

Village Views

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

WELCOME AND HELP NEEDED

Sad news at Village Views HQ this month as Karen, who designs and creates Village Views, is moving out of the area for a new life by the sea, which leaves a gap in our team. We are reaching out to see if there is anyone out there who would like to take on this essential task and help keep Village Views going. Karen's day job as a Graphic Designer means she uses InDesign for the layout, but if you don't have that software there are lots of other options. If you have experience, that would be great, but if you don't she can support you to get to grips with the job, as well as creating a template in a software you are comfortable with if need be. She spends around 3 to 4 hours every 3 months working Village Views and sending it off to print. You won't need to write or edit any articles (Chris does all that), but you will need to keep in touch with the rest of the friendly team who all chip in with proof reading and fact checking the final product. If you want any more information please contact Karen on **07891257441** for a chat or contact us on **villageviews@hotmail.com**.

Chris Harrison, Karen Fisher, John Glover, Rachel Johnson and Lois Johnson

LOCAL CONSTITUENCY SURGERIES

Stuart Anderson MP will be available for consultation at the following constituency surgeries:

Church Stretton: 4th February
Highley: 12th February

If you wish to attend a surgery to discuss an issue with Stuart, please contact his constituency office at **www.stuartanderson.org.uk/contact** or call **01594 872187** to arrange an appointment.

PLANS FOR 2025 ACTON BURNELL FETE

In early January Acton Burnell Church held an open meeting, inviting local residents to come along and discuss fund raising ideas and to decide if the community still wants to hold an annual fete.

After much discussion it was decided that a fete is still something that many people enjoy and would like to see continue – and it also raises valuable funds for the maintenance of Acton Burnell's beautiful church. There was also discussion around the idea of holding a late afternoon / early evening barbecue, as it was felt that this might be a popular addition to the day.

A provisional date of Saturday 5th July has been chosen. What is needed now is people to volunteer ideas for stalls and sideshows and to come along and help run them. It isn't really hard work and you would have the chance to get involved with a fantastic and very enjoyable community event.

So if you have any ideas for sideshows, games or stalls, please get in touch. Commercial stalls selling crafts, gifts or local produce are also welcome at very reasonable rates. All ideas, suggestions and offers of help gratefully received! Please contact Jill Faulkner on **jillfaulkner@btconnect.com**.



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FREE CAREER WORKSHOPS IN CHURCH STRETTON

Thinking of changing career, getting back into work or looking for your first job? The Mayfair Community Centre at Easthope Road in Church Stretton will be holding four workshops during February to give job seekers the tools needed to identify opportunities, make applications and hopefully secure their dream jobs.

The sessions are open to anyone over 18 and will cover:

Choosing the right career path (3rd February)

How to make the change (10th February)

Finding and applying for the right jobs (17th February)

Navigating interviews and selection processes (24th February)

To book, please call **01694 722077** or email **information@mayfaircentre.org.uk**.

The closing date for contributions to the next edition will be 18th April 2025.

Please contact **villageviews@hotmail.com** with any news or **villageviewsadvertising@outlook.com** to place an advert.



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For membership enquiries please contact us at
membershipatcound@btinternet.com

FUTURE CLUB EVENTS

**Adult Beginners Courses,
Juniors Saturday Coaching and
Private Lessons**

Please contact Club Coach Graham Hart
on **07960 970 017** or
email hartg734@aol.com

THE FOX INN AT RYTON UPDATE

The Fox Inn at Ryton, a previously thriving country pub, sadly closed its doors in September 2022. With overwhelming support from the local community, The Friends of The Fox were formed to explore all options to purchase The Fox Inn.

We are now excited to share the news that our application for a £250,000 government grant from the Communities Ownership Fund has been approved and we have immediately approached the current owners of The Fox Inn for further discussions.

"After an extended pause in the assessment of grant applications because of the change in government, we are delighted to finally receive approval for this substantial grant and are reinvigorated in our intent to purchase, renovate and reopen The Fox as a community pub", said David Oliver, Chairman. "We are so grateful to the Community Ownership Fund for supporting rural communities and making this possible."

"We believe that our success in securing the funding was due to the incredible support from the local community through fundraising, share pledges and offers of skills and resources. Thank you to everyone that continues to support the campaign" said Helen May, Secretary.

The team will provide further updates if and when discussions with the current owners progress further. More information about the launch of the share issue will come in due course. A public meeting will be held in January.

For any questions, please contact Helen May at
rytovillagecommunitygroup@gmail.com

The Friends of The Fox website and Facebook page.



CONCORD COLLEGE

presents

Celebrating Together

Tues 11th February – 7.30pm – **Concord Students Only**
Wed 12th February – 1.30pm – **Primary Schools**
Wed 12th February – 7.30pm – **Concord Students and External Visitors**
Thur 13th February – 7.30pm – **External Visitors**

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CHARITY

Easter

QUIZ

1-6
PEOPLE
PER TEAM

£10
PER TEAM



19th
April

Start at
7pm

Condoover Club SY5 7AA

All In Aid Of Hope House Hospice



What's on



9th February

Coffee morning with cakes and breakfast baps at Ryton Village Hall, in support of The Friends of the Fox Inn. Open from 10.30am to 12.30pm.

13th February

Tales After Dark brings you two unsettling ghostly stories, told by candlelight at Church Stretton Library. Begins at 6.30pm and ends at 8.30pm, with a break for refreshments. Tickets £6, available from www.ticketsource.co.uk/weeping-bank. Unsuitable for under 15 year olds, and anyone of a nervous disposition!

14th February

Looking to celebrate Valentine's Day with your friends and neighbours? Come along to Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall. Beer, wine and soft drinks available all evening. Kids and well-behaved dogs very welcome. 7.30pm onwards!

15th and 16th February

Enjoy the snowdrops at Cound, and pop into the Guildhall for tea and cake afterwards. The Guildhall will be open for refreshments from 10.00am to 5.00pm on both days. To download a copy of the snowdrop walk route, go to www.coundguildhall.co.uk/uploads/8/2/1/1/8211305/cound_snowdrop_walk_guide_2020.pdf.

15th and 16th February

Support the Lingen Davies Cancer Fund and enjoy an hour or two enjoying the first snowdrops of spring at Winsley Hall, Westbury, followed by refreshments and home-made cakes served in the Saddle Room. Entry £5 per person, payable in cash on the day. Dogs on leads welcome! Grounds open from 10.30am to 4.00pm on both days.

17th to 21st February

Come along to the Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre to take part in a Bubbles and Balloons event, aimed at 4 to 11 year olds. Learn to make balloon animals, experiment with static electricity and a hovercraft, and find out how to make mega bubbles with things you can find around the home. Tickets £4.50 per child (all children must be accompanied by an adult). Runs from 1.00pm to 2.30pm. Booking essential at www.shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk/whats-on/bubbles-and-balloons-1

18th February

Kids are welcome to pop along to The Chalet at Carding Mill Valley to take part in a craft based activity day focussed on learning about native mammals. Open from 10.00am to 3.00pm. This is a free event (no need to book), but normal car parking charges will apply. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

21st February

Quiz night in support of The Friends of the Fox Inn. Teams of six, please. Entry £10 per team. Doors open at 6.30 and there will be a cash bar to help the evening go with a swing.

14th March

Pub Night at Pitchford Village Hall rolls round again. Come along to meet friends and neighbours old and new, and enjoy a drink and a chat. Doors open at 7.30pm.

22nd March

Breakfast butties are back at Pitchford Village Hall. Pop in between 9.30 and 12.30 for a delicious breakfast using locally sourced products. Veggie options now available! There will also be the chance to work up an appetite by joining in with the free Pitchford Village Hall circular spring walk. Meeting at 9.45am at the Village Hall and everyone is welcome.

22nd March

Enjoy some muddy fun and raise money for Severn Hospice on the Pontesbury Potter, a 13 mile sponsored trek starting from Mary Webb School. Expect rugged terrain, slippery slopes, high hilltops and plenty of mud, but the exact route will be kept secret until the big day. Take the route at your own pace – run, jog or walk. To book a place, go to <https://events.severnospice.org.uk/events/details>. Entries £15 per person. Children aged 12 to 16 welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult.

23rd March

Help to raise money for Hope House Children's Hospice by taking part in a circular 10 mile walk along the picturesque Llangollen Canal. Ticket prices £15 for adults and £5 for children aged 16 and under. Bring a picnic, or stop off halfway to buy lunch at The Poacher's Pocket. To book a place, go to www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/llangollen-canal-walk-2025-tickets-1002957020447.

5th to 6th April

Shropshire Way 80k Festival takes place in the Shropshire Hills. Join hundreds of runners and walkers and help raise money for Grow Cook Learn, which this year is focussing on helping children living in inner-city area understand how their food is grown. Choose from a range of distances – the full 80k, 26 miles, 13 miles or 10k, each with its own target time limit for completion. Entry fees vary from £60 for the 80k to £20 for the 10k. To book a place, go to www.sientries.co.uk/event.php?elid=Y&event_id=13976

11th April

Fancy a pint or a glass of wine? Come along to Pitchford Village Hall Pub Night for a drink and a chat. Doors open at 7.30pm.

19th April

Easter Quiz in aid of Hope House Children's Hospice at the Condover Club. Doors open at 6.00pm. Teams of up to 6 welcomed. £10 entry fee per team, and a fund-raising raffle on the night. Please bring cash to pay on the day.

2025 EVENTS AT PITCHFORD HALL

If you'd like to peek behind the scenes at Pitchford Hall, guided tours of what has been described as 'Britain's finest half-timbered house' will be taking place during the spring and summer. Tours feature the main rooms on the ground floor including the great hall and drawing room, and 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 sometimes included in the tour.

Ticket prices are £27.50, and include tea and cakes served in the Pitchford Orangery & Walled Garden. Tour dates for the first half of 2025 are 8th April, 8th May, 5th June and 15th July.

On 7th August there will also be a tour with refreshments including English sparkling wine and chocolate. Tickets for all events can be purchased at www.historichouses.org/house/pitchford-hall/visit/.

NEWS FROM LONGNOR SCHOOL

The children of Longnor School came back to school in the new year full of energy and eager to learn. This term we are looking forward to Young Voices where our students will participate in a huge pop concert alongside children from across the region. This event is held at Birmingham's Resorts World Arena and gives our children an amazing opportunity to engage with a variety of songs and music in a fantastic and exciting setting.

In March, our older students will be taking part in their residential visit to Arthog in Wales. The children will

spend five days there, taking part in many exhilarating outdoor activities. We are hoping for some good weather to make this trip extra special. Kestrels class will be visiting St Lawrence's Church in Ludlow in early February for a day of drama activities. As always, we are very grateful to all the helpers, locally and further afield, who run these kind of enrichment activities for our young people.

The staff and children have quickly established some new clubs and activities in school, including a new book club, indoor athletics, gymnastics and

Minecraft club. We are also delighted that one of our parents has kindly started offering ballet lessons in school. In sport, our year 3 and 4 students are involved in a Dodgeball final in the coming month. We wish them good luck.

World Book Day is on the horizon – a fantastic day where staff and children alike dress up as their favourite book characters. We always look forward to seeing which literary characters are most popular within our school community.

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

NEWS FROM MUCH WENLOCK AND CRESSAGE MEDICAL PRACTICE

CHANGES TO APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

Much Wenlock Medical Practice overhauled its appointment system in November, in order to direct patients to the care they need more effectively.

Patients can use the following routes to contact the surgery:

For urgent (but non-life threatening) assistance, patients should ring the surgery on **01952 736011**. The reception team will ask for a few details and will add the patient's name to the emergency doctor's list. The emergency doctor will review the patient's needs and provide the relevant medical support.

For new and existing problems, patients can contact the surgery by either telephoning the surgery to ask for an appointment, by completing the 'contact us' form on the practice website (www.muchwenlockandcressage.mp.co.uk) or by calling into the surgery in person.

Appointments and assistance may be offered in person at the surgery, by phone, on a video call or by text or email.

SURGERY CLOSURE

The practice will be closed on Thursday 6th February from 12 noon to 6.00pm for staff training. Please contact NHS **111** if you need urgent health care or advice during this time.

MAD MARCH HARES

We are lucky to live in an area where sightings of hares are not uncommon. While they are most often spotted during summer evenings, loping across the fields or scooting along the lanes, it isn't unusual to see hares in March, behaving for all the world as if they were as mad as the saying suggests. People also talk of hares 'boxing' at this time of year. But what drives this odd behaviour?

Hares were traditionally linked to witches in old myths and stories, due to their apparent ability to suddenly disappear from sight, and their March antics were sometimes thought to be part of a 'witches' dance'.

Brown hares are the fastest British land mammal, managing speeds of up to 40mph courtesy of their long, powerful back legs. Their agility means that they can perform instant sharp turns at breakneck speed to evade predators, which along with their habit of hunkering down tight to the ground in any small hollow, gave rise to the stories of them magically vanishing while being chased or hunted.

Not originally native to Britain, the brown hare is thought to have been introduced by the Romans for food and also for sport – although there is also a native mountain hare, which can still be found in the Scottish highlands and parts of the north of England, and which turns white in winter in order to camouflage itself in snowy conditions. There are thought to be around 1 million brown hares in Britain, although changes in farming practices, including larger fields of single crops and fewer hedgerows may be putting them at risk in some areas.

And what about their March madness? This is not 'boxing' between rival males, as was thought at one time but rather lovers' tiffs between males and females during the mating season. Male hares chase the females at high speed, with both zig zagging across open countryside apparently at random and in a 'mad' dance. If the female isn't interested she will stop, turn around and hit him with her front paws. Often the males will retaliate, leading to the sight of apparently boxing hares. These boxing matches can become quite heated, with fur literally flying in some cases.

However, the females do eventually decide to give their suitors a chance, and up to four litters of two to four youngsters, known as leverets, will be born from April until October. The youngsters are left alone in shallow scrapes, known as forms, during the day, with the mother returning at dusk to feed them. If you come across a young hare lying in a field during the day, don't assume that it has been abandoned – it is probably just waiting for its mother to return!



NEWS FROM PITCHFORD VILLAGE HALL

BREAKFAST BUTTIES

The 'butties' event in December was a lovely affair, with plenty of customers taking advantage of our wonderful breakfast butties made from goods from local producers, and the stalls from other local businesses which were Blackhurst Beef, The Little Farm Shop and the Shrewsbury Food Hub. We are planning another four such events this year with the first coming sometime in March – keep an eye out on the ABC and PVH Facebook sites for details nearer the time. We would also like to thank all those who supported our breakfast events last year and hope to see you again later in 2025.

SHROPSHIRE VILLAGE HALL QUIZ LEAGUE

The Hall played host to the latest round of this season's Shropshire Village Hall Quiz League. Nine teams from across the county took part with our own team of John and Jo Long with Keith and Jill Faulkner coming third and who are now currently lying second in Division 2 of the league. Well done to them!

PUB NIGHTS:

Pub nights are held on the second Friday of each month and all are welcome! Dates in this quarter are Friday 14th February, Friday 14th March and Friday 11th April. We hoped you enjoyed the complimentary turkey baps and mince pies last December and the chilli-con-carne on offer in January, all courtesy of Rachel Johnson with Steaky and Jamie – we look forward to more of their culinary delights to compliment the drinks in the coming months! Again, detail of these will be publicised through the Facebook sites.

PVH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

We are really pleased to welcome a couple of new and much needed volunteers with our PVH Team, and it will be no surprise that they are Ian Maddox (aka Steaky) and Jamie Barrett, both of PVH Pub Night food fame. Should anyone else wish to join, whether it is full membership or simply to help out behind the pub night bar (or anything in between including help with future events) then we'd love to hear from you!!

HIRING OF THE HALL

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

Children's parties: £30

Meetings: £20

Other bookings: £40 and £60 for events over 6 hours

Should you wish to hire the hall for your own use, then again, please contact Mike Price.

Mike Price

(Chairman)

email: price622@btinternet.com

mobile: 07740 067955

Chris Jones

(Secretary)

email: csjay@btinternet.com

mobile: 07538 744807

Jeanette Reaney

(Tote Organiser)

email: jeanettereaney@hotmail.com

mobile: 07971 780963

John Glover (PVH Committee)

SHROPSHIRE MUSEUMS IN 2025

Shropshire has a wealth of local museums, which are just right for exploring during the winter, when bad weather makes being outdoors less attractive.

Perhaps the jewel in the crown is Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery which stands in The Square in Shrewsbury. The Museum regularly holds events for children, including 'Museum Babies' every Tuesday morning during term time, offering sensory play and interaction for little ones up to the age of 18 months. For 2 to 4 year olds there are the 'Mini Mammoths' on Thursdays in term time, when singing, story-telling, crafts and exploring the museum are all on offer. For older children there are one off events, such as 'Get Creative' on 21st February; one of a series of workshops were over 5s can try drawing, painting or sculpture guided by qualified teachers, and a look at Roman myths, legends, gods and monsters for 6 to 11 year olds on 20th February. On 18th February, 8 to 11 year olds can have a go at making a Roman-style mosaic.

Creatively-minded adults are also catered for, with a sketchbook circle meeting on Fridays in term time and a series of workshops on creative darning starting on 28th February.

Of course, there is also the permanent Museum collection to be explored, in addition to regular special exhibits. Until 30th April, the Museum is hosting an exhibition and a series of workshops and talks focussed on 'Sun and Fire – Life and Death at the Dawn of Prehistory', which looks at life in Shropshire before the arrival of the Romans. If you prefer more recent history, then pop along to enjoy the Corbet Household Re-enactment Group, who will be looking at medieval life and games, dressed in their period finery.

In Much Wenlock, you can find out all about local geology and also dip into the history of the modern Olympics and the life of the man widely seen as its founder – William Penny Brooks. During the winter months (until April) the museum is open on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10.00am to 1.00pm, and from 1.30pm to 4.30pm.

Other venues which come under the banner of Shropshire Museums include Coleham Pumping Station, which has open days throughout the year when visitors can see the steam engines in action, and Shrewsbury Castle, which re-opens after its winter closure on 14th February.

For more information on all of the above events and to book tickets where necessary, go to

www.shropshiremuseums.org.uk/events/.

Ironbridge also has its own selection of amazing museums, including the Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, the Museum of the Gorge, Jackfield Tile Museum, Coalport China Museum and Blists Hill Victorian Town, all brought together under the title of Ironbridge Valley of Invention. There are adult workshops available at Coalport China Museum and Blists Hill, where you can learn new skills such as blacksmithing, printing and pottery making. For something guaranteed to appeal to children, head to Enginuity, where they can enjoy hands-on and interactive science and engineering activities. Information on all the Ironbridge Gorge museums can be found at www.ironbridge.org.uk.

Also not to be forgotten is the RAF Museum at Cosford. This wonderful museum is free to enter (parking charges apply), and offers stories of the Cold War, displays of aircraft, iconic cars, models, tanks and even life-sized Russian dolls. It is home to the world's oldest Spitfire and several other classic aircraft in the War in the Air Hangar. There are also some interactive and immersive exhibits to get the pulses racing (there are charges for these) and a playground to keep the little ones happy. For more information visit

www.rafmuseum.org.uk/midlands/

MESSAGE FROM **COUNCILLOR DAN MORRIS** SHROPSHIRE COUNCILLOR FOR BURNELL

This article is all about planning and council structures.

Planning Reform: Planning Committees

Late last year a consultation for the future of Local Planning Committees was announced by the new Government. It can be read here:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-reform-working-paper-planning-committees.

It proposes options for change to planning committees in England that would support the plan-led system, including the introduction of a national scheme of delegation, a new system of targeted committees for strategic development, and mandatory training for committee members. In effect this consultation will lead to most applications being dealt with by officers and if a site is agreed within a local plan, it will get built on. There will be fewer planning decisions considered by locally elected members.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Final Document

The reform of planning committees was quickly followed by the release of a new NPPF document:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2.

The Government confirmed that Shropshire Council's annual housing figure (currently 1073) will rise to 1994. In our draft local plan the number was 1450 so this confirms a significant increase. The increase in numbers

means the Shropshire Council draft local plan will now need some significant changes by adding land to the plan to not be withdrawn from the planning inspector's examination process, as the council currently now doesn't meet its 5-year land supply targets.

Having a 5 year land supply target is a planning policy requirement for councils in England to ensure that enough land is allocated and available to meet the housing needs of their area over a rolling 5 year period. This target is designed to support sustainable development and ensure a sufficient supply of housing. If Shropshire Council does not have enough land to meet its targets (which is the case with the new numbers given to the council as it stands today) then a presumption in favour of sustainable development would apply. This makes it easier for developers to gain planning permission, even on sites not designed for development in the Local Plan, provided the proposals align with national and local planning policies.

English Devolution White Paper

On 16th December, the Government released the English Devolution White Paper:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper. Effectively

what this does is abolish every Council except for those Unitary councils that have a population of 500,000k (give or take 10%).

The first councils to receive letters were those County Councils and Districts with elections in 2025, asking if they wished to postpone their elections. Some councils have done this, but Shropshire Council elections on May 1st this year will go ahead as planned. In short, the White Paper seeks to abolish two tier authorities (County Councils & District Councils) and make all councils Unitary like Shropshire has been since 2011. Following that Unitary Councils will need to cover a population of more than 500,000, this will inevitably mean that Shropshire (current population around 323,00) will have to merge with another authority, but there are no timescales for this yet. Once these changes have been made (or alongside these changes) Unitary Councils will be asked (or mandated) to come together in a combined authority under a mayor. The mayor will also be the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Fire Chief. So, all in all the structure of local Government, and how development will take place, is changing very quickly.

If you have any other questions on any matters you think I can help on, please do get in touch by email

dan.morris@shropshire.gov.uk,

on twitter [@dan4burnell](https://twitter.com/dan4burnell) or by phone on **07902 408400**.

Dan Morris

*Shropshire Council Member for Burnell.
Cabinet Member for Highways & Infrastructure.*

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

The Council met on 19th November and 21st January. Papers and minutes are available at www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk/meetings.

FINANCES

A key item for meetings has been setting the budget for 2025/6 and, from this, agreeing the precept for the next financial year.

The precept is that small portion of the council tax which funds the Parish Council – currently just under £24.00 per household each year. Our Parish Council has been fortunate in that over recent years the Neighbourhood Fund, which is our portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy – Shropshire's charge on local developers, together with income from the solar farm on the old Condover airfield has been available to fund all the projects we have initiated: defibrillators, Pitchford Village Hall refurbishment, bus shelters at Frodesley and Pitchford, noticeboards, village gateways, Jubilee picnic etc. However, though restrictions are slightly different, Neighbourhood Fund and solar farm income can only be used for community 'projects' and cannot be used for general running of the Parish Council which must be covered by the precept. Running costs comprise principally the clerk's salary, but also membership of council associations (local and national- essential for support on legislation, statutory requirements etc.), IT equipment and support, insurance, training, meeting costs, local elections, etc.

Prior to the availability of the additional funds noted above, the Parish Council had built up reserves which, when no longer needed to fund projects, were run down over a number of years by freezing the precept. Having reached a reasonable level of reserves there was an increase in 23/24. No increase was made for 24/25. However, running costs have continued to increase and 25/26 will see an upgrade to the email system along with local elections on May 1st so an increase of 9.9% has been agreed. This comes to an average increase of just under £2.40 per household over the year.

PROJECTS

No large projects are envisaged for 25/26. However, the telephone boxes are to be refurbished, and funds are being provided for a broadband connection to Pitchford Village Hall. This will make the hall more attractive to hire but will allow the Parish Council to take advantage of revised legislation which is set to permit remote attendance at meetings. All meetings (and any voting) will continue to be in person but this facility will be available to anyone who is unable to attend.

The Parish Council has funds available for community projects and would welcome proposals from residents. Please contact the clerk and use the forms available on the website: www.actonburnellparishcouncil.org.uk/grants-parish-groups.

OTHER ISSUES

The new 30mph speed limit, mirror, etc. for Frodesley, along with additional 30mph roundels for Pitchford and Acton Burnell and removal of the old yellow signs at Acton Burnell are now apparently in the Shropshire Council 25/26 work programme. A request has been made to at least expedite the mirror at Frodesley to improve safety for those leaving the village.

Severn Trent has responded relating to sewage issues at Acton Burnell and Pitchford. Capacity of the Acton Burnell treatment works is quoted at just over 1000 residents which seems adequate and improved solutions for the Pitchford septic tank are being considered.

Shropshire Council has approved the planning application for the mobile phone tower at Frodesley Hall Farm which should provide improved reception for all our villages. Speed will depend on the individual service provider.

The Council agreed to fund grass cutting on the old Roman Road and will continue to pursue options to keep local footpaths from becoming overgrown; possibly through organising volunteer groups or contracting. It is hoped to have some plans in place for the summer.

Everyone is urged to continue to report issues with potholes and eroded verges via the "Fix my Street" website.

The next Parish Council Meeting is set for Tuesday 11th March 2025 at Pitchford Village Hall to start at 19:30.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Shropshire Council is offering the public the chance to have their say in choosing the name of the new park which will form part of the new Smithfield Riverside development in Shrewsbury. The park will feature play equipment, sunken rain gardens, seating, lawns and a space for events. It has been designed to provide a calm, relaxing space only a few moments from the town centre.

You can vote for one of the shortlist of possible names (all suggested by Shropshire residents) – Beagle, Riverside, Salop, Drover's, Smithfield or Origin. You can also vote on whether you would prefer the space to be known as 'Gardens' or 'Park'.

Voting closes on 12th February and you can have your say by going to www.smithfieldriverside.com/have-your-say.



Letter from Westminster

Happy New Year! Within the blink of an eye, 2025 has arrived. I am writing to you, having just begun my recovery from reconstructive surgery on my foot. I suffered a high velocity gunshot wound during a live firing attack at the age of just 17, which shattered my foot and has required treatment ever since. I am using this opportunity to highlight the ongoing physical and mental impact that ex-service personnel face. As home to some 4,000 veterans, I know many others in South Shropshire share this experience. That is why I am so committed to making Shropshire the best place to be a veteran – ensuring it is as easy as possible to access the right support at the right time.

The new year has begun with a flurry of announcements from the government, following the Prime Minister's 'Plan for Change' published in December. Sadly, his Plan does not mention rural areas even once. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the government has decided to plough ahead with its decision to 'redirect' funding previously dedicated to rural areas. As the Council has reported, Shropshire's rural geography means that it takes longer and costs more to deliver services than it does for most other authorities. Without the necessary support, rural councils may have to resort to steep increases in the council taxes levied on residents.

On the final week of the parliamentary year, the government announced it will not provide financial compensation to women affected by increases to the State Pension Age. Almost four million women were impacted. The Ombudsman found two incidents of maladministration – in 2005 and then again in 2006 – when the government at the time could have been better in communicating the changes. It has made a clear recommendation that compensation should be paid to those impacted. I am calling on Ministers to step up to their responsibilities and take swift action to address injustices inflicted the last time that they were in government.

South Shropshire is home to many historic buildings – like New Market Hall in Bridgnorth. Yet, urgent action is needed to ensure its continued use. So, I was delighted to meet Bridgnorth locals, Huw Rees and Richard North to discuss it. Huw has initiated a petition calling on Shropshire Council to use its powers to acquire the building for the good of the community if urgent remedial action is not taken by the owners. After a decade of disrepair, it is time to revive the building for the future.

This year, the litmus test for me will be whether the government's plans will benefit rural communities, where we have so much unlocked potential to drive economic growth and prosperity. I also want to find out your thoughts on what the government should prioritise. Whether it is health, housing, education, or planning your feedback is important to me. So, do visit my website and share your views. If you prefer a paper copy, just let me know.

Stuart Anderson MP






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