

Minutes

of The Annual Parish Meeting
7pm Wednesday 3rd May 2023
at Pitchford Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Paul Harrison (Chairman), Cllr. Gareth Ball, Cllr. Carmen Cullis, Cllr. John Long,
Cllr Graham Davies, Cllr. Keith Faulkner, Cllr. Alan Hotchkiss, Cllr. Robert Morgan, Cllr. Tracy Johnson.

Also present:

Gail Power – Locum Clerk for the Meeting

Cllr Dan Morris – Shropshire Council

Matthew Hodge – Bursar, Concord College

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Appointment of Locum Clerk to Take Minutes

RESOLVED: Gail Power, SALC Officer, appointed to take the minutes for the meeting.

3. Minutes of the Previous Parish Meeting:

a) To read and approve minutes of the meeting held on 10th May 2022

RESOLVED: Minutes agreed as a true record.

b) **To consider any matters arising therefrom.**

Members referred to the staggering of bus arrivals and departures from Acton Burnell village and confirmed that this issue had been resolved. The query regarding the Longnor/Concord bus was ongoing and was being followed up by Councillor Paul Harrison.

4. Public Session

There were no members of the public present.

5. Police Report

There was no report from the police.

6. Report of Accounts - 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023

The Chairman, in his role of Acting Clerk to the Council, informed the meeting that the accounts and the Internal Audit had now been completed for the Year End. The Chairman continued to give a report, which had been previously circulated (Appendix A).

7. Chairman's Annual Report - Report on the work of the Parish Council

The Chairman confirmed that he had been fulfilling the role of Acting Clerk since appointed by the Council, during the Clerk's maternity leave and announced that the Clerk had achieved the CiLCA qualification. The Chairman continued to give his report which had previously been circulated (Appendix B), concluding with his thanks to the Clerk, Anna Morris and all member Councillors.

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
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8. Concord College Report

Matthew Hodge introduced himself to the meeting, stating that he had been Bursar at the College now for 4 months. Matthew continued to give his report, in particular the following was noted:

- Exceptionally high standards being achieved by pupils
- There had been a few changes in senior staff
- The College was working on developing a new website (over the next 4-5 months)
- Community relationships were important to the College, which reaches out to other schools/hosts events
- The College was looking at the possibility of developing the campus over the next few years
- The village shop lease had been renewed for another 12 months (April – April). The College were hoping to be able to work with the Parish Council to ensure the future and possible development of the shop.

The future possibility of VAT being introduced to private school fees was noted and Matthew commented that there may be some financial pressures but that he considered that all things were manageable.

A question was posed by the parish council regarding the consideration of a play park. Matthew said that there had been no action on this but was happy to take pick this up again.

The Parish Council raised concern over the safety of the number of students walking around the village roads at night, without any form of lighting, Matthew stated that he would feed this back to the Pastoral team.

Discussion took place regarding an introduction of 20mph speed limit near to schools. Cllr Dan Morris confirmed that Shropshire Council would be giving a briefing to Shropshire Councillors tomorrow (4.5.23) on the County Survey that had been carried out in relation to 20mph speed restrictions outside Shropshire Schools. Cllr Morris reiterated that although a survey had been carried out, it did not mean that there would be a 20mph speed restriction outside all schools. Further details can be found on Shropshire Council's website: [20mph speed restrictions outside Shropshire schools | Shropshire Council](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/20mph-speed-restrictions-outside-shropshire-schools)

9. Shropshire Councillor's Report - Report on the work of the County Council

Cllr Dan Morris gave a report to the meeting, previously circulated (Appendix C).

10. Parish Charity - Godolphin Edwards Trust

A report from Rev. Geoff Garrett (Treasurer) had been previously received and circulated to members (Appendix D). In particular, it was noted that the Treasurer was retiring, and at the end of April two Church Wardens had retired, volunteers were sought to fill these vacancies. The proposed building of putting toilets in the church was now out to tender.

11. Pitchford Village Hall Report

A report was given by Mr Mike Price, the Chairman of Pitchford Village Hall Committee. The report had previously been received and circulated (Appendix E). In particular it was noted that although 20 years was left on the lease, consideration should be given now to the long-term future and options for a replacement facility.

