

PONTESBURY PARISH COUNCIL



Full Council Meeting held at Cruckton Village Hall on Monday 9th June 2025 at 6.30pm

PRESENT

Councillors: D Fletcher, N Hignett, R Evans, J Pritchard, M Trow, A Windows, A Hodges, S Wallace Johnson and D Jones

Clerk of the Meeting: Debbie Marais

Public present: One member

In attendance: Inspector Ben Tanfield, West Mercia Police

23.25 Co-option of Councillor

After a proposal by Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED** to approve co-option of Sarah Wallace Johnson as a parish councillor for Pontesbury Ward. Cllr Fletcher welcomed Cllr Wallace Johnson. Cllr Wallace Johnson signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form and joined the councillors to take part in the meeting.

24.25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs S Davies, C Sandells and D Gregory

25.25 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations – None

26.25 Public Questions and Comments

A resident of Pontesbury who had attended the May council meeting wished to follow up his enquiry about S.106 and CIL Neighbourhood Fund monies in relation to the junction improvements at the bottom of Hall Bank. Cllr Hignett is awaiting a response from Shropshire Council Highways and would contact the resident for a site visit when he had heard from SC.

27.25 Minutes of Council

After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 12th May 2025.

28.25 Police Matters – Cllr Fletcher welcomed Inspector Ben Tanfield to the meeting. Inspector Tanfield read out a report from PCSO Sarah Edwards. Inspector Tanfield addressed the parish council concerns about proposed cuts to PCSO hours and Cllr Evans voiced concerns about rural areas being unduly affected by any changes to hours.

Inspector Tanfield responded that PCSO hours are not being cut in number but moved to an earlier start and finish to save anti-social hours payments. There are no changes planned to the team that provide 24/7 policing first response for the area, working out of Monkmoor. PCSOs do not deal with criminal incidents, they are responsible for community engagement

and prevention. Local PCs work to find solutions to crime and anti-social behaviour and will still be working their normal shift patterns until 10 or 12pm. There is a commitment to attend parish council meetings at least once each year and local policing teams will send update reports where possible. There is to be another PC recruited to the parish area. Inspector Tanfield encouraged councillors and residents to use 101/999/report online to provide evidence of demand on the service and to sign up to Neighbourhood Matters. Police.uk website is a good source of police data and is searchable by postcode and crime trends for the last 3 years can be viewed.

Cllr Hodges raised a concern about a vehicle parked on Church Green in Cruckton. Inspector Tanfield advised councillors that parking has been decriminalised and is now the responsibility of Shropshire Council Civil Enforcement Officers.

Cllr Windows raised the possibility of applying to the West Mercia Community Fund for monies for CCTV on School Green and to cover the public toilets once they are refurbished. Inspector Tanfield suggested making an application but funds are limited. A decision on applications for up to £3000 can be decided by Superintendent James Dunn. On the issue of CCTV images and conviction, the images need to be of sufficient quality for persons to be identified (preferably a full facial image) and need to be kept for 1 month. The ICO advise on CCTV use.

Cllr Hignett commented that the local policing report the Safer Neighbourhood Team send to the parish council is really helpful in addressing resident's concerns/enquiries.

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

Following the initial meeting of Shropshire Council, the 10 new Cabinet members and their responsibilities have been confirmed as follows:

- Councillor Heather Kidd-Leader.
- Councillor Alex Wagner-Deputy Leader and Communities.
- Councillor Roger Evans-Finance.
- Councillor Ruth Houghton-Social Care.
- Councillor Andy Hall-Children and Education.
- Councillor David Walker-Planning.
- Councillor David Vasmer-Highways and Environment.
- Councillor James Owen-Housing and Leisure.
- Councillor Rob Wilson-Transport and Economic growth.
- Councillor Bernie Bentick-Health.

The new administration has announced 3 initial priorities:

1. Fix more potholes and sort out the roads.
2. Improve customer service & be more responsive.
3. Work together with Town and Parish Councils to achieve things locally.

FINANCIAL POSITION

Shropshire Council finished the 2024/2025 year end £34 million over budget, having made over £47 million in savings. This equates to around 18% of the Councils' net budget and is one of the highest amounts achieved by an English Council.

This budget overspend is forecast to continue, in part driven by ever-rising costs of Adult and Childrens' social care, compounded by a poor settlement from Central Government.

Shropshire Council will continue to lobby Westminster for more funding.

The next Full Shropshire Council meeting is on 17th July.

Cllr Pritchard suggested that it was important for all Councillors to liaise regularly with the local MP and asked how the current SC administration were dealing with the lack of a 5 year housing supply. Cllr Evans gave an update on the progress of the Shropshire Local Plan. The most recent Local Plan will be withdrawn and the current SAMDev is valid until the end of 2026, however developers are arguing that it is not fit for purpose. The Planning Inspector has given SC 18 months to draw up a new Local Plan that meets the new housing targets set up Central Government for Shropshire of 1994 houses. The new Local Plan will run from 2025-2045 and SC will be asking developers and landowners to come forward and identify more land for development. Cllr Evans suggested that the Planning Committee to be aware of land that could potentially be made available in the parish.

30.25 Planning Committee

30.25.1 After a proposal from Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr Hodges, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 7th April 2025.**

30.25.2 Cllr Hodges gave a verbal report which was **NOTED**, including that the next date for the Planning Committee meeting will be Monday 23rd June.

31.25 Finance & General Purposes Committee

31.25.1 After a proposal from Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting held on 27th May 2025.**

31.25.2 After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Trow, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the financial statements summarising the accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2025**

31.25.3 After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the Internal Auditor's Year End report & recommendations and the follow up actions recommended by the FGP Committee

31.25.4 After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the new Income Collection and Debt Write-Off policy prepared by RFO and recommended by FGP committee**

31.25.5 After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the updated Financial Regulations as prepared by RFO**

31.25.6 After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the year-end statement of reserves and reserves transfers, in addition to transfers included in the 2025-26 budget**

31.25.7 The updated list of Direct Debits/Standing Orders was **NOTED**

31.25.8 The s.137 expenditure for 2024-25 (within limit) and the 2025-26 limit of £30,203.10 were **NOTED**

31.25.9 The updated banking mandate removing councillors who have resigned, was **NOTED**

32.25 Facilities Working group

32.25.1 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the notes from the FWG meeting held on 10th April 2025.**

32.25.2 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE** delegated authority to the FWG to undertake the tendering

process for an upgrade to the public toilets and make recommendations to the September Full Council meeting

32.25.3 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE continuing with Shropshire Council play area inspections until September 2025**

32.25.4 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE delegated authority to FWG to review in-depth play area inspections and make recommendations to September Full Council meeting**

32.25.5 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE max. budget of £400 for Deputy Clerk for one day Rospa inspection course and an additional 1.5 hours per week for weekly visual play area inspections and written report as Cllr Fletcher is no longer able to undertake these duties regularly and to meet insurance requirements**

32.25.6 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE approve delegated authority to FWG to obtain quotes for play area repairs and action plan for play area refurbishment**

32.25.7 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE delegated authority to FWG to obtain quotes and organise 2025 tree inspection and survey for trees the parish council is responsible for, with a maximum budget of £1000**

32.25.8 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE delegated authority to FWG to obtain quotes and organise replacement of 2 leaning streetlight poles identified in the 2025 condition survey, with a maximum budget of £5000**

32.25.9 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE**

33.25 Statutory Business and Finance

33.25.1 Income of £19,534.11. This was **NOTED**.

33.25.2 After a proposal from Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve payments of £20,861.75 as attached.**

33.25.3 No transfer of funds from CCLA to Unity was required.

33.25.4 After a proposal from Cllr Windows, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE 2025 Standing Orders as updated by Clerk in conjunction with Cllrs Fletcher and Windows**

33.25.5 A report on the Pontesbury Youth Group, from Revd. Greg Smith was **NOTED**. The grant received in 2024-25 from Shropshire Council has now been spent.

34.25 Audit 2024-25

34.25.1 After a proposal from Cllr Hodges, seconded by Cllr Jones, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve and sign, and respond YES to all questions, excluding question 9, which is not applicable for AGAR Section 1 – the Annual Governance Statement 2024/25 for Pontesbury Parish Council.**

34.25.2 After a proposal by Cllr Pritchard, seconded by Cllr Trow, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve and sign, noting the restatement of box 9. – AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/2025 for Pontesbury Parish Council**

34.25.3 It was **NOTED** that the intention to publish the Notice of Elector's Rights beginning on 16th June and upload it and the AGAR pages to the Council website before this date.

35.25 Health & Safety Matters – None raised.

36.25 Request for funding for Plealey defibrillator

After a proposal by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Pritchard, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE that a grant of £1117 be given for a new defibrillator using CIL Neighbourhood Fund monies.**

37.25 Tree for Councillor Lewis.

After a proposal by Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr Pritchard, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE purchase and planting of a tree for Cllr Lewis, location and type of tree to be decided.**

38.25 Library Service Funding Agreement and Licence. The Funding Agreement had been received but the License had not been received to date.

After a proposal by Cllr Hignett, seconded by Cllr Evans, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the funding agreement as prepared by Shropshire Council.**

39.25 Parishes' Biodiversity cluster. After a proposal by Cllr Wallace Johnson, seconded by Cllr Jones, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE joining with Minsterley, Hanwood and Longden parishes to combine forces to maximise the impact of activities to enhance biodiversity in the local area. Members of the Biodiversity Working Group (which Cllr Sarah Wallace Johnson is already a member of) would meet with other parishes to take this further.**

40.25 Clerk's Report - A report from the Parish Clerk was received and **NOTED.** Parish Council staff have received their new gov.uk email addresses and Shroptech would be in touch with Councillors shortly to set their email addresses up. Cllrs Fletcher, Davies, Hignett and Jones were progressing the issue with flooding at the Sports Association fields.

41.25 Parish Business the following parish business was reported:

Cllr Jones concerns about the cycleway verges encroaching onto the cycleway and significantly reducing the width of the footpath/cycleway. Also that the success of Area 1 of the wildflower verge was helping with the reduction in vegetation and improving visibility of all road users. Cllr Hignett would arrange a site visit to discuss the mowing by SC.

Cllr Hodges wished to report a success story of a local resident benefitting from an affordable home recently built.

Clerk asked if a working group of councillors would like to meet to come up with suggestions in relation to the letter from SC about working more closely with Town and Parish councils. A report could be given to full council at the July meeting and then a response made to SC. Cllrs Fletcher, Pritchard, Hignett and Windows and Clerk would liaise.

Cllr Fletcher raised concerns about the speed of traffic entering Pontesbury from Habberley and asked to put increased signage on the July agenda.

42.25 Date and Time of Next Meeting. The next parish council meeting will be held on Monday 14th July 2025 at Habberley Village Hall at 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed:
Chairman Pontesbury Parish Council

Date: