shopping, for those isolated or still not completely happy with venturing out. This has now waned with the Good Neighbours phone only receiving a minimal number of calls per week and we have also we have noticed a decline in volunteers as people return to work.

The befriending side has at present fifteen volunteers matched with people providing a friendly voice on the phone, meeting up in gardens and as restrictions have lifted they are able to go into homes. However, again we have plenty of people who would benefit from this, but do not have enough volunteers.

We currently run Coffee Mornings once a month in Pontesbury at the Plough Pub, we have over fifty people attending each month sometimes more. They all seem to enjoy the gathering and we really do have to guide them to the door an hour and half later. We have just recently started up a coffee mornings in Minsterley.

We have also recently started some support groups for specific aspects of the community – a Gentlemens club has been created as we pinpointed a need for men to meet to together in a safe environment and connect through playing cards and dominoes or just chatting. Particularly vulnerable individuals have been invited to a “coffee and chat” forum where matters such as bereavement and family breakdown can be discussed in a confidential environment, with others who have been through similar experiences.

The fundraising group raise money through different events such as holding a Christmas Market, bingo and our very successful ‘100’ club which has over two hundred members.

The group organised a Christmas Dinner at Shrewsbury Golf Club where even in December, when Covid was quite virulent locally, over sixty people attended and had a lovely time. A further trip for afternoon tea has been planned for March this year with over seventy people paid so far to join us. We are also planning an afternoon of Country and Western music at The Plough on the 1st April and if this is successful it will become a monthly event.

We are also working with Age UK to try and organise a hot meal for people who may be struggling financially or may need some support. At the moment we are just gathering information and looking at venues.

We are always looking for volunteers and without these the group would be unable to run.

We have many events planned for 2022.

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

Since 1st April 2021, the Parish Council have managed Government COVID regulations changing, stopping and starting and we have worked closely with our partners within the building to help to ensure the building is a safe space to visit. Risk assessments have been updated and distributed as required by Gov rules.

The Pavilion is home to the Pontesbury Library, and continuing good working partnerships are very conducive and beneficial to the people of the parish and wider Rea Valley area.

During 2021, the Pontesbury Safer Neighbourhood Team moved into the building and a good rapport between staff was built and both organisations are very supportive of each other.

Meetings. To enable continuing good working relationships, both within the building and with our external neighbours. Two meetings have been set up; the Building Users Group (BUG) and Site Meeting with external partners, the Cooperative shop and Ark Nursery, . These meetings take place quarterly and have resulted in some very positive input from all partners.

The management of the building on a day to day basis lies with the Deputy Clerk, working in conjunction with the Pavilion working group members and reporting to Council on a monthly basis.

Hiring. The Pavilion now has 6 regular hiring organisations:

- Friends of Pontesbury Library (FOPL) - Library Reading Group
- Good Neighbours Scheme (GNS)
- Age UK
- Energize Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
- Sea Change Trust -
- U3a - including Geology and Creative Writing groups

Working closely with these organisations means that advertisements and information about regular and up-coming events are also posted onto the SMART TV in the Pavilion, which was generously donated by FOPL following a grant from the Cooperative Community Fund.

Income through hire is picking up, but due to the high costs of Business Rates, the Pavilion will never be cost neutral, but this fantastic community facility continues to be well-used, with events and activities building month on month.

Feel Good Friday event was hosted by the Parish Council in the Pavilion on 19th November 2021. This was a dedicated event to Support Older People and Carers, and following this event a Dementia Support Café was set up by Age UK and Elevate STW were able to pass on the message about their chair-based strengthening exercises to help prevent trips, slips

and falls.

Exhibitions have been regularly held in the Meeting Room. The local artist group were first to display their artwork, also holding launch drinks in the Pavilion. Since then other artists, the GNS and now Gill Scriven have hung their display on the walls of the Meeting Room. Everyone is welcome to come along and take a look.

The Chairman offered open the floor for questions on any report. No questions were asked.

15. Matters of Interest or Concern to the Parish of Pontesbury from the electors of the Parish. None received.

16. Date of Next Meeting.  
Following a proposal by Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Heywood, it was RESOLVED that the date of the next Pontesbury Annual Parish Meeting will be on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023.