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
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12. Village Views Report

A report was given on behalf of Mrs Chris Harrison, a member of the team who produce the Village Views and Village Directory. The report had previously been received and circulated (Appendix F). It was noted that the magazine is produced 4 times a year, in full colour and is distributed to every household in the Community. A digital version is accessible on the Parish Council website. An update of the Directory is expected in August (usually published in May). The team have managed to attract sufficient revenue from advertising to cover the costs of the Directory. Village Views costs are covered by a grant from the Parish Council.

The Chairman expressed the Parish Council's thanks to the team for all their work in producing newsletters and the Directory for the Community.

13. Any Other Business

No public present, no representations received.

14. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 14th May 2024, to be confirmed.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45pm

Signed:

Chairman

Date:

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

APPENDIX A

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council
Financial Report for 2022/23**

The Council received a precept of £5,705 from Shropshire Council to enable it to fulfil its statutory obligations.

General Parish Council expenditure, as shown in the year end accounts, was £8,732.12.

Putting aside restricted grants and funds, with a small amount received in interest and VAT refunds, the Council had an excess expenditure of £2,809.35 over its income for the year. The Council budgeted to overspend its income in 2022/2023 so as to reduce unrestricted reserves to within recommended levels. This also meant that the precept was maintained at the same level as in the previous four years. Unrestricted reserves were reduced from £9022.22 to £6212.87 at year end.

The Council also holds restricted funds of £20,512.20 CIL Neighbourhood funding and £55,179.68 Lightsource Community Benefit Funding. Therefore, the total amount held by the Parish Council at year end 2022/23 was £81,904.57. Of this total £50,000 has been invested in 12-month bond which matures in January 2024. Interest is also earned from savings accounts which run alongside the current accounts.

Lightsource Community Benefit Fund

The Parish Council received £13,359.99 as a Community Benefit payment from Lightsource for the Solar Park within part of the parish.

This money is held in a separate account as a Community Fund and, like the CIL funds, may only be used to fund community projects, not general expenditure. During 2022/23 the fund provided £1024.58 for the Jubilee Picnic, £500.00 for the Village Views newsletter and £5029.00 for upgrades to the defibrillators.

Governance

The Parish Council reviewed and updated its Financial and Risk Assessment documents in May 2022 and these will be reviewed again in 2023. The Council was audited by an internal auditor in April 2023 and received no recommendations on any improvements which should be made to its financial controls. The Council has in all aspects of its financial dealings adhered to strict guidelines ensuring that all decisions represent best value for money for the community.

Paul Harrison



RFO and Acting Clerk 3rd May 2023

APPENDIX B

**Report for the 2023 Annual Parish Meeting from the
Chairman of the Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford,
Ruckley & Langley Parish Council**

This report covers activities over the last twelve months, during which six regular meetings were held along with additional meetings of the Appointments Committee to interview and appoint a locum clerk to cover for Anna's maternity leave and for a Code of Conduct training session for Councillors.

Unfortunately, the locum clerk resigned in December and it was agreed at the January Parish Council meeting that I should take on the role of financial officer and acting clerk until Anna's return in June. Prior to her leave Anna completed her CiLCA training and is now fully qualified.

The most significant planning item during the past year was Shropshire Council's decision last May to grant outline permission for 9 dwellings on the Albert Davies' lorry yard brownfield site, following a number of proposals and comments over the previous year. The development of Castle Barns has continued and plans for the second part of the development have just been officially received.

The planning Enforcement Notice relating to the exit from Stoneleigh Close has been shelved as the developer was not able to acquire the necessary land to improve the visibility splay. The exit will be improved as part of the Albert Davies yard development and in the meantime a mirror has been installed to provide for a safer exit from the close.

Highways continue to require attention and it was good to see the road through Pitchford resurfaced. Potholes elsewhere continue to present hazards and residents are encouraged to use the "Fix my Street" on-line system to report these and any other issues. Although the Parish Council submits reports, additional reports from residents will help to increase pressure to get the necessary work done. Although a positive meeting was held with a Highways representative last year there has been no work to date to stop the water which runs through and over the pavement at the bottom of Burnell Bank. This will be pushed again although the situation was not so severe this winter.

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
Parish Council**

APPENDIX C

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley and Langley – Annual Report April 2023 by Dan Morris Cllr for
Burnell**

In 2022/23 Shropshire Council set out its 4 priorities in its strategic planning document for 2022-2025

- Healthy People
- Healthy Economy
- Healthy Environment
- Healthy Organisation

Healthy People:

- SC will tackle inequalities, including rural inequalities, and poverty in all its forms; providing early support and interventions that reduce risk and enable children, young people, adults and families to achieve their full potential and enjoy life.
- SC will support Shropshire residents to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing, choosing healthy lifestyles and preventing ill-health, reducing need for long term or hospital care.
- SC will work with partners to develop, commission and deliver the right services and support that meet the needs of children, young people, adults and families in the right place, at the right time

Healthy Economy

- SC will provide access to lifelong learning, supporting people and our communities to prosper, and through providing the right skills developing greater productivity and improved wages.
- SC will develop Shropshire as a safe, strong and vibrant destination to attract people to live in, work in, learn in and visit the county.
- SC will deliver excellent connectivity and infrastructure, increasing access to social contact, employment, education, services and leisure opportunities.
- SC will ensure an appropriate mix of housing in the right areas of the county when supporting people with disabilities and to attract the right workforce for the employment needs and opportunities located there; reducing distances travelled to work

Healthy Environment

- SC will deliver the Council's Corporate Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, promoting the means to tackle climate change and reduce the carbon footprint including the adoption of low carbon energy for council's assets and for communities.
- SC will enable safer, sustainable, diverse and inclusive communities that pull together by reducing anti-social behaviour and risk of harm; addressing the issues they face; and adopting the waste hierarchy to reduce, reuse, recycle and recover from all household waste.
- SC will maintain, protect, and enhance our outstanding natural and historic environment, promoting positive behaviours and greater biodiversity and environmental sustainability.

Healthy Organisation

- SC will enable a skilled, happy, healthy, diverse, inclusive, empowered, and proud workforce that influences and leads change, addressing any inequalities.
- SC will continuously develop our response to disruptive incidents affecting Shropshire communities, strengthening our ability to absorb shock, adapt and make changes, sustain positive change, and anticipate future shocks.
- SC will communicate clearly and transparently about what Shropshire Council delivers, signposting to the right places for services and support, and listen to what communities say about their place and what they need.
- SC will put our resources in the right place using accurate data, insights, and evidence to support the delivery of the organisation's priorities and balance the books.
- SC will ensure councillors are supported to advocate for their constituents but to also be ambassadors for the council

**Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford, Ruckley & Langley
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The recently agreed Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) last week (2nd March 2023) is the key strategic document within The Shropshire plan that defines how finances over the medium term will be allocated and aligned to the outcomes set within the plan. Council tax has been set at 4.99% for the coming year at the same council meeting.

The MTFS is determined by The Shropshire Plan outcomes and priorities – the budget for next year has been led by SC priorities, rather than the other way around. The MTFS brings together the planned revenue and capital estimates for resources and spending across the coming 5 years. It is shaped by the priorities of the Shropshire Plan, and clearly sets out the financial challenge and the opportunity created by successfully tackling that challenge.

SC still must close a budget gap of £51m. Most of these savings will come from continuing to think, act and work differently, as set out in the above-mentioned Shropshire Plan. Since the Plan was launched, SC colleagues are responding to this and challenging positively to how things are done.

To achieve such a target of closing £51m budget gap, SC will need to transform and reduce the size and shape of the council, how it works and align this to the Shropshire Plan. SC has no choice but to do this because it must become sustainable. To achieve this SC expects to invest between £1m - £3m over the next three years with a transformation partner to help accelerate and implement the changes needed.

When the Council launched the Shropshire Plan, the council said it would appoint this transformation partner to work to make these changes. The partner will help SC put in place the 'machinery' needed to enable services to transform and provide the much-needed capacity, capability, and resource to move at pace and achieve the savings that have to be made.

The priority of the council for the coming year will therefore be to make transformative change to make the council fit for the future within the priorities of The Shropshire Plan.

Cllr Dan Morris April 2023

APPENDIX D

The Godolphin Edwards Charity

Over the last few months the charity trustees have been reviewing the range of the trust and the grants it is giving and how we might widen the objects of the trust so that we can benefit a wider group of people. After consulting with the Hereford Diocese legal department we were put in touch with the Staffordshire Community Foundation (a group which, despite its name, includes Shropshire charities) who manage a large number of charities in order to take the pressure and ultimate trustee responsibility and legal obligations from them and take it on themselves. The agreement still allows for local involvement as consulting trustees and some of the current trustees will continue as such. This means that when an application for help from the trust is received, the Foundation will consult with the local trustees who have the necessary local knowledge. This has also come about because two of the trustees are standing down and joining the Community Foundation secures the long term management of the Trust in the future.

Once the transfer is finally complete in the near future, applications will have to be made through the foundation and when that time comes full details of how to apply will be made clear. In the meantime applications can still be made by letter detailing the need to Rev Geoff Garrett, The Rectory, Condover, Shrewsbury, SY5 7AA.

CHURCHES

The main news from the churches in Acton Burnell, Condover, Frodesley and Pitchford is that Rev Geoff Garrett is retiring on 31st July. His last service is on 23rd July 10am at Condover Church. Following his retirement the ongoing church services and activities will continue with the help of the current Lay Readers Jeremy Lowe and Ray Evanson ably assisted by experienced retired clergy from around the Condover Deanery as well as the Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councils of the Benefice. After July the recruitment process will begin for the next Rector of the Benefice.

ACTON BURNELL CHURCH CHURCHWARDENS

After many years faithful service the two churchwardens of St. Mary's Church have retired and currently we do not have any replacements. Churchwardens serve on an annual basis and are re-elected annually at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and as such can stand down if wanted at each annual meeting. The qualification to be a churchwarden is that they must be 21 years of age or over, on the electoral roll of the parish (if not already this can be done very quickly) and a confirmed member of the Church of England or a church in communion with the Church of England.

TREASURER

Our treasurer has also retired after several years faithful service. We are looking for someone to look after our simple accounts. The main qualification is that you are able understand and produce annual accounts. We are set up with online banking and the outgoing treasurer has slim lined the accounting procedure.

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If anyone is interested in finding out more about these roles (all of which are voluntary) please contact Rev Geoff Garrett (revgeoff@live.co.uk 01743 872251)

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Parish Council**

APPENDIX E

Pitchford Village Hall 2023

We are pleased to report that after some three years of improvements and structural work the hall is now fit for purpose. The final upgrade was to the kitchen with a budget of £12500, however due to unforeseen structural work the final cost was £20788.93. The additional £8000 has come from hall reserves

We are extremely happy with the outcome of the works and how, many people have been complimentary about the heating and the kitchen

We would hope for an upturn in booking with the committee organising different events to attract people.

The pub night is held every month but numbers are starting to decrease so we may have to “rebrand” it

We have planned an early pub night in May to coincide with the coronation celebrations, we would be grateful if the PC looked favourable on our request for a grant of £250 towards the food buffet

As with everyone the cost of living is proving difficult with electricity and insurance our biggest outlay. The insurance cost alone is some £1430 per year

With our small reserve we feel we can still operate and provide a pleasant facility for, and with the support of the local community

Moving forward we would hope the hall will see out the last 20years of its lease but feel the PC should start preparing a strategy on how or if to replace the existing facility within the parish

Thank you

Mike Price

Chair

APPENDIX F

VILLAGE VIEWS AND VILLAGE DIRECTORY

We continue to produce Village Views four times a year, both in a full-colour print version and in digital form accessible on the Parish Council website. We are very grateful for the continued financial support of the Parish Council, and the on-going support of the volunteers who deliver the paper version of the newsletter to all the households in the villages of Acton Burnell, Frodesley, Pitchford and Ruckley & Langley.

The long-standing team of myself, Karen Fisher and John Glover were joined in August 2021 by Rachel and Lois Johnson. They have proved to be a very valuable asset to the group, and have taken over the difficult job of finding and liaising with advertisers. This has meant that our income from advertising has risen, and we are now in the happy position of being confident in our ability to continue to fund the annual Village Directory.

The Directory is usually published in May, but this year we have delayed publication until August, to give ourselves time to look at and update both the content and look of the booklet.

We are always on the lookout for new ideas and content for both Village Views and the Directory, and welcome any suggestions and contributions from members of the community.

Finally, I would like to thank Karen for her wonderful work in designing and laying out both publications, and liaising with the printers, and John for managing distribution, keeping the financial records and handling any necessary payments.

Chris Harrison