

August 2026

# Village Views

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF ACTON BURNELL, PITCHFORD, FRODESLEY, RUCKLEY AND LANGLEY

## WELCOME

In autumn 2017 a small group of volunteers got together to take over the running of Village Views from Beth Davies, who had been the driving force behind the publication for a number of years. The first edition produced by the new team was a black and white newsletter of 4 pages. Since that time we have moved on to produce a full colour newsletter, often running to 12 pages. Supported by grants from the Parish Council's Lightsource fund, and by the generosity of local businesses who advertise with us, we have published and distributed the newsletter four times a year.

After 9 years, however, some of us now wish to step back and let some new talent take Village Views forward. We are in need of an editor (responsible for collecting reports from local organisations and council representatives, putting together information on local events and issues, and writing a few articles on anything that might make for an interesting read!), a layout designer (who doesn't need to be a professional – just someone with computer skills who can use PowerPoint, and who has a good eye for making things look smart, attractive and easily readable), and a treasurer. Finding new advertisers and contacting existing ones and organising deliveries are handled by other members of the team.

The editor and layout designer will need to work together (either in person or via email) to get the publication ready for printing. This usually takes two or three days per publication, spread over a couple of weeks. The work of the treasurer involves liaising with the bank where necessary and keeping track of bank statements. The only payments out are for printing costs, and payments in consist of an annual grant plus occasional advertising payments.

We are very proud of what we have achieved with Village Views and want to see it continue into the future, but that can only happen if some new blood steps up to take over. If you are interested, please contact me at [villageviews@hotmail.com](mailto:villageviews@hotmail.com) or call 07410 381349 to discuss. We're waiting to hear from you!

*Chris Harrison, John Glover, Rachel Johnson and Paul Harrison*

## NEWS FROM LONGNOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

We've had a wonderful and busy year at Longnor Primary school. The children have enjoyed the summer term and all the sunshine and have taken part in activities including Shropshire Bookfest at Theatre Severn; a trip to Home Farm in Attingham; swimming lessons at Church Stretton Leisure Centre; the Shrewsbury Half Marathon; and a trip to Shrewsbury Library.

We held our Lawley Leap event on 5th July. This annual fundraising activity involves walking or running through the Shropshire hills, ending up back at school for a barbeque and summer fete. There were two routes available: a shorter 6.6 mile up and down the Lawley and a longer 13.2 mile route which takes in Caradoc, Gaer Stone, Willstone Hill and Lawley. We had over 250 fantastic entrants this year and they all made an enormous effort in the hot sunshine. We would like to give a huge thank you to everyone who made this day such a success – from local businesses who sponsored us, to parents, relatives and friends who stewarded and manned stalls, to the participants and their families who joined us on the day! Together we raised much needed funds for projects in school and we are very grateful to our community for their support.

In the last few weeks of term, children have been camping on site, making pizzas for a DT project, enjoying a wonderful sunny sports day, taking part in a super Spanish day which included a delicious Spanish stew for lunch, and enjoying participating in their end of year plays. Merlins class gave a fantastic performance of an Egyptian themed play to a huge audience, raising £150 for Birmingham Children's hospital. Little Owls performed an adorable animal themed play to the whole school as well as their families. Eagles class performed their hilarious comedy to a very receptive audience who enjoyed it enormously. We have certainly enjoyed all the extra acting and singing this term!

We continue to ensure children are developing a lifelong love of learning and look forward to a new year in September.

The closing date for contributions to the next edition will be October 19<sup>th</sup> 2026.

Please contact [villageviews@hotmail.com](mailto:villageviews@hotmail.com) with any news or [villageviewsadvertising@outlook.com](mailto:villageviewsadvertising@outlook.com) to place an advert.

## NEWS FROM PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

### Pub nights

The July Pub night was an exceptional event with a fantastic level of attendance on a lovely warm evening where the audience sat outside while enjoying a good catch-up with neighbours and enjoying fayre from a BBQ run by Rachel Johnson with Jamie Barrett. The unbelievably generous donation of the meat from Darren Williams and the equally generous donation of the rest from Rachel added a good amount to the Hall funds which, given the constant need for maintenance, will be sorely needed for further improvements both outside and in.

The next event will be on August 14th and again on September 11th where the Fodder Box will be in attendance providing you with freshly baked pizza to get you out of cooking at the end of a probable hard week!!

As always, all ages welcome, but do remember, we only operate a cash bar!

### Other Events

In addition to Pub nights, we are also looking into putting on other food events, both the traditional Butties morning but also evening events with a finer fayre! Don't forget also, the PVH Centenary Event in December, where we are looking to put on free food feast (funded by the Parish Council) plus a fantastic display detailing

the life of the Hall and the area we live in since its inception in 1926 and we hope that you can all come to that. As always, details to follow in a future edition of this newsletter and on our Facebook and Instagram sites.

### News

The input from our new Committee Members can't go un-noticed, with an increased vibrancy in terms of ideas and supporting events as well as immersing themselves behind the bar on Pub nights. Should anyone else be interested in joining and helping then we would love to hear from you.

In particular, with the retirement of our Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer in the next 9 months, we could really do with some extra help, particularly with the financial side and if anyone out there can help with a traditional Treasurers role, then please do contact us. Indeed, such a role does not necessarily have to involve other commitments to the running of the Hall.

### Hiring of the Hall

The Village Hall is your facility and is available for hire and at extremely competitive rates. Currently, prices start from:

**Children's parties: £30**  
**Meetings: £20**  
**Other bookings: £40 and £60 for events over 6 hours**

Please contact Mike Price.

As always, we are continually looking for new volunteers to help with the running of the Hall and associated events, and on that note, Miriam is still coordinating the Hall Hero's WhatsApp group for people who are up for helping out from time to time, but without the responsibility of being a committee member. Please contact Miriam via messenger or WhatsApp on 07883 089500 if you are able to help on any aspect of looking after our Hall.

### Contacts

Mike Price (Chairman):  
email: [price622@btinternet.com](mailto:price622@btinternet.com)  
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mobile: 07538 744807

Jeanette Reaney (Tote Organiser):  
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mobile: 07971 780963  
*John Glover (PVH Committee)*

## CHRIS NAYLOR – OUR SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR

I'm pleased to say I've booked a couple of key Shropshire Council people to visit locally soon. Our new CEO, Tanya Miles, will spend a couple of hours in the Burnell Division. I've suggested she spend part of that around Acton Burnell/Frodesley, firstly getting – if possible – a feel for Concord College's importance locally, nationally, internationally even. In my experience Concord seems far less known and appreciated than it should be, for the very impressive educational establishment it is. And secondly being reminded how long we've been waiting for those potholes by Frodesley – and of course by Acton Burnell too – to be fixed. Then if Tanya doesn't respond our second key visitor is Cllr David Vasmer, Cabinet Member of Highways since 2025, at the September Parish Council meeting when I'm sure councillors will want to press him on our pothole problems here.

Meanwhile Shropshire Council's financial position remains difficult, as you probably tire of me saying. As I've now been asked to chair the new Finance and Improvement Scrutiny – a cross-party group that double-checks the Council's financial plans and management – I'm continually reminded of our financial strictures, that there's little money spare to catch up on potholes, sadly. This role means I also join the Council's monthly Budget Forum, with key finance officers and leaders of the political groups - and get a monthly update from the new Chief Financial Officer, the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Deputy Leader.

As someone who's overseen a £200m budget myself, when I was in charge of Housing in a former councillor role, and who's written business plans and set budgets, I have to say I'm impressed by the new grip in those overseeing our finances at senior level. Our new Chief Exec, and our new Chief Finance Officer – otherwise known as our '151 Officer', as he has the 'Section 151' power to shut the Council down if we spend outside agreed budgets - are both absolutely determined to fix our finances.

Our mid-July Scrutiny meet 'scrutinised' briefings on the Council's new 'Medium Term Financial Plan', and on our 'Financial Sustainability and Recovery Strategy' (to get us out of the financial hole we've inherited). The good news is that new controls mean we know where we are financially - our Chief Financial Officer says the Council really didn't, when he arrived 6 months ago - and that in the end our 2025-6 deficit was £9m less than predicted. The less good news is that digging ourselves out of this hole looks likely to take years not months. But we're all committed to doing our best to maintain vital resident services while working to balance the books.

[Chris.naylor@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Chris.naylor@shropshire.gov.uk) Tel: 07825 745 626

## WHAT'S ON

### 9th August

The gardens at Moat Hall, Annscroft, SY5 8AZ open as part of the National Garden Scheme. This an acre farmhouse garden featuring an extensive kitchen garden and orchard, with many quirky delights to enjoy. Entry £6 for adults; children free.

### 14th August

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall.

### 21st to 23rd August

The big screens are up at Attingham Park! Come along for a Grease Sing-a-long performance at 6pm on the 21st, and The Gruffalo and Stick Man at 12.30pm on the 22nd, with Mamma Mia! Screening at 6.30pm. On the 23rd you can enjoy Pride and Prejudice at 1.30pm, followed by Star Wars: A New Hope at 6.30pm. Go to [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/attingham-park/events](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/shropshire-staffordshire/attingham-park/events) for prices and to book tickets.

### 30th August

Ryton Village Fete will be shared between The Fox at Ryton and Ryton Village Hall. Enjoy vintage family fun, with stalls, games, a dog show, classic cars and live music from 12 noon to 8.00pm. Free entry. Proceeds to all stalls to charity.

### 5th September

The Pantaloons present an outdoor production of Twelfth Night at Attingham Park. Curtain up at 6.30pm. Bring along a picnic and something to sit on. Warm clothing and blankets advised for when the sun goes down. Tickets £16 for overs 16s and £10 for children, available at [www.tickettailor.com/events/thepantaloon/2214728](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/thepantaloon/2214728)



### 11th September

The Coracle World Championships take to the water at the Pengwern Boat Club in the Quarry Park, Shrewsbury. Races taking part from 12 noon to 7.00pm. Come along and watch or get together a team and compete. Go to [www.coracleworldchampionship.co.uk](http://www.coracleworldchampionship.co.uk) to register. Event in support of Macmillan Cancer Support.

### 11th September

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall with Fodder Box providing freshly baked pizza.

### 12th September and 10th October

'Made in Shropshire' Artisan Fair takes over The Square in Shrewsbury. Handmade items from talented local craftspeople will be on sale throughout.

### 19th and 20th September

Hills Ford Rally – see page 4 and 5.

### 25th September, 9th October, 13th November and 11th December

Build your skills and confidence on a one day navigation course at Cardingmill Valley. Learn how to read a map, use a compass, plan route and what to do if things go wrong. The course includes a walk of around 10k along footpaths and across open country so that you can put your new found knowledge into practice. Course runs from 10.15am to 5.00pm. Meet at the National Trust café at Cardingmill Valley. Price £75 per person (£85 to include map and compass hire). Book at [www.rayofsunadventures.com/event-details-registration/introduction-to-navigation-course-shropshire-hills-2026-09-25-10-00](http://www.rayofsunadventures.com/event-details-registration/introduction-to-navigation-course-shropshire-hills-2026-09-25-10-00)

### 27th September

Clara's Classic Convoy takes to the road again, with a scenic 30 mile route. Bring along your classic vehicle to take part or come along to enjoy the spectacle. Agricultural, quirky, vintage, classic and sporty vehicles welcome. Convoy leaves thThe Fox at Ryton at 10.00am. Entry fee £15 for car and driver, and £5 per passenger. Includes a hot drink and a sausage bap. All proceeds in aid of Hope House Hospice.

### 9th October

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall.

### 17th October

The Leasowes Garden and Arboretum in Cound, SY5 6AF, opens its gates as part of the National Garden Scheme programme for 2026. Open from 10.00am to 4.30pm. Entrance £7 (children free). Refreshments available. Enjoy a garden stretching over 10 acres, with ponds, rhododendrons, azaleas and roses.

### 24th October

'Made in Shropshire' Artisan Fair returns to Much Wenlock. Plenty of unusual, handmade items produced by local artists and craftspeople will be on sale, and all of Much Wenlock's small independent shops will also have their doors open, making for a truly local shopping experience.



## SUMMER FUN ATTINGHAM PARK

The Field of Play at Attingham Park will be hosting a whole load of fun summer activities for youngsters during August. No booking is required – just turn up on the day. Usual National Trust admission charges apply and please note that all children must be accompanied by an adult. All the activities will be outdoors, so may be cancelled if the weather is wet.

From 3rd to 24th August from 10.00am to 4.00pm, Mondays will focus on science activities and stomp rocket workshops. Tuesdays (4th to 25th August, 11.00am to 3.00pm) will offer the chance to get creative with nature. On Wednesdays (5th to 26th August, 1.00pm to 3.30pm) you can have a go at mini archery, using safe 'sucker' arrows.

On Friday 7th August (10.00am to 1.00pm) and Friday 21st August (1.00pm to 4.00pm) you can have a go at learning some circus skills. Friday 14th August and Friday 28th August from 11.00am to 3.00pm see bubble performers take to the field to bring a little bubble-filled magic to the day.



## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

### Questions for Shropshire Council about Highways and Waste

Shropshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Highways and Waste, Cllr David Vasmer, is planning to attend the next Parish Council meeting on 8 September 2026. We have invited him so that we may ask him about the state of the roads and how highway repairs and maintenance are scheduled.

Everyone is welcome to attend the meeting, which will take place on Tuesday 8 September 2026, 7.30pm at Pitchford Village Hall.

Should you have any questions you wish to ask Cllr David Vasmer, please submit them in advance to Anna Morris, Parish Clerk, by **Thursday 20 August 2026** by emailing [clerk@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk).

### Previous meetings

The Council met on 12th May and 14th July 2026. Papers and minutes for these meetings are available at: [www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk/meetings](http://www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk/meetings)

The 12th May meeting was the statutory annual meeting where the Chair, Vice-Chair and committee members are elected or confirmed along with annual accounts, audit, standing orders, etc. The new Parish Council Chair is Cllr Carmen Culliss. The Council wishes to thank her for taking on this role and also thank the outgoing Chair, John Long, for his work in this role over the past year.

The Council also awarded two Lightsource community Benefit Fund grants to help fund Pitchford Village Hall's Centenary Celebrations later this year.

At the meeting on 9th July, the Council was pleased to note the amount of work which has recently been undertaken on roads in the Parish to fill in potholes and other defects outstanding since the winter, in addition to the completion of the 30mph limit in Frodesley and associated traffic calming measures throughout the villages. It also discussed Shropshire Council's Local Plan consultation and residents' issues with the increasing costs of Airband internet contracts in Ruckley and Langley which the Council will follow up with Shropshire Council.

### Annual Parish Meeting

The parish's annual community meeting was held on 19th May 2026. The Council would like to thank everyone who came to give presentations to the meeting and the members of the public who attended. Cllr Vasmer's invitation to attend our next meeting was made as a result of issues raised by residents about highways repairs at this meeting.

The meeting received reports from local organisations including Pitchford Village Hall, West Mercia Police and Concord College.

Anna Morris  
Parish Clerk  
Tel: 07842 324809 Email: [clerk@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

## ACTON BURNELL SHOP AND POST OFFICE SUMMER OPENING

Until 7th September, the shop and post office are open only on Tuesday and Thursday.

Normal opening hours will resume from Monday 7th September (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, from 9.00am to 1.00pm and from 2.00pm to 5.00pm).

## RALLY CARS TAKE TO SHROPSHIRE LANES

The Hills Ford Stages Closed Road Rally will be taking place at Weston Park on 19<sup>th</sup> September and around the lanes on South Shropshire on 20<sup>th</sup> September. A total of 150 cars will be taking place, including modern rally cars and historic Escorts and Minis. This exciting event starts with a ceremonial start in Shrewsbury at noon on the 19<sup>th</sup>, followed by 4 rally stages at Weston Park, where five hours of 'flat out action' are promised plus trade stalls, food and family entertainment.

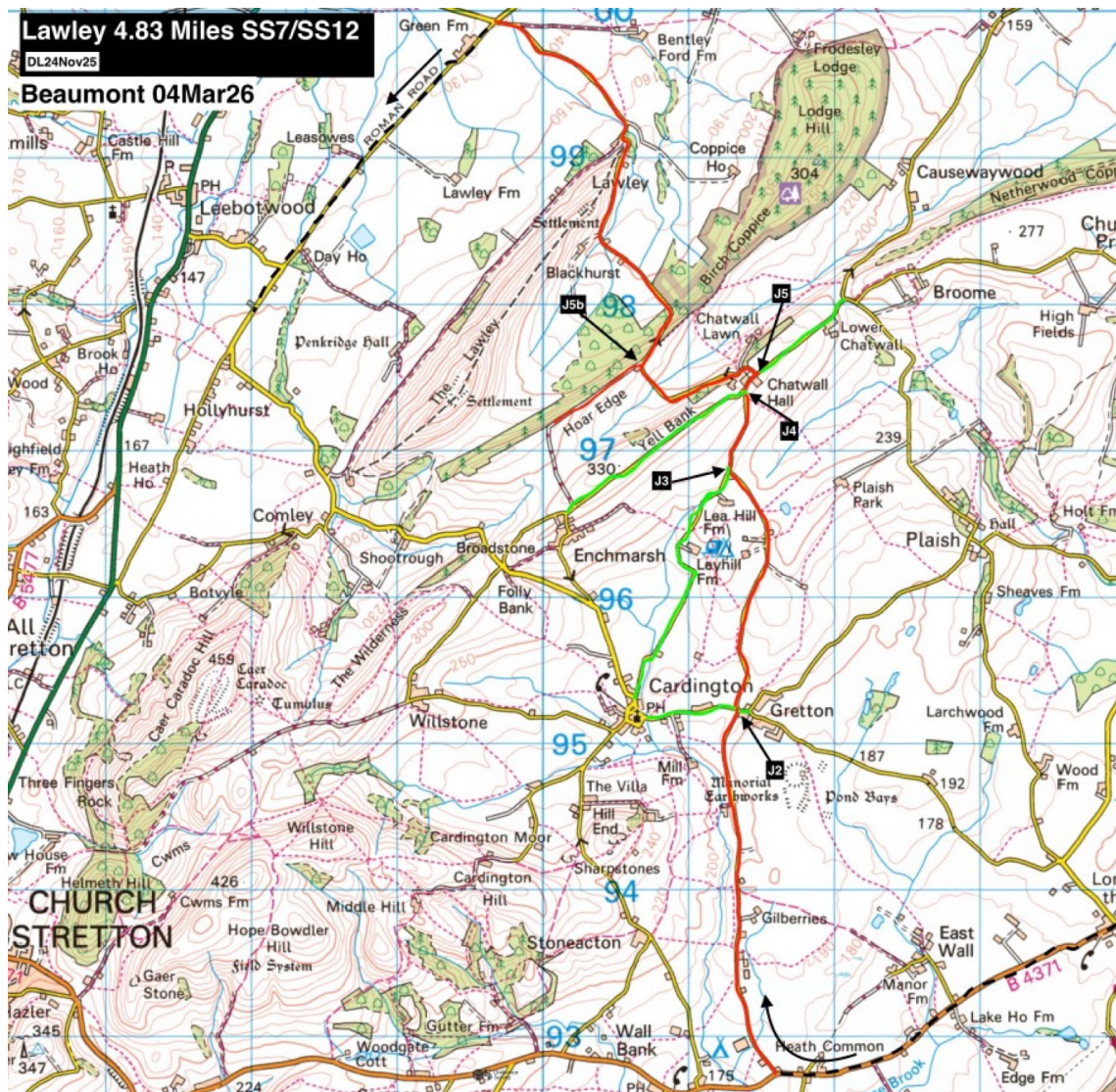
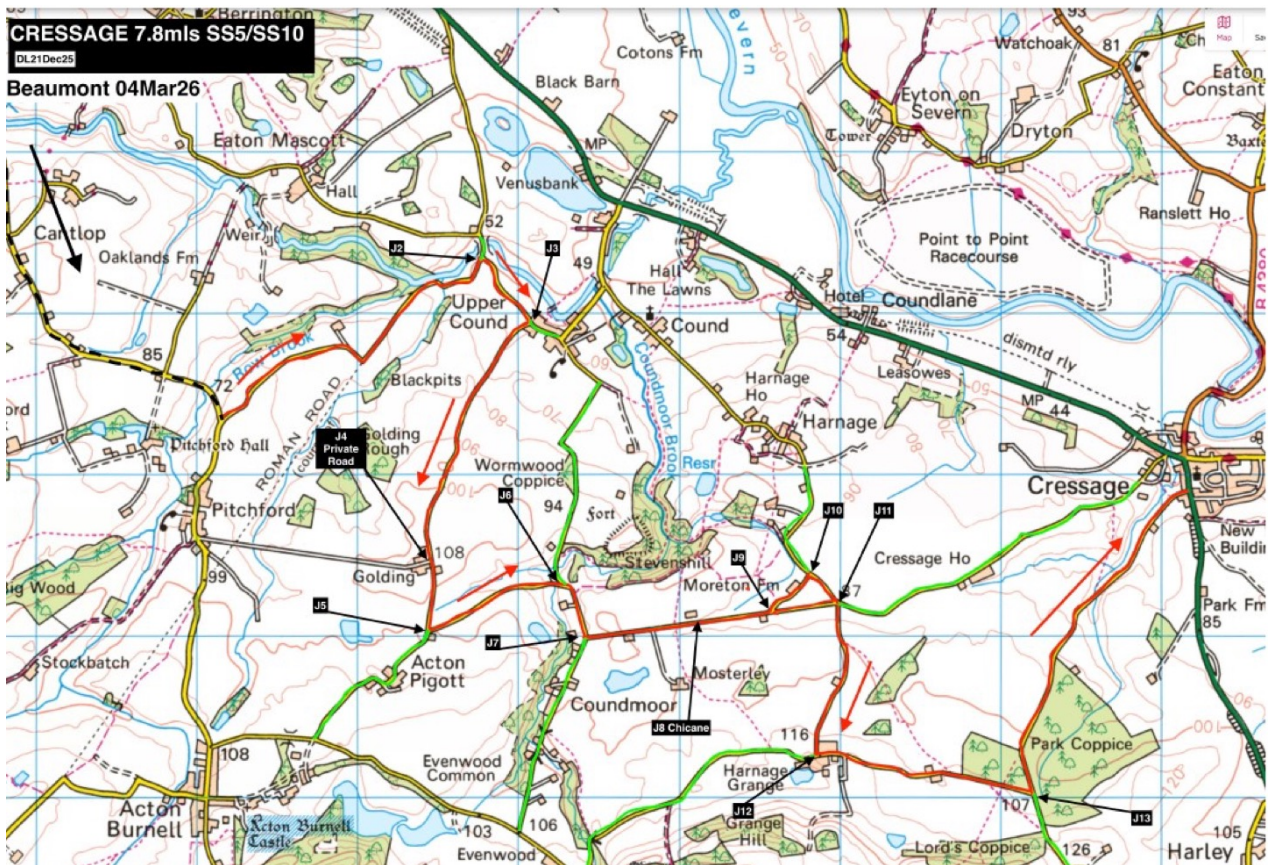
The following day, there will be rally stages in both the morning and the afternoon, leaving from Halls Auction Centre at Battlefield, Shrewsbury. The stages closest to our locality will be the Cressage Special Stage (which leaves Pitchford Hall, heads along The Glebe towards Upper Cound, before turning south towards Acton Pigott, then along Coundmoor, before looping round to finish at Cressage), and the Lawley Special Stage (which leaves Gilberries Hall Farm at Rushbury, and heads north to finish at Green Farm in Longnor).

The main routes (shown in red on the maps opposite) will be closed to traffic on 20<sup>th</sup> September from 6am to 8pm, except for residents living along the route, who will have restricted access. Green roads shown on the map will be closed to through traffic from 6am to 8pm, but local residents and businesses will have access all day.

More information on the rally can be found at <https://hillsfordstages.co.uk/> and information regarding arrangements for spectators will be available nearer the date.



# HILLS FORD RALLY - LOCAL CLOSED ROAD STAGES





## PITCHFORD HALL CENTENARY CLUB TRIPPING DOWN MEMORY LANE

We wanted to update you a little more about our progress since the last edition of Village Views as we work towards our centenary celebrations in December 26.

On Saturday 4th July, we held our "Trip Down Memory Lane" event, where we presented just some of our findings. We were very pleased that so many dropped in to have a look and to add crucial new information to help this community project.

The highlight was the camcorder footage of the Queen's 1977 Jubilee celebrations held in Acton Burnell. We managed to get some of the villagers identified, dressed on floats and pulled by now vintage tractors representing all of the wider parish. There are plenty more waiting to be named. You will have a chance in December and we are looking at having copies made of the recording, to sell as a fundraising opportunity, for those interested.

The sugar rush from the delicious cakes provided by The Pastry Box and washed down by a welcomed tea or coffee, helped refresh many more memories as people perused our timeline. This was our display of just some of our findings so far. The time-line spanned both time and space- about 100 years and 35 feet ! Spread over tables running down the hall, we placed photos, articles and artefacts , grouped into ten decades.

Items were moveable so people could correct positions based on greater knowledge - this was really helpful given that many items were undated and we had made provisional best guesses. Hopefully we managed any disputes amicably.

So, as we get the Bayeux tapestry back on temporary loan in London , we have our very own panorama of local history emerging ready for full display in December.

We plan to finalise the time-line by the end of September, so please send any further photos, stories or offers of people willing to be interviewed etc through to us well before then.

Contact us on: [PVH1926@outlook.com](mailto:PVH1926@outlook.com)



## and finally – FROM OUR COLLECTION



**Pitchford 1910s or 1920s**



**Wedding reception at PVH Winter 1955, of Mr. Geoffrey Picken and Miss Mary Howells (of 16, Pitchford)**

*Courtesy of Mike Picken*



## LETTER FROM FATHER GARETH

When we moved into the Benefice back in late April, the fields around the village were a blaze of bright yellow, enclosed with hedges full of new emerald leaves. Just a few months later, and August is suddenly upon us. There's an intense golden stillness, and this year it comes wrapped in the long endless heat wave that has settled over the country.

The fields are now pale, the lanes dusty, and even the birds in the hedgerows seem to be sighing for a little rain. Many of us are seeking refreshment wherever we can find it — a cool room in the heat of the day, a patch of shade, a quiet moment away from the confusions and complications of life. In times like this, Church has never been so cool! When the Church is open in the day, do come inside and sit a while; even if just for a few minutes. Bring a book or a coffee from the shop; then pause and just relax and enjoy the refreshing peace.

This month brings Lammas, that ancient celebration of the first loaf baked from the new grain. Do come along to the Lammas service at Frodesley Church, which will be held at 3pm on 9th August. The Lammas loaf reminds us that even in the driest of seasons, God's generosity continues. We begin to see the first signs of the Harvest: early apples, swelling barley, and gardens doing their best to flourish despite the weather. For children and families, August is also the heart of the school holidays — hopefully a time of rest, adventure, and just occasionally wondering how to keep everyone entertained without having another water fight.

In the seasons of the Church, we remain in Ordinary Time, the green season that focusses on growing. In our journeys of faith, we can often experience a growth which is slow, steady, and often unseen. It feels fitting in a month when we are longing for refreshment.

One of the Gospel stories that speaks most clearly into this season is Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. He offers her "living water" — a bubbling spring within, welling up to eternal life. It is a promise of refreshment deeper than any cool drink, a blessing that reaches into the dry places of our hearts.

Whatever the season brings you, may it include times of rest, renewal, and the gentle gift of God's living water. Alongside that, may we also receive some gentle cooling rain and soft refreshing breezes.

Every blessing  
Fr Gareth



## LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER

July marks the second anniversary of my election as the Member of Parliament for South Shropshire, and it remains an absolute honour to represent the people and places that make our area so special. As I continue to listen, support, and deliver for my constituents, I am reminded every day of how lucky I am to have the privilege of representing the most beautiful part of our incredible nation.

I want to sincerely thank everyone who has taken the time to contact me, attend meetings and events, or simply share their views. Whilst I remain focused on the year ahead, this anniversary provides a fitting opportunity to reflect on some of the work which has already been done.

The state of our roads has been a key focus in 2026. I have pushed relentlessly for better repairs, secured support for local areas including Church Preen, and backed the rollout of a Road Warden Scheme by Shropshire Council following my campaign. In response to a significant number of complaints from my constituents, I have also raised concerns about Royal Mail delays and unreliable deliveries at the highest level with Royal Mail chiefs and continue to press for improved services in our area.

To support South Shropshire's extraordinary towns, I have been working with local stakeholders to remedy concerns about neglected and unused buildings, including the former Costa Coffee building in Ludlow, New Market Hall in Bridgnorth, and the Manor House in Cleobury Mortimer. My Shop Local Survey and High Street Survey provided me with valuable insights from local residents, leading me to campaign for improved street cleanliness, more free parking, vital banking access, and no more concerning 'pop-up shops'. On a similar note, my Best Pub in South Shropshire Competition is ongoing, forming part of my wider campaign to support the locals which we all love.

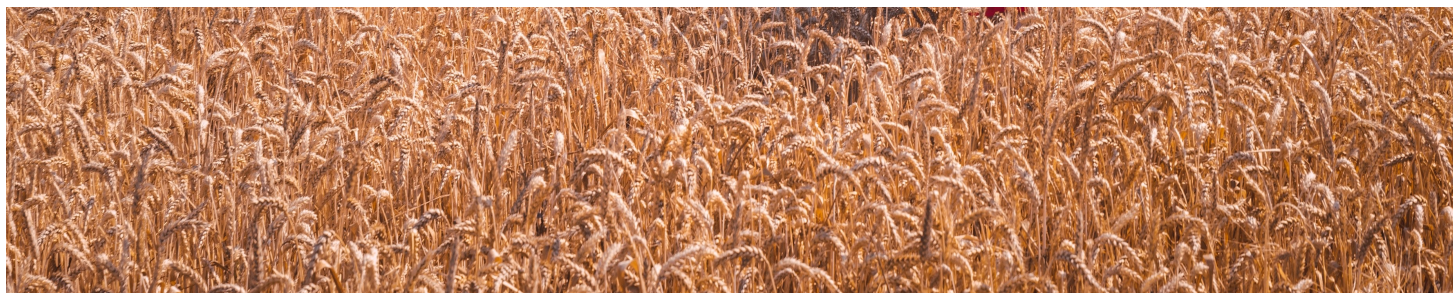
When it comes to rural areas, I have relentlessly called for increased support for off-grid energy users following the conflict in Iran. I have also backed calls to scrap the 10% Sales Commission for South Shropshire's park home owners, recently leading to a much-needed Call for Evidence from the Government. Improving broadband and mobile connectivity, especially in harder-to-reach areas, remains a key part of my work in Parliament, and I have had meetings with Ministers to push for meaningful action. Protecting nature also remains a primary focus. Having secured a vital extension to the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme, I am now campaigning for South Shropshire's waterways to be cleaned up as a matter of urgency.

These are just a few areas which I have been focused on over the past year. I look forward to continuing all of this exciting work in the year ahead.

*Stuart Anderson MP*

Tel: 01746 555025

Email: [stuart.anderson.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:stuart.anderson.mp@parliament.uk)



## MUCH WENLOCK AND CRESSAGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

Local GP Dr Jess Harvey, one of the team at Much Wenlock, has been named national winner of the leadership award at the inaugural NHS Excellence Awards.

The awards, delivered by NHS England, celebrate the people, teams and organisations driving improvement, innovation and collaboration across health and care in England. Winners were announced during a ceremony at NHS ConfedExpo in Manchester in June.

The judges recognised Dr Harvey for her engaging, evidence-led style of leadership, recognising her work with the Primary Care Network to implement several initiatives successfully as part of a push to improve neighbourhood services. Judges said the

breadth of activity and impact made her nomination stand out.

Dr Harvey said: "I am incredibly honoured to receive this recognition. It means a great deal. I feel very fortunate to do a job that I genuinely love and to have had so many opportunities to make a difference. Most importantly, I am privileged to work alongside so many talented and dedicated people. They have supported me throughout my career, and many of the projects I have led or been involved in simply would not have been possible without them. This recognition is as much a reflection of their contribution as it is mine."

### South-East Shropshire Stoma Group

A South East Shropshire Stoma Group supporting patients in the local area has been set up. The inaugural meeting was held at the Methodist Church in Much Wenlock on the 22 June and a further meeting has been arranged for 9 November 2026. For further information please contact the Practice and they will pass details on to the group organiser.

### Bank Holiday Closure

Much Wenlock & Cressage Medical Practice will be closed on Monday 31st August. If you require medical assistance during these times, please call 111.



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

As we get ready to celebrate 100 years of Pitchford Village Hall, it is interesting to look back at this article, written to mark the 200th anniversary of the building of Acton Burnell Hall, now home to Concord College. Interestingly, Sham Castle predates the Hall by around 34 years, and was used by the Smythe family as a music room – presumably it was far enough away from the main house not to annoy anyone!

### HAPPY 200<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY TO...

Concord College is a thriving International boarding and day school set in the heart of Acton Burnell, but did you know it wasn't always a school? The castle (not, in fact a castle, but a partly fortified manor house) is steeped in history, mystery, a Royal scandal, and, if the rumours are to be believed, ghosts of nuns, sobbing servants and even a friendly phantom dog.

Robert Burnell, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, was granted permission to build the castle by his good friend Edward I. On January 28<sup>th</sup> the King decreed that 1284 Burnell could "strengthen with a wall of stone and lime and also embattle their mansion of Acton Burnell" It was passed down through the Burnell and Lovell families until it was confiscated by Henry V11 as a punishment for Francis Lovell for supporting Richard 111 in The Wars of The Roses. Eventually it passed to the Lee family and then to the Smythes by marriage in 1660. The castle became a haven for the Benedictines, an order of monks from France who were fleeing persecution in 1794 at the time of the French Revolution.

The "big house" was built in the grounds of the "castle" in 1814, by John Tasker for Sir Joseph Edward Smythe just after his marriage in 1811....almost 200 years ago! Sir Joseph became the high sheriff of Shropshire in 1831. Acton Burnell Hall was the home of the Smythe family for many decades. The family survived scandal until in 1785, when Maria Anna Smythe (otherwise known as Lady Fitzherbert) married the future King George IV, which was illegal according to two laws in England.

On 13<sup>th</sup> April 1914, when there was a devastating fire. The fire was reported in The Times the following day as follows...**"Country House Burned...Home of the Benedictines"**

"Acton Burnell Hall near Shrewsbury, the seat of Sir Walter Smythe, was destroyed by fire yesterday. The fire broke out after midday over Lady Smythe's dressing room... soon the whole house was in flames... Lady Smythe had been ill for some weeks and had fires in her bedroom... Four fire brigades were at work...but they were hampered in their endeavours by the remoteness of the water supply... The Roman Catholic chapel that adjoins the Hall was saved...The damage is estimated at £30,000-£35,000" (in excess of £2 million pounds today)

The Hall was rebuilt in 1915. At the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the Sisters of the Order of Sion established a Convent in the Hall and formed a girls school. The Convent continued until about 1970, when the nuns left and their school closed. The Hall was sold but the mortuary chapel was still used for mass until 1983. In 1973, Concord College moved from Tunbridge Wells to Acton Burnell. The school attracts many students both from the UK and overseas.



The hall as it appeared in 1825, shown in an engraving from 'Neale's Views of Seats'.



# CHURCH PREEN FOREST SCHOOL

A new Forest School area has officially opened at Church Preen Primary School, marking the culmination of more than four years of dedication, planning and community support.

The project, led by class teacher Nadine Wilde with the support of her partner Rob Evans, has transformed an outdoor space into an engaging natural learning environment for children. The official opening was attended by the High Sheriff of Shropshire, Katy Tanner, and her husband James, who joined staff, pupils, parents and supporters, to celebrate the occasion. She conducted the unveiling in traditional fashion by cutting a ribbon surrounded by lots of keen pupils.

The Forest School area has been made possible through a combination of grants, donations and hands-on contributions from local businesses and volunteers. Key supporters included MKM (Shrewsbury), Wickes, Cambers and Logs2YourDoor, whose generosity helped bring the vision to life.

Ms Wilde described the project as a “labour of determination and teamwork,” highlighting the many hours of physical work and planning that went into creating the space. “I would especially like to recognise my partner, Rob, whose vision, dedication and countless hours of hard work have helped bring this area to life.”

The new outdoor learning space is designed to give children opportunities to explore and connect with nature in a creative and hands-on way. It encourages pupils to develop confidence, build resilience, use their imagination and take managed risks, all while learning outside the traditional classroom. Staff say the area is already having a positive impact, providing a setting where curiosity and discovery are at the heart of each experience. “Seeing the children use this space and watching it become a place of learning and happiness makes every challenge along the way worthwhile,” Ms Wilde added.

The opening event gave thanks to all those who contributed their time, resources and expertise to make the project a reality. The High Sheriff officially marked the occasion, praising the effort and community spirit behind the initiative. Assistant Headteacher, Rebecca Williams, explained, “We are proud to offer families in Shropshire a very special environment for pupils to explore, learn and flourish. Our forest school brings a sense of awe and wonder to the children’s learning, whilst developing a love for the natural world.”

The Forest School area is expected to play a key role in enriching pupils’ education for years to come, offering a unique environment where learning and nature go hand in hand.



**High Sheriff Katy Tanner and Ms Wilde**



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