

# Village Views

## WELCOME

Grey skies and drizzle seem to be the order of the day at the moment, but there are already signs of spring in fields, gardens and hedgerows. At the time of writing, the first snowdrops are showing their heads and daffodil leaves are popping up. The birds are starting to sing again, and blackbirds and robins are already squabbling around the bird table while they scope out good nesting sites.

The Pitchford Village Hall photography competition once again highlighted what a beautiful part of the world we are privileged to live in, and we are delighted to include the winning snaps in this edition of Village Views.

We hope that all our readers find something useful, interesting or entertaining in our pages. If you have something you'd like to share with the community, please get in touch with us at [villageviews@hotmail.com](mailto:villageviews@hotmail.com). We'd love to hear from you!

*Chris Harrison, John Glover, and Rachel Johnson*

## SNOW DROP AND BLUEBELL SPOTTING

Take a springtime walk around the county to spot snowdrops galore during February. Snowdrop walks are available to enjoy at Attingham Park, with a special trail laid out to ensure that you get the best views.

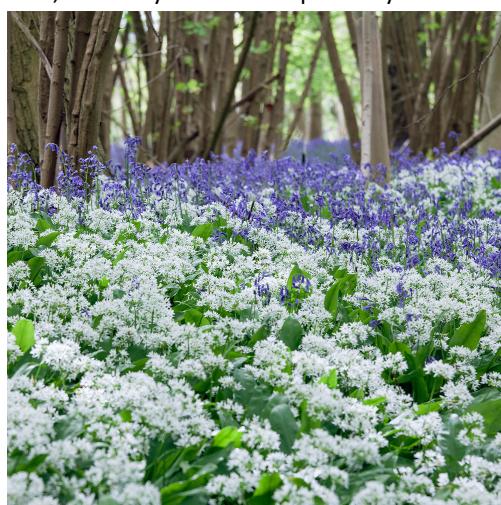
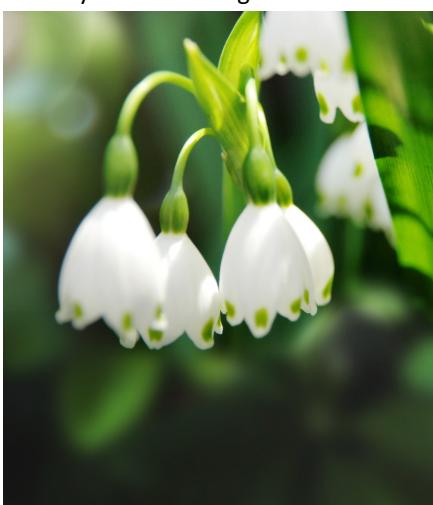
Cound Brook is renowned for the wonderful snowdrop display in February. Take your furry friends along, but be aware that there are stiles to cross, and dogs may need to be lifted over. There may also be mud!

If you'd like to combine snowdrop spotting with some fundraising, then the Lingen Davies charity offers the chance to enjoy a snowdrop walk at Winsley Hall, Westbury on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> February. Tea, coffee and cakes will be on sale in the Saddle Room to help you warm up after your stroll. Admission is £5.00 with tickets available from <https://www.lingendavies.co.uk/news-events/events/snowdropwalk2026>

Bluebells follow on in early April, although weather conditions may mean an early or late flowering. Attingham will have bluebells on offer in season, and it is easy to find clumps of bluebells, along with wild garlic and daffodils along Wenlock Edge, which is easily accessible from Much Wenlock. Going further afield, there should be spectacular displays of bluebells at Hodnet Hall, near Market Drayton, and at the Dudmaston Estate's Dingle Gardens, near Bridgnorth.

Don't forget to take a look at the riot of spring (and summer) flowers you can spot in our local churchyards. St Mary's in Acton Burnell puts on a particularly good show, with the grass around the church a sea of white snowdrops, followed by a stunning display of daffodils and wild garlic.

And if you fancy filling your own garden with these beauties, spring is the best time to buy snowdrops and bluebells 'in the green', as small plants which have finished flowering but still have their leaves. Plant in a partly-shaded, moist position – under deciduous trees is the perfect setting. Wild garlic can also be planted as a bulb in spring and likes moist conditions, but it can be very invasive, so unless you have rolling acres to accommodate it, this tasty wild herb is probably best confined to a large pot.



The closing date for contributions to the next edition will be April 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

Pub nights are the only regular social event in our area where anyone can come along and meet up with others. These are held every second Friday of the month and all are welcome, including dogs and humans of any age! They usually start at 7.30pm and we operate a cash bar and offer a wide variety of drinks, including cask ale, for you to enjoy. Every couple of months or so, we also have a food event and in February, we welcome back Gladys and her Nigerian Food shack which went down very well last time (although we suspect we will not be sitting outside soaking up the sun this time!). We also hope to welcome Lalita and her Indian Food truck back to the hall in May!

