

PONTESBURY PARISH COUNCIL



Full Council Meeting held at The Pavilion on Monday 14th April 2025 at 7.30pm

PRESENT

Councillors: D Fletcher, N Hignett, R Evans, N Lewis, S Davies , A Windows, N Manning, A Hodges, P Heywood and D Jones

Clerk of the Meeting: Debbie Marais

Public present: None

In attendance: Greg Lawrence from Shroptech

190.24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Pritchard, M Trow, C Sandells, T Mackenzie-Slight and D Gregory

191.24 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations – None

192.24 Public Questions and Comments

Cllr Fletcher read out two questions from a local resident:

1. What is the parish council doing to expedite the issuing of the Enforcement/warning notice to Forest View?
2. What is the parish council doing to stop quad bike access to Poles Coppice?

Response to question 1. At the February parish council meeting the issue was raised by a resident and Clerk was asked to write to Julia Buckley MP and the Shropshire Council Enforcement Officer to raise resident's concerns and to ask that the matter be dealt with as soon as possible. Both parties had replied that the matter was in hand and that they had contacted the relevant parties. Cllr Hignett reported that Julia Buckley had met with local residents affected and had asked Cllr Hignett for a report on the communications he had had with the SC Enforcement Officer, this had been supplied.

Response to question 2. Clerk would contact the Shropshire Council Officer who is responsible for managing this SC owned reserve to enquire what is happening, and the local policing team to see what action can be taken.

193.24 Minutes of Council

After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Jones, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 10th March 2025.

194.24 Police Matters – Cllr Evans raised the issue of moves to reduce Police Community Support Officers working hours. Clerk asked to write to PCC to raise the parish council's concerns about the impact of PCSOs hours being further reduced, on their ability to do patrols locally and attend parish council meetings.

194.24.1 Quarter 2 policing priorities. Clerk asked to respond stating that the current 4 issues of anti-social behaviour, speeding, drugs and rural crime are still the priorities.

195.24 Shropshire Council Member Report Shropshire Councillor Nick Hignett gave a verbal report including:

FINANCES—The latest information for the council shows that the budget overspend has fallen slightly to £34m, with expected savings of £47m in the financial ending March 2025. The council expects to have sufficient reserves in the General Fund Balance to cover the forecast overspend, leaving almost £5m at the end of the financial year. A recent report shows that the council expects to achieve 52% of the £90m savings target it began the financial year with, and has plans in place for the £44m outstanding savings to be achieved. However, the report stresses that the council's financial position remains extremely challenging, with continuing pressures across many areas from rising demand and growing costs for services, particularly in Social Care, which accounts for around £4 in every £5 of the council's budget.

ELECTION INFORMATION—a reminder that the deadline for registering to vote expired on 11th April. Also the deadline for applying for a postal vote expired at 5pm today (14th April). All voters will need to provide photo i.d. at the polling station.

PHARMACIES—with General Practices closed this Friday (18th) and next Monday (21st) for the Easter holidays, patients are reminded to get requests for repeat prescriptions in early this week, to avoid running out of essential medication.

LORD HILL STATUE—essential repair work is set to be carried out this year to the statue of Lord Hill, which stands on top of the column. It was built between 1814 and 1816, was grade 2 # listed in 1953, and is the tallest free-standing Doric column in England. Works are anticipated to begin in the summer.

196.24 Planning

196.24.1 After a proposal from Cllr Hodges, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 3rd March 2025.**

196.24.2 Cllr Hodges gave a verbal report which was **NOTED.**

197.24 Pavilion Committee

197.24.1 After a proposal from Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes of the Pavilion Committee meeting held on 24th March 2025.**

197.24.2 Cllr Fletcher gave a verbal report which was **NOTED.**

198.24 Facilities Working group

198.24.1 After a proposal from Cllr Lewis, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE delegated authority to FWG to undertake a review of play area inspections and report back to May Full Council meeting.**

198.24.2 After a proposal by Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Lewis, all in favour, It was **RESOLVED to APPROVE Contractor 1 to be employed at a cost of £865 to carry out the refurbishments to the bus shelter at the top of Hall Bank, once the electric is disconnected.**

- 198.24.3 The matter of a new under-lease between Pontesbury Parish Council and Pontesbury Sports Association was deferred until Clerk has 3 quotes.
- 198.24.4 After a proposal by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE that the parish council pay for electrical connection for any new or replacement parish defibrillators and add them to the maintenance schedule (this will entail an additional hour/week for the member of staff who carries out weekly checks)**
- 198.24.5 After a proposal by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE that the parish council will consider any formal request for funds towards a defibrillator and/or cabinet and support communities in their fundraising for defibrillators**

Specific requests for Plealey and Habberley will be considered at the May Full Council meeting.

- 198.24.6 After a proposal by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Davies, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE Minor repairs to Asterley noticeboard be carried out**
- 198.24.7 After a proposal by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Evans, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE a maximum budget of £600 to replace the Lea Cross noticeboard and delegated authority to clerk/Chair to purchase the board and organise installation. Cllr Evans to advise on site for noticeboard**

199.24 Statutory Business and Finance

- 199.24.1 Income of £12,123 . This was **NOTED**.
- 199.24.2 After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve payments of £23,988 as attached.**
- 199.24.3 After a proposal from Cllr Hignett, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to retrospectively approve transfer of £15,000 from CCLA to Unity for April payments**
- 199.24.4 After a proposal from Cllr Davies, seconded by Cllr Jones, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE closure of the Nationwide account due to excessive administrative burden and little prospect of use and to transfer the funds into the Unity current account. ‘**
- 199.24.5 After a proposal by Cllr Hignett, seconded by Cllr Manning, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE retrospectively the fee for sanitary bin installation and collection, for the men’s public toilet as part of the Lingen Davies ‘Bins for Boys’ scheme to improve facilities for men with a stoma.**

200.24 Health & Safety Matters – None raised.

201.24 Gov.uk domain Greg Lawrence gave a verbal report on why it is best practice for parish councils move to a gov.uk domain for transparency and security purposes (as suggested by Central Government, National Association of Local Councils and Shropshire Association of Local Councils).

After a proposal by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE that**

201.24.1 a task and finish group be set up to look at the best option for hosting parish council email addresses. This would be Cllrs Windows and Fletcher, Clerk and Greg Lawrence from Shroptech.

201.24.2 that Information Solutions/Web Orchard (who currently host the parish council website) be asked to register Pontesbury-pc.gov.uk as the website domain for the parish council at a charge of £25.

202.24 BT payphones. Clerk was asked to write to Shropshire Council to ask if BT can reverse their decision to remove the payphone at the top of Pontesbury Hill on the basis that there is poor mobile coverage, a lot of people walk/cycle in the area and for emergencies such as power cuts.

203.24 VE Day Celebrations. Cllr Fletcher gave a verbal update that the lights will be on St Georges church, the flag will be flown and St Georges will be organising other activities on the VE date.

204.24 Biodiversity in the parish. Following the report to council from the Clerk the following was agreed.

204.24.1 After a proposal by Cllr Fletcher, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE that a Biodiversity Working Group be set up to include Cllrs Fletcher, Hignett, Jones and local residents**

204.24.2 the BWG would discuss possible sites for 'No Mow May' for May 2026

204.24.3 After a proposal by Cllr Fletcher, seconded by Cllr Davies, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE that the parish council would become a supporter of Shropshire Hills Landscape Trust at a fee of £250 and would apply for grants for local projects to improve biodiversity in the parish**

204.24.4 After a proposal by Cllr Hignett, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE £1000 to mow/collect the risings along the areas of the verge along the cycleway, designated for wildflower meadows, and to include this work in the new grounds maintenance contract drawn up in 2026.**

205.24 Hall Bank improvements

Cllr Hignett gave a verbal update including:

- The s.106 payments allocated for the improvements to the junctions on Hall Bank have not been returned to Shropshire Homes
- Shropshire Council officers will be reviewing the progress on all the s.106 and CiL Local projects currently in the system

Cllr Hignett hoped to have an update following this meeting.

Clerk was asked to write to Andy Begley (CEO of Shropshire Council) stating that the parish council are aware of the upcoming meeting and would like to stress that the parish council and local residents are very concerned that these monies should not be lost, and should be ringfenced for the junction improvements on Hall Bank that were included as part of the Planning Permission for the Hall Bank development. There is now increased pedestrian footfall along Hall Bank and increased traffic and so the safety of pedestrians is even more compromised when using the footpath and crossing places.

206.24 Pontesbury Festival

After a proposal by Cllr Davies and seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE a donation of £151 for a 4 page black and white wraparound for the parish newsletter to promote the festival.**

207.24 Clerk's Report - A report from the Parish Clerk was received and noted. Clerk added that the parish council elections on 1 May 2025 are uncontested. There will be 4 vacancies on the parish council.

208.24 Parish Business the following parish business was reported:

Cllr Davies mattress reported on facebook as being dumped on the village green, on Hall Bank.
 Cllr Windows asked if residents are informed about the upcoming closure of the A488. Notices were included in the Shropshire Star and local businesses affected, had been sent letters.

Cllr Jones raised concerns about large trees being planted too close to the kerb in the hedge alongside the Co-op car park. Cllr Jones would contact Co-op about this.

Cllr Evans asked if the vegetation which has reduced the pavement outside Halston Cottages could be included in the 2025-26 Environmental Maintenance grant application

Cllr Hodges gave a verbal update that the work agreed to alleviate the flooding by Cruckton Hall School and the damaged manhole cover are now included in SC Highways maintenance schedule although there isn't a firm date yet

Cllr Fletcher wished to give many thanks to the councillors standing down after this 4 year term, Cllrs Manning, Heywood, Lewis and Mackenzie-Slight, for all their commitment and contributions towards the running of the parish council. He wished to add particular thanks to Cllr Lewis who had been in post for many years and his contribution as a tree warden, on the Planning Committee and support to Cllr Fletcher, as Chair, in particular. His wealth of experience and knowledge will be greatly missed. There will be a formal event to thank long-standing, retiring and new councillors later in the year. Cllr Fletcher wished to also thank Cllr Evans and Hignett for their hard work, commitment and contributions as Shropshire Councillors for the area.

209.24 Date and Time of Next Meeting. The Annual Meeting of the Council will be held on Monday 12th May 2025 at the Pavilion at 7.30pm
The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed:
 Chairman Pontesbury Parish Council

Date: