

Pontesbury Parish

Activities to increase biodiversity in the parish

Background

Pontesbury is a large village 7 miles south of Shrewsbury. The parish of Pontesbury includes the village and a wider rural area containing a number of smaller hamlets. Some of the southern part of the parish falls within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape area. On the Eastern side of Pontesbury village there are the two large forested and grazed hills, Pontesford Hill and Earls Hill which are managed by a Trust alongside Shropshire Wildlife Trust. There are also some small nature reserves in the parish – Poles Coppice (managed by Shropshire Council) in Pontesbury and Polemere (on a private farm with public access). The parish has drawn up a Neighbourhood Plan which identifies a number of green spaces in the parish, to be preserved for community access). The parish council own a large meadow area and the public access spaces on a recently built housing development off Hall Bank in Pontesbury and also have 125 year leases on a green in the centre of Pontesbury (with a number of flowerbeds and mature trees); a large play area/green space off Station Road and a sports field and small woodland on the northern side of Pontesbury.

Key Champions	Initiative	Outcomes
Pontesbury Climate Emergency Action Group (PCEAG) (set up in 2019)	<p>Aim to increase biodiversity locally as part of response to climate emergency</p> <p>Aim to encourage and educate people about growing food and decreasing food miles, and also to garden with wildlife in mind. Set up a community garden including fruit trees and pollinating plants, on parish council land and working with local children's nursery who have a dedicated bed in the garden to look after</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556850791782</p> <p>Series of talks relating to increasing biodiversity locally</p>	<p>Hedges/trees/wildflowers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Along meadow area of Hall Bank (with CPRE) approx. 136m long. 2. Alongside a local children's nursery (approx. 20 metres) 3. Eleven trees planted around parish 4. Pollinator and native flower/bulb planting at various sites 5. three areas of wildflower planting along cycleway verge linking Pontesbury and Minsterley 6. Wildflower planting on an area within the Hall Bank meadow area
Parish Council	<p>Duty to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>Took ownership of public open spaces on large development of 85 houses on Hall Bank</p> <p>Community Orchard planted on Hall Bank meadow area</p> <p>Worked with PCEAG to fund/organise planting and maintenance of wildflower verges alongside a cycleway linking Pontesbury with neighbouring village Minsterley</p> <p>Bought community planters for community building that grow veg and pollinating plants working with PCEAG and Age UK</p> <p>Will manage wildlife corridor (with badger sett) alongside Hall Bank from 2028 – management plan in place</p> <p>Contribution of £2500 annually to Shropshire Council towards management of Poles Coppice nature reserve</p> <p>Grants annually for biodiversity/carbon netzero projects – to PCEAG community garden/wildflower verges/hedging to date</p> <p>Aim to draw up and adopt biodiversity policy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy for parish</p>	<p>Community garden (8 Large beds) and 5 planters growing veg and fruit and wormery</p> <p>Community orchard (21 trees)</p> <p>Talks/public events since 2021</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restoring Shropshire Verges Project talk 2. Trees outside woodlands talk – Shropshire Council 3. Hedgehogs 4. Wildlife gardening 5. 'Get growing' public event in April 2023 to encourage local food growing/seed swapping/composting
Pontesford/Earls Hill Volunteer Group	<p>Managing and restoring biodiversity on the two hills through weekly conservation tasks on and botanical surveying working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England. The group have recently started water quality monitoring in the Habberley Brook</p>	

<p>Rea Valley Community Wildlife Group (RVCWG)</p>	<p>Encouraging local community to engage with nature through series of monthly wildlife talks/events/walks https://www.shropscwgs.org.uk/rea-valley-wildlife-group/</p>	<p>6. Street Allotment project talk 7. Community Garden volunteer working party sessions - fortnightly since April 2024</p>
<p>Future Plans</p>	<p>Aim to link and promote biodiversity activities between parishes with public engagement events and possibly funded by grant from Shropshire Hills National Landscape fund https://www.shropshirehills-nl.org.uk/</p> <p>RVCWG have been awarded a grant from the Shropshire Hills Conservation Fund to facilitate delivery of a programme of 10 wildlife training events from April 25-March 2026. This will enable the group to reach out to new audiences, engage young people about the wildlife in their area and attend events run by partner organisations. Helping to raise awareness about nature, enthuse and engage with the local community and hopefully lead to new audiences caring and taking future action to protect nature.</p>	<p>8. April 2024 public event at Community Garden and display in library 9. 2 talks to other local groups about community gardening and growing food 10. Community meal with donated food from garden working with Pontesbury foodbank/church 11. Harvest event with apple pressing and pizzas/salads with food from garden – Sept. 2024</p>
		<p>25/26 talks /events 1. April 25 – seed/tool/plant swap at Community Garden 2. June 25 -PCEAG stall and activities promoting biodiversity & community garden/climate change at Pontesbury Festival 3. Biodiversity Fresk with Marches Energy Agency funds 4. Public event planned linking with Minsterley parish to promote what is happening/could happen to increase biodiversity – June 25 5. September 25 – 3 parishes public event to encourage volunteers to get involved and generate ideas for activities linking the parishes 6. Open day planned for Poles Coppice nature reserve</p>