Sadly, we had to cancel January's pub night as the evening before we had the large dump of snow followed by a power cut to Pitchford and without knowing whether the conditions would put potential punters off or even whether we could turn the lights (and more importantly, the heating) on, it was a 'call' we had to make. This was certainly the first time in 10 years I can remember having to do this outside Covid and our refurbishment a few years ago, but we hope February will get us back on track. We do look forward to seeing as many of you as we can and hope you also look forward to seeing others from our area you may not bump into ordinarily – we are a friendly bunch and as previously said, all are very welcome!

## Breakfast Butties

Our 'Breakfast Butties' event in December ticked over nicely and the addition of the "table-top" / "jumble" sale was a welcome extra. While takings were not huge, the Hall made a decent profit thanks to the jumble sale and the sausage and bacon, yet again generously donated to us by Acton Burnell's Darren Williams who needs a massive "pat on the back" for his generosity! We look forward to having another of these regular seasonal events on March 28<sup>th</sup> and look forward to seeing you then.

As usual, updates will be on the AB Community and PVH Facebook sites!



## Maintenance

Our old hall is continually in need of maintenance and at the moment, we are looking to repair the wood behind the guttering around the outside of the building and to make the toilets more presentable. More details next edition we hope!

## PVH Tote

We are now well into 2026 and by now, Jeanette, our Tote Manager, will have probably been round nagging you for your membership for this year. Should you have been missed, then you can contact her using her details at the end of this article.

The monthly draw has a first prize of £50, with other prizes of £25, £15 and £10 and you can buy your 12 month 'ticket' for £12 using BACS on the PVH and ABC Facebook pages.

Please do support this venture - it does help significantly to pay towards our insurance costs and utility bills which allows us to keep the hall running for all our benefit!

## Other News

Please see the separate article in this newsletter regarding the recent photo competition and our up and coming Centenary event later this year. With regard to the latter, as you will see, we are looking to install a commemorative plaque and the celebration itself will be a modified Pub night in December with a party including food and a quiz – more details nearer the time!

## Hiring 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 (£60 for events over 6 hours)**

Should you wish to hire the hall please contact Mike Price.

We are continually looking for new volunteers to help with the running of the Hall and associated events. On that note, Miriam is still co-ordinating the Hall's 'Do One Thing' initiative, details of which are also on the Facebook pages.

If you would like to help, or just discuss the possibility, or even have any ideas of the sort of hall you would want to see and which would encourage you to use us, then do contact any of the Committee Members. In addition, should you wish to hire the hall for your own use, then again, please contact Mike Price.

## Contacts

Mike Price (Chairman):  
email: [price622@btinternet.com](mailto:price622@btinternet.com)  
mobile: 07740 067955

Chris Jones (Secretary):  
email: [cjajay@btinternet.com](mailto:cjajay@btinternet.com)  
mobile: 07538 744807

Jeanette Reaney (Tote Organiser):  
email: [jeanetttereaney@hotmail.com](mailto:jeanetttereaney@hotmail.com)  
mobile: 07971 780963

*John Glover (PVH Committee)*

## Events Diary

Thurs 29 <sup>th</sup> Jan	First meeting of the PVH Centenary group – anyone interested may come along. 18:30
Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Pub night with Nigerian food truck. 19:30
Thurs 26 <sup>th</sup> Feb	PVH Centenary Club meeting. 18:30 @ PVH
Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Pub night. 19:30
Wed 18 <sup>th</sup> Mar	PVH AGM to which all are welcome. 19:30
Thurs 26 <sup>th</sup> Mar	PVH Centenary Club meeting. 18:30 @ PVH
Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Breakfast Butties. 09.30
Fri 10 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Pub night. 19:30
Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Pub night with Lalita's Indian Food. 19:30
Fri 12 <sup>th</sup> Jun	Pub night. 19:30
Fri 10 <sup>th</sup> Jul	Pub night with Senor Tigre Mexican food. 19:30
Fri 14 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Pub night. 19:30
Fri 11 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Pub night. 19:30
Fri 9 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Pub night. 19:30
Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Pub night. 19:30
Fri 11 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Pub night celebrating 100 years of PVH. 19:30

## THE FOX INN AT RYTON

The Fox at Ryton is now open for business and ready to welcome locals. Following a campaign of fundraising which included pop-up pubs, quizzes, car treasure hunts, coffee mornings and bingo nights, the refurbished pub opened its doors to the public on 19<sup>th</sup> December.

With manager Steve Lee in place, The Fox currently offers a full range of beverages – alcoholic and otherwise – and from 19<sup>th</sup> January opened on Monday and Thursday mornings, from 10am to 12.30pm, for community coffee mornings (supported by the Warm Hub initiative). A food menu will be launched soon, when a new chef takes up their post.

This community-owned pub plans to offer events designed to draw in the local

community – so far these have included a quiz night in aid of Lingen Davies, carol singing and a Burns Night celebration. While they wait to start cooking and serving their own meals they have also arranged for food trucks to provide pop-up restaurant quality food from time to time.

Although the pub received a full 'head to toe' refurbishment before opening, more developments are in the offing. Planning permission has been granted for a small extension to build an additional, wheelchair accessible toilet and also provide baby changing facilities, thanks to funding from Condover Parish Council. There will also be a platform lift to enable easy access for wheelchair users, funded by the National Lottery.

To keep up with developments and events, please check out their Facebook page (search for The Fox at Ryton) or go to [www.the-fox-at-ryton.co.uk/event-list](http://www.the-fox-at-ryton.co.uk/event-list)

An extra positive is that this is a very dog friendly pub – all four-legged friends welcome!



### Community Coffee Mornings

We are excited to launch our coffee & chat mornings starting Monday 19<sup>th</sup> Jan  
Mondays and Thursdays 10am-12:30pm

Pop in for a chat and free refreshments. We are grateful to the Warm Hubs Initiative who are supporting our coffee mornings over the coming weeks.

Everyone is welcome!

## MUCH WENLOCK AND CRESSAGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

### Need Help with the NHS App?

Come and see our Digital Champion Amy Hudson. She will be at Cressage Practice on the 12th February 2pm-5pm and Much Wenlock Practice on the 26th February 2pm-5pm.

Please bring your phone or iPad with you and some form of photo identification or if already registered with Patient Online Access, your login details.

Due to the popularity of our last event these sessions are by appointment only. Please call the Practice to book an appointment on 01952 726011.

### Carer Connect:

Carer connect is a support group dedicated to our unpaid carers and those they care for. It provides an opportunity to meet other carers and to connect with support services within the community. Carer Connect meet at Priory Hall, Much Wenlock on the first Tuesday of the month 2pm-4pm.

### Keep warm

Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression. Heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. If you can, this should be at least 18°C in the rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom. This is particularly important if you have a pre-existing medical condition. You should also keep your bedroom windows closed at night.

Make sure you're receiving all the help that you're entitled to. There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. Visit [www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency](http://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency) and [www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/low-income](http://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/low-income) for further information. And check your heating and cooking appliances are safe. Contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to make sure they're operating properly. Visit [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk) and [www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk](http://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk)

### Appointments

Complete our Contact Us Online form available via our website: [www.muchwenlockandcressagemp.co.uk](http://www.muchwenlockandcressagemp.co.uk) and your request will be reviewed by a member of our team within 2 working days or contact us by phone Monday to Friday 8.30 – 6.00 pm on 01952 726011 and select Option 1 (Urgent calls only between 1pm and 2 pm please). You can also visit the surgery and speak to a member of our reception team.

Surgery open times 8.30 – 6.00 pm Monday to Friday (please note Cressage is closed between 1pm and 2 pm).

To check the time of an appointment which is already booked, or to cancel an appointment, please call the Practice on 01952 726011 and select Option 0.

For home visits please call the Practice, where possible before 10.30am, and select Option 1. For more information, please see our Accessing Your GP Services leaflet available in our waiting rooms.

## WHAT'S ON

### 6th February

Quiz Night hosted by Berrington League of Friends at Pitchford Village Hall. Tickets £12.50 per person, to include a cottage pie supper (please bring your own drinks). Doors open at 6.30pm, ready for a 7.00pm start. To book a table, please contact Libby Baines at [libbybaines@gmail.com](mailto:libbybaines@gmail.com). Payment by BACS or cheque – payment details on PVH Hall Facebook page.

### 7th February

You are invited to join Concord College students to welcome the Lunar New Year with a firework display followed by refreshments. Gates will open at 7.45pm. Please make sure you keep pets inside until after the display.

### 11th February

Concord College students present a production of 'The Importance of Being Ernest'. Performances at 1.00pm and 6.30pm. Tickets are free, but please contact Emily at [Emily.purvis@concordcollege.org.uk](mailto:Emily.purvis@concordcollege.org.uk) to reserve. All members of the local community very welcome.

### 13th February

Noba Kitchen makes a very welcome return to Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall, serving delicious Nigerian street food.

### 13th March

Pub Night rolls round again at Pitchford Village Hall. Come for a pint or a glass of wine and stay for a natter. Doors open at 7.30pm.

### 21st March

Home Farm Attingham re-opens for the 2026 season. Check in with them on <https://homefarmattingham.co.uk> to find out when this year's new lambs will be arriving! Tickets are £6.50 for adults and £5.50 for children (under three-year olds go free).

### 28th March

Breakfast Butties at Pitchford Village Hall. Come along for a late breakfast or an early lunch! Doors open at 9.30am.

### 10th April

Come along and spend a pleasant evening with friends and neighbours at Pitchford Village Hall Pub Night. Children of all ages, and well-behaved dogs, very welcome. Beer, wine and soft drinks on sale throughout the evening.

### 14th April

First open day of the season at Pitchford Hall. The tour includes the main rooms on the ground floor including the great hall and drawing room. Also the Priest Hole Room and Princess Victoria Room. The Victorian kitchen, unrestored Victorian wing and the General's Quarters (west wing) and the attic are also sometimes included in the tour. Tea and cakes will be served in the Pitchford Orangery & Walled Garden. Tickets £27.50 per person.



## DOGS AND LIVESTOCK – NEW LEGISLATION

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, new legislation will come into force in England and Wales which aims to clarify and strengthen the law around livestock attacks and worrying. The changes will give farmers and livestock owners stronger protection, and will also make the legal obligations of dog owners clearer.

Since 1953, it has been an offence to allow a dog to 'worry' livestock. However, since that date livestock numbers in the UK have doubled, and more and more people now visit the countryside with their dogs, meaning that there are more occasions when dogs and livestock come into contact with each other.

The new Act is worded so that attacking livestock is treated separately from

worrying, recognising that while both can cause serious and lasting harm to livestock, a dog attacking livestock is more violent than the act of worrying. 'Worrying' includes chasing, running at, being loose and not under control near to livestock, while 'attacking' refers to biting, grabbing, injuring or killing. The law also now covers attacks and worrying that takes place on roads and paths, and has been extended to cover animals such as llamas and alpacas.

The legislation introduces a new defence for dog owners exempting them from liability if the dog was in the charge of another person without the owner's consent (for example, if they have been stolen). However, if found guilty, dog owners can now face an unlimited fine. The police also now have the power to

seize a dog where they have reasonable cause to believe a dog could attack or worry livestock again.

None of the changes prevent dog owners walking in the countryside, or change access to footpaths and bridleways. As before, the Countryside Code continues to advise that dogs should be kept on a lead around livestock, and that owners should check that their dog's collar or harness is well-fitting and can prevent escapes.

Owners are also advised to pay attention to signs warning of livestock in the area, and to keep a watchful eye open for livestock at all times.

# 100 YEARS OF PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

In December 2026, we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Pitchford Village Hall's opening. It feels quite remarkable that this little black-and-white tin community hall has managed to survive against the weather, the war, the ageing process, a pandemic, and multiple resourcing challenges! The PVH Committee has spent some time reflecting on this milestone and would love to celebrate this big birthday with the community later this year. Plans are in place to erect a commemorative plaque and host a Pub Night Birthday Party with food, games, music, and dancing on 11 December. Please hold a spot in your diary and keep a lookout for updates on these plans in future Village Views and on the PVH social media.

## PVH Centenary Club

We would love to bring the 100-year story of the Village Hall and its community to life! The PVH Centenary Club will meet every month this year to bring together a collection of stories, photographs, newspaper articles and artefacts to create this very special story. We would love to hear from you if this sounds like something you'd like to be part of.

We already have some great 'leads' for things we would like to explore...and no doubt there are many treasures yet to be revealed. We would like to focus on the 100-year history of Acton Burnell, Pitchford, Frodesley, Ruckley & Langley (and the bits in between!) - as these are the communities the Hall was built to serve. We are interested in historical events, family stories, community developments and weird

and wonderful pieces of community life that we can patch together into a lively timeline exhibition to be revealed in December. For example...

- Did you know the Pitchford Rovers football team made the local news in the 1980's? Perhaps you were on the team or know someone who was?
- Did you know that Concord College used to be a Convent School up until the 1970's...perhaps you studied or taught there? Maybe there are some report cards lurking in your attic?
- Did you know there was a Prisoner of War camp in Acton Burnell in the 1940s, and prisoners would work on the local farms? Did you or your family meet them?
- Did you know the area was used for military air force training during the war years, and there was a plane crash just outside Pitchford village? We have a tiny piece of the plane to show you!
- Did you know we had a School in Pitchford, a Butcher's shop in Acton Burnell, and a Pub in Frodesley? Maybe your parents got up to mischief at break time? Maybe your farm supplied the butchers? Maybe you used to enjoy a pint or two at The Swan?
- Did you know the Hall has hosted the Home Guard, Wedding receptions, Community meetings, Swing Dances, Elections, Birthday Parties, Race Nights, Youth clubs, Fêtes, Brownies & Scouts, Wine Tasting, Ceilidh's, Quizzes, Bowling and more WI meetings than you can shake a stick at! There must be a few stories to tell amongst those!

There are lots of ways you can get involved:

## 1. Share your photos and memorabilia

If you have old photos and objects from the last 100 years, we'd love to see them. We will make copies and return everything (we will also consider data protection before we share).

## 2. Share your stories

If you have a story to share, you can either submit it in writing via email or let one of the 100 Club interview you to create an article or a video. Just get in touch, and we'll work it out.

## 3. Join the PVH Centenary Club

We plan to meet on the last Thursday of every month at 6.30 pm in the Hall. We can enjoy a hot drink and a piece of cake, and collate the contributions together. The more the merrier!

## 4. Contact us with ideas

If you have ideas or suggestions for this project or other avenues we might explore, please share them with us.

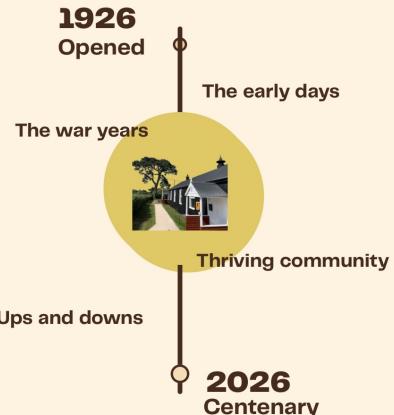
## 5. Just turn up to a meeting!

We plan to hold meetings on the last Thursday of every month at 6.30 pm until December (keep an eye on Facebook in case of scheduling changes), but please just show up, you will be very welcome, no booking required.



## 100 years of PVH

So much has happened in Pitchford, Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Ruckley & Langley since the hall has been standing...



We want to bring the story of PVH alive!

PVH Centenary Club

## HAPPY SNAPPERS!

Following numerous requests to run another Photo Challenge this year, the Pitchford Village Hall team delivered with a 'Photo of the year 2025' challenge in November. Locals were asked to search their camera rolls and submit their favourite photo from 2025 which showcases our local surroundings and community.

We received thirteen entries in total which all met the brief brilliantly and all had unique subject matter and style. The winners were decided by folks who attend our Breakfast Butties event on the 6th of December. Thirty-Seven votes were cast in total which gave us our six favourites. Congratulations go to:

1<sup>st</sup> place, Rainbow in Cardington, taken by Janet Morgan

1<sup>st</sup> place (juniors under 16), Embers of the Horizon, by Isabel Page

Joint 2<sup>nd</sup>, The Still Waters of Our Community, taken by Tracy Johnson, and The Wolf of the Wibberlies, snapped by James Davies

Joint 3<sup>rd</sup>, A Secret Garden, taken by Chris Jones, and A Sunny Frosty Morning, from Joanne Davies

The two first place photos have adorned the PVH Facebook Page as the cover photo, replacing last year's winner 'My Back Garden' by John Glover.

The team at PVH wanted to thank everyone who entered their pics and came along to the Hall to vote - it has been lovely to have neighbours old and new involved. Please follow the PVH Facebook page for information about future events at the Hall.



1<sup>st</sup> "Rainbow in Cardington" Janet Morgan



1<sup>st</sup> (Juniors) "Embers of the Horizon" Isabel Page

# PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL PHOTO CHALLENGE



“The Wolf of the Wibberlies” James Davies

JOINT

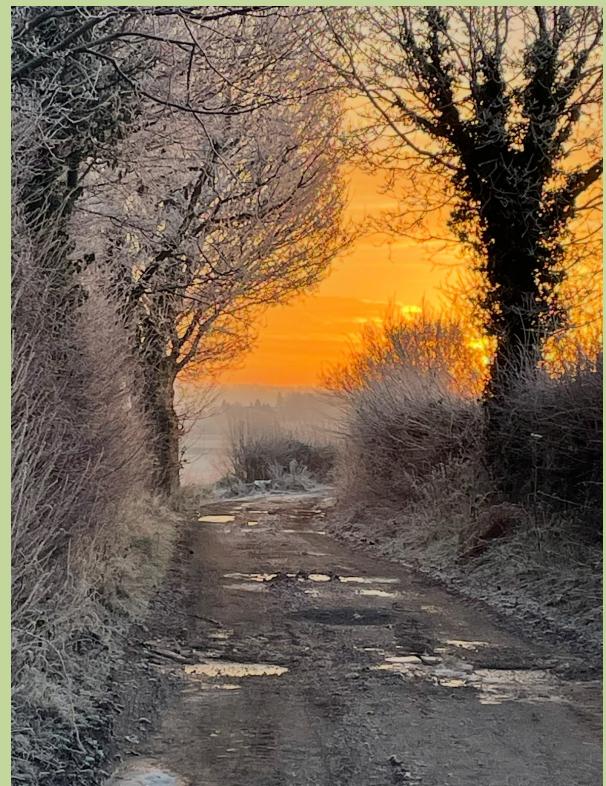


“Still Waters of our Community” Tracy Johnson

JOINT



“A Secret Garden” Chris Jones



“A Sunny, Frosty Morning” Joanne Davies

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Parish Council met on 20 January 2026. The meeting was attended by Cllr David Walker, Shropshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Planning, who updated the Council on the development of a new local plan and changes which are being considered on how developer funding may be collected and allocated more fairly across the county.

The Parish Council agreed its budget and precept for financial year 2026/27. We are asking Shropshire Council for an increase of 9.9% on our precept, which is funded through the Council Tax. This equates to an estimated increased cost per household of £2.61 per year. This raise is necessary for the Council to meet increased overheads due to inflation.

In November Councillors met with Shropshire Council's Portfolio Holder for Flooding and our local Shropshire Councillor, Chris Naylor, to look at the flooding issues on the road between Frodesley and Longnor. As a result, we are hopeful that some efforts will be made to ameliorate the worst areas of flooding in the coming months. We have also been pushing for the repair of the dangerously large pothole on the road opposite the farm coming into Longnor and Shropshire Council has assured us that this will be repaired as soon as possible. Please report any other highways issues you come across to Shropshire Council via <https://www.fixmystreet.com/reports/Shropshire>.

There was some discussion at the meeting of ways we might be able to help isolated members of our communities who are unable to drive to find people to help give them lifts by car. We envision possibly having a list of people willing to give lifts in each of the villages and that volunteers may be refunded for mileage by their passenger at a rate of 45p per mile, but would not be allowed to make any profit. If you would be interested in finding out more, or would like to put your name down as a potential volunteer to provide occasional lifts or to help to co-ordinate volunteers in your village, please contact the Parish Clerk by email: [clerk@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk).

Please note that the Parish Council now has new email addresses, Parish Councillors may now be contacted via these addresses:

Cllr Alan Hotchkiss: [alan.hotchkiss@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:alan.hotchkiss@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Gareth Ball: [gareth.ball@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.ball@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr John Long: [john.long@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:john.long@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Paul Harrison: [paul.harrison@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:paul.harrison@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Russell Davies: [russell.davies@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:russell.davies@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Carmen Culliss: [carmen.culliss@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:carmen.culliss@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Graham Davies: [graham.davies@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:graham.davies@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Keith Faulkner: [keith.faulkner@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:keith.faulkner@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

Cllr Robert Morgan: [robert.morgan@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk](mailto:robert.morgan@actonburnell-pc.gov.uk)

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Tuesday 10 March 2026, 7.30 pm at Pitchford Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

## LETTER FROM WESTMINSTER

On the last day of Parliament before Christmas, the Government published their Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. I have been campaigning for more equitable funding, particularly due to concerns that the current settlement will result in higher council tax and reduced local services. As it stands, Shropshire Council is now set to face a significant reduction in government funding over the next three years, which will make it much more difficult to deliver basic services to residents. I was glad to have the opportunity to raise these concerns directly with Alison McGovern MP, Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness. This is a principal priority of mine going into the new year, and I will keep piling on the pressure in Parliament to secure meaningful change.

My Shop Local campaign in 2025 saw nearly four and a half thousand constituents sharing their views on how to support our local high streets. I have listened to these views and laid out three campaigns that I believe will make a difference: I will be campaigning this year to secure free parking, to cut business costs, and to clean up our high streets. Working together with local community partners, I am excited to see what we can achieve. The recent changes to the Family Farm and Business Tax demonstrate what a difference it makes when the whole community gets behind one cause. In the Commons Chamber, I have thanked all the South Shropshire farmers and businesses for their tireless campaign, and though more still needs to be done, I know from conversations with farmers across the constituency that the changes announced in December have come as a huge relief.

It is a great honour to serve as the UK's representative on the NATO-Ukraine Interparliamentary Council, and through this role I am able to get a good idea of what needs to be done to bolster our national security. Our nation now faces multifaceted and serious threats, the likes of which have not been seen for decades. We are at a crossroads, where we can either continue down the path of decline in our armed forces or take the difficult decisions needed to ramp up spending and fund them in a way that responds appropriately to the nature of these threats. I have raised my serious concerns about committing to a deployment of UK troops in Ukraine if we do not have a clear strategy to fund and support our armed forces. I will be firing on all cylinders over the next few months to make sure MPs across the house are aware of the harsh reality of our current security situation. The changes that need to be made for the defence of the United Kingdom may be radical and, in some cases, unpopular in the short-term, but the outcome will be far worse if we simply refuse to confront them.

Stuart Anderson MP

### NEW CONTACT DETAILS

Please note that our MP, Stuart Anderson, can now be contacted via his office by calling 01746 555025 or by emailing [stuart.anderson.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:stuart.anderson.mp@parliament.uk)

His constituency office address is 75a High Street, Bridgnorth, WV16 4DX.

# CHRIS NAYLOR – OUR SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR

As I write in mid-January I've just come off an online meeting for fellow councillors, briefing us on ongoing financial challenges – with our Leader Heather Kidd, Dep Leader Alex Wagner, Finance Cabinet Member Roger Evans. These are my notes from the meeting, exclusively for Village Views!

It is of course budget time of year, and local councils budget after learning what support they'll get from central government. In Shropshire's case that looks like a reduction despite our local challenges. "According to the government's provisional funding settlement" Heather says. "Shropshire Council will be £26m worse off over the next three years."

She's concerned the settlement doesn't properly take into account rural deprivation, and the higher cost of delivering services in sparsely-populated counties. She's met with all our local MPs – Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem – to urge them to press government to review Shropshire's difficult situation.

Meanwhile the Council has to batten down the hatches, applying for extra government help to meet bills this year as well as putting back projects – such as the new Sundorne Sports Village, the old Oswestry Railway Station, and the Whitchurch Civic Centre. "These were included in forward plans we inherited in May" says Heather. "However it wasn't clear how they were to be paid for, and with our reduced government settlement our position has got even worse."

Alex explains that the 2026-27 budget currently being finalised will use 'zero-based budgeting'. "What's happened in the past, normal in many councils – whether Lib Dem, Labour, or Conservative" he says, "is to just use past spending 'plus a bit', to give department spending totals going forward. But now we're insisting on going through every line from the bottom up, so only what's 100% justified goes into next year's budget."

The other side of the coin though is that the Cabinet will be asking the Council to approve the maximum permitted 4.99% Council Tax increase again. However, with inflation running at around 3.5-4.5% (depending whose figures you use) that leaves precious little towards the inevitable pressures of social care costs as numbers of older people here increase. Nor is borrowing a way out: "The previous Council had to borrow £28m a year ago, and the £1m or so a year interest on that already eats into the extra £10m the 4.99% tax increase would raise" says Roger.

But Heather reminds us it's tough but not all gloom: "Council staff have a very good record, which many of us don't know, of bringing in extra money to pay for Highways, Public Transport, Schools – we'll be bringing in £24m in 2026-27 to build or extend 14 Shropshire schools. But we're sadly going to be saying no to many other perfectly worthy requests."

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# CHURCH NEWS

After our local churches have been in vacancy (without a Rector) since Rev'd Geoff retired in July 2023, I am delighted to be able to report that we will have a new Rector joining us in the early summer. At the time of going to print we understand that Rev'd Gareth Ingham is likely to be licensed and installed as our Rector on the evening of Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May at Condover Church. This is subject to final confirmation, and you will be informed as and when more detail becomes known. Meantime do try to reserve this date in your diaries.

It was encouraging to see that attendance was up at our Christmas services, with a congregation of 154 at the Condover Crib service on Christmas Eve – finally back to pre-Covid numbers! However, all our churches need your support, particularly Pitchford Church. On 13 January we met at Pitchford Village Hall to seek views on the future of Pitchford Church. From the turnout and comments made, it is clear that the church building is much valued;

however, your help is needed if the church is to remain active within the village and a future meeting will be held once people have had chance to reflect on what was said at the meeting. What is very clear, is that the current PCC (Parochial Church Council), who have done a sterling job for many years, need more support. Before we know it, Easter will be upon us, with Easter Sunday falling on 5 April this year. We hope to be able to hold our usual pattern of services over Easter but are waiting on confirmation of which clergy are available; I will post a full list of services for Easter on the Acton Burnell Facebook page when finalised. The season of Lent starts in mid-February and we will be holding a special Ash Wednesday service at Condover Church on 18 February, starting at 7.30pm. The following week our Lent Course, which is held in the Millennium Room at Condover Church on Tuesday evenings throughout Lent, starting at 7pm. This year the course will start with a short service of Compline,

followed by a reflection on verses from Psalm 22, which is often called the Psalm of the Cross. Further details are below.

## The Lent Course 2026;

24<sup>th</sup> Feb: **The Psalm of the Cross** (Ps22:1) 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me'.

3<sup>rd</sup> Mar: **Calvary in Preview** (Ps 22:15) 'My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth'.

10<sup>th</sup> Mar: **The Divine Paradox** (Ps 22:16) 'They have pierced my hands and my feet'.

17<sup>th</sup> Mar: **History's greatest gamble** (Ps 22:18) 'They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing'.

24<sup>th</sup> Mar: **Great Expectations** (Ps 22:31) They will proclaim his righteousness to a people as yet unborn – for he has done it'.

Wishing you much joy and peace throughout 2026, Jeremy.

*Jeremy Lowe – Reader Condover Benefice*

## News from Longnor School

We have had an exciting start to 2026; children arrived back to school ready for learning and then Storm Goretti brought us a snow day and lots of tree branches down. We are grateful to the school community for helping with the cleanup!

This term we are looking forward to several fun activities in and out of school. World Book Day is on the horizon and we eagerly anticipate some fabulous costumes as children come to school dressed as their favourite book character. Also, this term we have a trip to Blue Planet Aquarium planned for our younger students, as well as a visit to the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre for years 3 and 4. Some year 5 students will also be attending a Maths Challenge at Wrekin College and we are sending a team along to a football tournament at Church Stretton School. We are as always grateful for the invitations to other schools and the enrichment this offers our students.

The children are currently in the process of setting up all the lunchtime clubs and we are offering Cross Country and Hockey clubs after school both of which are extremely popular with our students.

Later this year, on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2026, our School Circle will be hosting a Ceilidh at Dorrington Village Hall. Everyone is welcome at attend this event which will be raising money for our school. More information will be available on our website closer to the time.

We continue to work together to inspire a lifelong love of learning.



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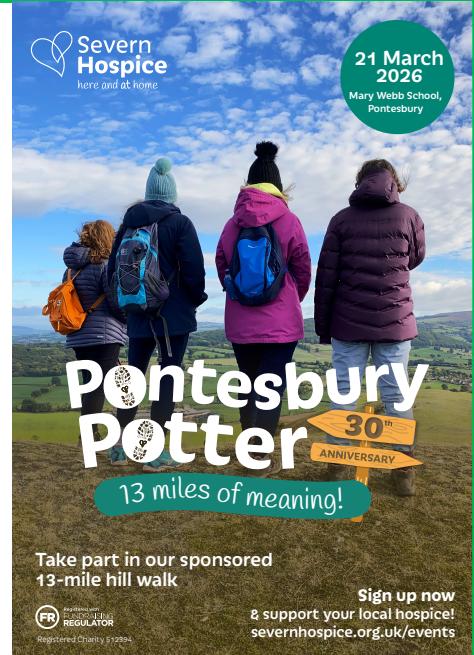
## SEVERN HOSPICE PONTESBURY POTTER

Lace up your boots and join Severn Hospice for a very special Pontesbury Potter, celebrating 30 years of muddy miles, mighty climbs and amazing community spirit! Leaving from Mary Webb School, Pontesbury, on 21<sup>st</sup> March, participation in this fund-raising event costs £25 for adults and £15 for youngsters aged 12 to 16 and takes in 13 miles of beautiful countryside.

It's the Potter that's anything but. Take on 13 miles of meaning through stunning hills and countryside, all while raising vital funds for hospice care.

Inspired by the original 1996 route, the exact course remains a secret until the big day – perfect for anyone who loves a challenge in the great outdoors.

Expect rolling hills, beautiful views and plenty of the infamous Potter mud – it wouldn't be the same without it. Whether you're a first-timer, seasoned Potterer, fell runner or rambler, it's the perfect challenge for anyone who loves the great outdoors. Be part of 30 years of community, compassion and care and make it one to remember. Sign up at: [www.severnhospice.org.uk/events](http://www.severnhospice.org.uk/events)



## SHARE THE LOVE - FOR HOPE HOUSE!

This February, Hope House challenges everyone to complete 14 miles in 14 days to raise money for children living with life-threatening conditions.

The challenge is simple, flexible and fun. Complete your miles your way: run them, walk them, cycle, swim... you can even hop if you fancy it! Registration is free, and you will receive a free snood just for signing up! Raise £100 and you'll receive a Hope House & Ty Gobaith reusable coffee cup.

Every mile covered and every penny you raise will make a real difference to local children and their families. So lace up, head out, and wear your heart on your sleeve this Valentine's season.

To register, go to  
<https://givp.nl/register/qzvtFDMq>

Registration is free.



## COMMUNITY RESOURCE OIL BUYING CLUB

If you are reliant on oil for your domestic heating, you'll know how expensive filling the tank can be, especially during the winter months. Community Resource is a local charity that runs a Community Oil Buying Club to reduce the heating costs of those living off gas.

By bringing communities throughout Shropshire and surrounding areas together and making the most of joint buying power, Community Resource can make savings and pass them directly to people whose fuel costs are high simply because you aren't connected to mains gas.

Being a member of the Club not only gives you savings on your fuel bills but removes the often time-consuming task of ringing around suppliers for the best price. With local coordinators on hand to help those without email, and access to suppliers who can deliver to remote properties, the scheme promises to cater for everyone's circumstances.

Membership to the scheme is £27 per year and which enables Community Resource to cover the admin costs for running this scheme.

For more information please visit their website: [www.community-resource.org.uk/service-community-support/-oil-buying-club](http://www.community-resource.org.uk/service-community-support/-oil-buying-club)



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