

PONTESBURY PARISH COUNCIL



Full Council Meeting held at The Pavilion on Monday 13th April 2026 at 6.30pm

PRESENT

Councillors: D Fletcher, M Trow, D Gregory, A Hodges, S Wallace-Johnson, K Day, A Windows, D Jones, R Evans, G Moss and N Hignett

Clerk of the Meeting: Debbie Marais

Public present: Two members of the public

189.25 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Pritchard, L Jones and S Davies

190.25 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations – Cllr Moss declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item. 10.4

191.25 Public Questions and Comments

A resident from Pontesbury wished to advise the parish council that he had recently taken over the Salop Fish Bar. He had a number of enquiries about marketing his business and was advised to send an email to the Clerk with all of his enquiries to seek advice as to who to contact.

Resident of Pontesbury wished to tell the councillors about the Rea Valley Green Day event on 2nd May 2026 and to outline the application for funds towards the organisation of the event and engagement of local residents.

192.25 Minutes of Council

After a proposal from Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr D Jones, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 9th March 2026 with an amendment of 179.25.1 to change the date to 2025.

193.25 Police Matters – No matters arised.

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

CORPORATE PLAN The Council is inviting residents to have their say on the ambitions and priorities that will guide the Council's work over the coming years, as it develops a new Corporate plan. This plan will set out what the Council will focus on for the County and its residents, working with Communities, partners and other stakeholders to deliver, enable and influence improvements in Shropshire. Feedback can be shared by completing the survey on the Council website by wed.22nd April. The aim is to present a draft Corporate Plan to Cabinet on 6th may, and to Full Council on 14th may.

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL FUNDING New analysis from the Rural Services Network has revealed a growing and structural funding gap between Shropshire, comparable Rural Councils, and the National average highlighting the increasing financial pressure facing the County. The figures show that Government funding for Shropshire is set to fall by around 10% between 2025/26 and 2028/29, compared to a smaller 4% reduction across Rural Authorities and a 10% increase Nationally. While Council tax income will rise, these increases will not even cover the scale of the reduction in Government grant, leaving a structural funding gap that must be managed locally. This demonstrates that Shropshire is facing a triple squeeze of falling Government support at a faster rate than similar councils, combined with a widening gap in funding per resident compared to both rural peers and the National picture and demographic factors leading to higher costs to maintain core services.

HIGHWAYS Shropshire Council has extended Kier's Highways contract for an additional year, taking it to April 2027. Under the modified contract, Kier will be supporting the Council to achieve its mixed economy ambitions. More services will now move back under the Council's direct control, and this will support greater use of local contractors and closer working with Town and Parish Councils.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT Shropshire Council has launched its new "Crisis and Resilience Fund", providing vital financial support to residents who are struggling to meet essential living costs, or who are facing a sudden financial crisis. The fund replaces the previous Household Support Fund, and is funded by Central Government through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It will run from 1st April 2026 to 31st March 2029. The Council has been awarded £3.6m each year, with an extra 1st year fund of £758,558 to help families that rely on heating oil. The Crisis and Resilience Fund is designed to support a wide range of low-income households, and crisis payments are not limited to people receiving benefits. Support is available for individuals and families who are experiencing short-term financial pressure or an unexpected drop in income. Residents can find out more, or apply online, via the Council's website. Alternatively, as always, they can contact their Local Councillor.

NATIONAL FLAGS The Council has issued a statement on their policy, in particular with regard to the unauthorised attachment of flags or any other objects to streetlighting columns, highway infrastructure or other public street furniture, which can be deemed as a criminal offence. The Council intends to remove all unauthorised flags, including any that are;

- Damaged or unsafe
- Creating a hazard
- Obstructing signs
- Posing risks following severe weather, or
- Installed without permission, regardless of condition.

Where appropriate and legally possible, the Council will seek to recover the cost of removal from the individuals responsible for installing the flags.

MEASLES Cases of measles are on the rise in the West Midlands area. Latest Government figures show that between 1st January and 30th March 2026 there have been 336 confirmed cases reported in England, an increase of 37 cases since the last report on 26th March. Measles is a very infectious disease that spreads easily and can lead to serious health complications, especially in children under 1, pregnant women, and people with a weakened immune system. Residents are reminded that they need 2 doses of the MMR vaccine for lifelong protection. They should contact their local GP practice for further advice.

Cllr Gregory raised a concern that items reported on FixMyStreet have been on there for months. Cllr Hignett asked for a copy of the list of items and he would take it up with the portfolio holder David Vassmer and say that councillors would be happy to meet with him or a member of his team to look at the issues raised.

Cllr Jones raised his concerns about:
ensuring any drainage issues should be sorted out before any potholes or road resurfacing was done

the quality of the tarmac being used ensuring that the edges of road resurfacing be properly completed to ensure longevity of any remedial measures

195.25 Planning Committee -

195.25.1 After a proposal by Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on Monday 2nd May 2026.**

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

196.25 Pavilion Committee –

196.25.1 After a proposal from Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the minutes of the Pavilion Committee meeting held on 23rd February 2026.**

196.25.2 After a proposal by Cllr Hignett, seconded by Cllr D Jones, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE payment of £16,243.50 business rates for the Pavilion for 2026-27. This level of business rates has been appealed in the past but to no avail.**

197.25 Statutory Business and Finance

197.25.1 Income of 5039.91 for end of 2025-26 and £3650.11 for 2026-27. This was **NOTED.**

197.25.2 After a proposal from Cllr Gregory, seconded by Cllr D Jones, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve payments of £22,624.93 for 2025-26 and £15,987.68 for 2026-27 as attached.**

197.25.3 After a proposal by Cllr Hignett , seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve a transfer of £20,000 from CCLA to Unity account for April payments**

197.25.4 After a proposal by Cllr Jones, seconded by Cllr Hignett, Cllr Moss abstained from vote, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE retrospective payment of £180 to Moss Company for maps for the sports area off Bogey Lane to aid flooding alleviation works.**

197.25.5 the parish council had budgeted £10,000 for replacing concrete streetpoles for 2026-27. There were 15 in total to be replaced. 3 were done in 2025-26 so 12 left. Clerk asked to get a quote to replace 6 streetlights in 2026-27. After a proposal by Cllr Hignett, seconded by Cllr Windows, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE replacement of 6 poles if it came within the £10,000 budget.**

197.25.6 After a proposal by Cllr Fletcher, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE a payment of £250 for a family workshop on ‘Why Nature Matters’ as part of the Green Day event**

197.25.7 After a proposal by Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve an IT policy and an updated Data Protection Policy as prepared by Clerk**

197.25.8 After a proposal by Cllr Trow, seconded by Cllr Day, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve an additional payment of £299 for a 24 page newsletter for April (partially offset by £200 previously agreed for a 4 page insert in the April newsletter for the Green Day event)**

197.25.9 After a proposal by Cllr Hignett, seconded by Cllr Evans, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to approve the renewal of lease of the offices in the Pavilion, with the Police & Crime Commissioner for the base for the Safer Neighbourhood policing team.**

197.25.10 After a discussion about the impact of the roadworks on the Full Council Meeting on 11th May 2026, it was decided that as the roadworks are planned to finish at 3.30pm that the meeting would still go ahead on that date.

197.25.11 After a proposal by Cllr Gregory, seconded by Cllr Hodges, all in favour it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE a payment of £3,813.56 to Worknest for HR and H&S support and access to H&S e-learning for the parish council.**

198.25 Health & Safety matters- None raised

199.25 Request for additional funding for the Rea Valley Green Day – After a proposal by Cllr Hodges, seconded by Cllr Fletcher, (Cllr Gregory abstained, Cllr Windows voted against) it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE a payment of £300 additional funding towards the organisation of and engagement of local residents with the event.**

200.25 Potholes in the entrance to the play area. This was deferred to the Facilities Working Group for discussion and to form an action plan.

201.25 Footpath on Malehurst Bank. Cllr D Jones reiterated a concern raised by a resident about the narrowness of the pavement due to encroachment of vegetation. Cllr Jones reported that the footpath needed to be cleared so that residents could walk down to a safe crossing place across the A488 to enter the village. Cllr Hignett would invite portfolio holder David Vassmer for a site visit.

202.25 Update on National Grid works. Cllrs Evans/Hignett gave a verbal report of a meeting they had attended with National Grid about the works being carried out and the impact on parishes the work crosses. There is commitment to good communication with the parishes affected. Cllr Hignett had raised concerns about the closure of the industrial estate at Malehurst. The work would not clash with the resurfacing work along the A488 in April and May. No further information had been received since the meeting.

203.25 Update on car rally in September 2026 - Clerk had circulated information from the organisers. Cars would be driving through Pontesbury parish but no races in the parish. Licences have now been granted for the rally and any Road Traffic Orders needed were being put in place. Clerk would contact the Resident Liaison Officer for information for the July newsletter.

204.25 Request for daffodil bulbs for entrance to Lawrence Park – Cllrs discussed the request but it was felt that it would set a precedent for all estates in the parish which could not be met financially by the parish council and involved land that the parish council did not have ownership or management of. The broader picture of funding bulbs on parish council land would be discussed at the next Facilities Working group meeting.

205.25 Request concerning the siting of a commemorative bench – Cllr Fletcher/Cerk would meet with the person to discuss siting options for a bench to be donated in memory of her parents who had lived in the village for a long time.

206.25 Water Risk Assessment – deferred to future meeting in order to gain other quotes

207.25 Update on Hall Bank junction improvements

207.25.1 Some communication had been received from Shropshire Council about programming and funding works at the bottom of Hall Bank and Brookside. Cllrs Hignett/Fletcher and Clerk would meet with SC Highways team and bring back

recommendations to future meeting. Cllr Evans reported that a paper reviewing CIL payments was to be discussed at SC Cabinet later in the week.

207.25.2 Cllr Hignett gave a verbal report following his meeting with David Vassmer to raise resident concerns about the mini-roundabout leading into Lawrence Park and the parking at Mary Webb. There was to be a meeting in April at Mary Webb school to look at traffic/parking solutions that Cllrs Fletcher/Hignett would attend.

208.25 Clerk's Report - A report from the Parish Clerk was received and **NOTED**. Cllr Fletcher wished to thank John Bellis and Cllr D Jones for all their support to alleviate flooding at the sports field. Cllr Hignett asked about the toilet opening hours – this matter would be taken to Facilities Working Group meeting.

209.25 Parish Business the following parish business was reported:
Cllr Hignett reported that a local resident wished to replace a plaque that had been lost from a bench on Jubilee gardens. Cllr Hignett would go back to the resident to say yes to the replacement
Cllr Hodges reported that the noticeboard at Cruckmeole is beyond repair and needs replacing. This would be taken to the May meeting
Cllr Wallace raised concerns about the road markings at junctions along the cyclepath. There have been some near misses with vehicles crossing the cyclepath. Cllr Hignett would follow this up.
Cllr Evans reported that Land developers would be putting forward potential sites for housing development towards the end of the month
Cllr Gregory asked about the tree for Cllr Lewis. This would be put on the Facilities Working group agenda
Cllr Jones Asked what was happening with the mowing regime for the wildflower areas on the cycleway. Clerk would respond to Cllr Jones
Cllr Windows reported a SC programme for installing EV charging points and asked how the parish could apply. Cllr Hignett would bring this up with David Vassmer. Cllr Windows also asked if the streetlight engagement meeting was still happening. Clerk would chase this up
Cllr Trow reported another accident outside the Hare & Hounds and asked if signs to denote the stretch of road as Cruckton, could be put up so drivers knew that they were entering a settlement. Cllr Evans would raise this with David Vassmer and see if CIL Local monies could be used.

210.25 Exclusion of the Press & Public After a proposal by Cllr Fletcher, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED** that exclusion of the Press & Public be made on the grounds that the consideration of the following items may involve the likely disclosure of confidential information (s1(2) Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960).

211.25 Play Area Task and Finish Group . After a proposal by Cllr Gregory, seconded by Cllr Hignett, all in favour, it was **RESOLVED to APPROVE the following recommendations:**

211.25.1 **SUTCLIFFE PLAY LTD be appointed to undertake the refurbishment of the Pontesbury play area.**

211.25.2 **A maximum budget of £50,000 ex. VAT for the refurbishment project.**

211.25.3 **Transfer of £8,000 EMR underspend for the public toilet refurbishment to the play area refurbishment EMR giving a total EMR of £50,000**

212.25 Date and Time of Next Meeting. The next parish council meeting will be the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council to be held on Monday 11th May 2026 at the Pavilion at 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Signed:
Chairman Pontesbury Parish Council

Date: