

Consultation statement – Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

1. This Consultation Statement supports the Neighbourhood Plan Submission in accordance with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. It contains the following:
 - a. Details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
 - b. Explains how they were consulted;
 - c. Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
 - d. Describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.
2. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (Localism Act 2011) require a Consultation Statement to set out the consultations undertaken for the neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with these regulations and the Local Planning Authority's guidance on consultation, the preparation of the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Development Plan has involved residents, and other organisations with an interest in the parish in the preparatory stages of the Neighbourhood Plan.
3. This Statement sets out details of events and consultations. It lists activities in which the local community has been involved and the ongoing work of volunteers. The aim of the consultations in the Parish of Pontesbury has been to ensure that there is as widespread as possible understanding of the reasons for and content of the Neighbourhood Plan.
4. Following a public consultation, Shropshire Council agreed on 1st March 2017 that Pontesbury Parish Council area was an appropriate area for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan to be prepared for the Parish Council. Responsibility for the development of the plan was then delegated to a Steering Group consisting of parish councillors and members of the community who reported progress on a monthly basis. Although the composition of the Steering Group has varied over the years, it has always included several residents to ensure that the interests of the community were adequately represented.
5. As the Neighbourhood Plan area is large and contains at least ten villages and hamlets, the monthly newsletter - delivered to almost every household - has been the most obvious means of keeping the whole parish updated and involved with the Neighbourhood Plan. Also, the Parish Council has provided information on its website www.pontesburyparishcouncil.org.uk and the Steering Group set up a dedicated website www.pontesburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk and a Facebook page in 2021. A record of all Steering Group meetings is available from the Parish Clerk at clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk.
6. The newsletter provided not only information but requests for participation in aspects of the plan such as the village character which led to small groups providing valuable local knowledge. Copied below is an extract from the March 2021 edition of the Pontesbury parish Newsletter:



Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan/March update Has Pontesbury Got Character?

Yes, of course it has! When asked, most people agree that it is a caring, friendly community. But if we ask the same question of the place rather than its people the answer is more elusive. However defining the character of Pontesbury does matter because its future development depends in part on answering this question. Residents refer frequently to the variety of materials and building styles as a defining characteristic of its appearance. Certainly there is a different ambience and outlook from Mount Way compared with Shrewsbury Road; not better but different. Perhaps here lies the answer – different parts have a different character based on their history and geographical location.

Professional people who make decisions on our future development are required to ask what is distinctive about Pontesbury so that its spirit of place and our sense of belonging can if possible be safeguarded. This is even less easy to answer. Its setting beneath Pontesford and Earls Hills and their dominance in views approaching and from the village may be part of the answer. The important answers need to come from the village otherwise what is appreciated and valued by local people may well be overlooked by an outsider with limited local knowledge. So, answers to the above questions really matter and will be gratefully received by the Parish Clerk.

Debbie Marais, Parish Clerk
clerk@pontesburypc.org.uk



Initial questionnaire

7. **Who was consulted and how were they consulted?** A short list of 6 questions (see Appendix 1) was drawn up by the Steering Group and nearly 400 responses were received covering all settlements and all age groups. In addition to the paper-based questionnaire, responses were sought at a variety of venues in 2018 including the local agricultural show at Lea Cross, Church fete in Pontesbury, street fair in Plealey, Gardeners' show in Pontesbury and at the Mary Webb School.
8. **What issues and concerns were raised?** The main issues identified in the initial consultation were:
 - a. Maintaining the very attractive rural environment including opportunities to enjoy it and the peaceful ambience of the hamlets.
 - b. The much valued services in Pontesbury village and the need to retain and enhance them.
 - c. The risk of future overdevelopment of Pontesbury village.
 - d. The problems posed by increased traffic especially regarding inadequate parking facilities.
 - e. Facilities for younger people including affordable homes.
 - f. The need for more employment facilities.
9. Not for the first time in its long history, Pontesbury village was perceived to be under threat from external forces. Whereas place name, castle site and Saxon defences remind us of a long ago danger to the very fabric of the settlement, today the danger is to the character and ambience of the village from possible overdevelopment and suburbanisation. The seriousness of the threat is debatable, but the Neighbourhood Plan has to address these concerns.
10. **How have the issues and concerns been considered?** The issues and concerns formed the basis of a draft Vision, and list of Objectives was created:
 - a. Rural landscape and open spaces
 - b. Services and amenities

- c. Design and provision of housing
- d. Movement and transport
- e. Employment and business opportunities

11. A drop in-event in Pontesbury village hall was well attended in July 2019 when over 40 written responses gave unanimous support for the proposed Vision and Objectives which then became the basis for a more detailed questionnaire in 2020.

The 2020 questionnaire

12. **Who was consulted and how were they consulted?** In January 2020 the Steering Group engaged professional help from Shropshire Rural Community Council to assist in the preparation, distribution and analysis of a detailed questionnaire of 38 questions. (See Appendix 2.) This was posted to every household in the parish with the option of responding online or via a FREEPOST envelope. A total of 330 responses were received, representing an overall response rate of 24%. Covid restrictions led to the deadline for responses being extended from the end of July to the beginning of September.

13. **What issues and concerns were raised?** The following points were raised in the replies to the 2020 Questionnaire:

- a. The vision was supported by 86% of responses.
- b. Local facilities were well supported with over half of households using local shops weekly.
- c. There was very strong support for safeguarding views towards the AONB and protecting conservation areas.
- d. Regarding future housing, the following points all received strong support: bungalows; small infill sites; brownfield sites; conversions; design to reflect local character; each property to have its own garden and electric charging point; affordable homes. Note that the housing questions were designed to complement and not duplicate the Shropshire Council Housing Survey which ran at the same time with an emphasis on individual housing need.
- e. Local footpaths are regularly used by 79% of households. The most popular requests were for an improvement in their condition, good signage and making some more accessible to people with limited mobility.
- f. There was some support for allocating extra land for employment with land next to Malehurst Industrial Estate being the preferred option. Faster broadband was the major concern of those working in the parish.
- g. There was support for increasing tourism provided it was small scale and in keeping with local character and close to settlements with encouragement for walking for tourists supported by 39% of respondents.
- h. It is very important to note that the questionnaire was designed to provide details to develop policies based on objectives which had already received strong support in earlier consultation. Concerns regarding over-development, increased traffic and inadequate parking facilities mirrored concerns made in the initial survey.

14. **How have the issues and concerns been addressed?** After analysing the responses to the 2020 Questionnaire, the following was decided:

- a. A detailed analysis was presented on the Neighbourhood Plan website and a summary in the monthly newsletter pointed out the advantage of a Neighbourhood Plan and how the important concerns such as speeding, flooding and parking would continue to be investigated by the Parish Council.
- b. The increasing concern regarding climate change and carbon footprint expressed in numerous responses has resulted in a greater emphasis on green issues and an additional objective: Green Environment.
- c. Concerns about over-development and loss of character have been addressed by drawing up detailed Character Assessment of Pontesbury village and the parish landscape.
- d. As intended, the questionnaire responses have provided much detail for policies as well as confirming the wishes expressed in the first survey. In drawing up draft policies for Regulation 14 consultation, the Steering Group was not only mindful of the concerns of residents but also the advice given by Shropshire Council that the Neighbourhood Plan should complement and not duplicate the emerging Revised Local Plan.

Regulation 14 Consultation

15. **Who was consulted and how were they consulted?** As the draft Plan had now reached a recognisable stage of development, the Steering Group went to significant lengths to ensure that the Regulation 14 Consultation reached as many parish residents as possible.
- a. Advance publicity was provided on the Pontesbury Parish Council and Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan websites.
 - b. Consultation information was provided by banners, on noticeboards throughout the parish and in the parish newsletter (see Appendix 3). Information was also supplied to the local press.
 - c. Throughout the six weeks of consultation, which ran from 1st March 2022 to 12th April 2022 (and was extended by 2 weeks), it was publicised via social media and the website.
 - d. Each household received a 12 page summary of the draft plan as an insert in the parish newsletter which explained where the full draft could be viewed – online or at the Pavilion Community Centre in Pontesbury village. A display board, hard copies and a collection box for responses were available at the Pavilion (see Appendix 3).
 - e. A drop-in facility for questions and responses was provided by the Steering Group members between 10am – 12pm on each Saturday morning during the consultation (see Appendix 3).
 - f. Draft copies of the Plan were sent to adjoining parish councils, local schools, businesses and Shropshire Council. The Council provided an extensive an extensive list of additional consultees including English Heritage, Environment Agency and Natural England who were all emailed and sent a link to the website (see Appendix 4).
 - g. The summary version of the draft Plan sent to each household contained a detachable response form with the option of replying online or in writing. A framed print made from locally commissioned artwork was used to promote the draft plan and encourage responses. The full draft Plan contained four pages of artwork and photographs of different parts of the parish by a well-known local photographer.

16. Nearly 60 respondents provided over 130 responses and 10 consultees replied. Most responses were generally supportive. Some raised concerns not relevant to Neighbourhood Plans or did not appreciate how the Neighbourhood Plan complemented the Local Plan.

17. **What were the main issues and concerns?** The main issues raised in the public consultation were:

Topic raised from responses	Number of comments
Support of local character, historic buildings	16
Maintaining gaps between settlements	14
Traffic congestion/air pollution	9
Design of new homes	8
Pathways/footpaths/bridleways	8
Objections to previous/ongoing developments	8
Farming	7
Use of electric car charging points/alternative energy for transport	7
Green energy in new housing	7
Wildlife/biodiversity	7
Public parking	6
New developments not blocking existing views	5
Cycle ways	4
Encouraging local/ young families to the Parish	4
Parking spaces for new housing	3
Public transport	3
Poultry farms	3
Tourism accommodation	3
Issues around provision of disability access	3
Sewerage and flooding	2
Light pollution/ street lighting	2
Garden size for new homes	2
Village halls	1

18. These responses were individually logged and the Steering Group met several times in May/June 2022 to consider carefully all of the responses in order to decide whether amendments to the draft Neighbourhood Plan should be made. The Steering Group's responses and decisions to each point raised are available on the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan website.

19. **How have the issues and concerns been addressed?** In response to comments made to the Regulation 14 draft Plan, the Steering Group have made the following amendments/Changes:

- a. The list of amenities in Policy COM1 Has been updated.
- b. Typing and grammatical errors have been corrected, maps made clearer and missing captions/keys added.
- c. More emphasis has been placed on retaining the character of Pontesbury village around the Plough and ford.
- d. The importance of hedges has been emphasised.
- e. An extra paragraph and rewording has been added to Policy LAN2 in response to Historic England's comments, and extra evidence/justification added to this policy.

- f. The evidence/justification for Policy LAN6 has been strengthened.
- g. For Policy HOU2 extra evidence/justification regarding affordable homes has been added.
- h. In Policy MOV1 there is clarification regarding mobility scooters.
- i. For Policy MOV2 a new section has been introduced with added explanation.
- j. For Policy EMP1 there is a new section in response to the comments from Historic England, and new point 7 added.
- k. For Policy GRE3 – for clarification section 1 has been reworded.
- l. In response to Shropshire Council’s comments: minor alterations to wording of policies COM1, LAN2, LAN6, HOU2 and MOV2; improved clarity of maps; addition of paragraph numbering.

Conclusion

20. The main issues identified in the initial consultation have been addressed in this Neighbourhood Plan. Services and Pontesbury’s beautiful rural and historic environment are tackled in COM1 and LAN1-6 and the Design Policy should make development a little more welcomed by the parish residents. In the course of the preparation of this Plan, youth facilities have been improved through the construction and commissioning of the new library and Community Hub.

21. Traffic problems remain but progress is being made to alleviate inadequate parking facilities by Pontesbury Parish Council in conjunction with Shropshire Council.

22. Echoing the words of the revised NPPF and the wisdom of architect Clough Williams-Ellis, one respondent to the Regulation 14 draft declared that maintaining the natural beauty and heritage of the Parish should be the ‘cornerstone of any planning policy’. The Steering Group has kept this in mind when formulating policies which it believes have in large measure matched the aspirations and concerns of parish residents.

Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan – Sources

Sources consulted in the preparation of the Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan included:-

Ashton Hayes Neighbourhood Plan
Bagshaw's Directory 1851
Centre for Sustainable Energy: How Green is my Plan
Centre for Sustainable Energy: Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency
Cruckton Hall Estate sales catalogue 1929
Documents relating to Proposed Pontesbury Conservation Area 2010
R K Morris: Pontesbury Built Heritage - a report commissioned by PNP Steering Group 2021
Pontesbury Official Guide (not dated)
Pontesbury Parish Plan 2007
Pontesbury Parish Handbook 2012
James Rebanks: English Pastoral 2021 published by Allen Lane 2020
Fiona Renolds: The Fight for Beauty published One World 2016
Roger Scruton: Report of Building Beautiful Commission 2020
Shropshire Council: Shropshire Landscape Typology
Shropshire Council: Gillespie's Landscape Sensitivity Assessment
Shropshire Council: Historic Environment Record
Shropshire Council: Habberley Conservation Area Appraisal
Shropshire Council: Plealey Conservation Area Appraisal
Shropshire Council: Minsterley - Pontesbury Place Plan
Shropshire Council: Revised Local Plan 2016-2038
Shropshire Council: Pontesbury RHRP Housing Survey Analysis 2020
Shropshire Council: Demographic Statistics/ Basic Data for Pontesbury Parish
Clough Williams- Ellis: Architect Errant published Constable 1971
Suffolk County Council: Suffolk Climate Action Plan

Appendix 1 to Pontesbury Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement

2018 Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire - List of Questions

The following questions were asked, and residents were also requested to mark their home location on a map of the parish so that the Steering Group could assess the geographical spread of the respondents:

1. What do you like about living in Pontesbury Parish?
2. What don't you like about living in Pontesbury Parish?
3. What are the problems / pressures which affect your life within Pontesbury Parish?
4. Which special features of Pontesbury Parish need to be protected / maintained?
5. What changes / improvements are needed to improve life in Pontesbury Parish?
6. What other links / uses do you have with other parts of Pontesbury Parish other than where you live?

The full Questionnaire, together with analysis, may be found on the Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan website:

<https://www.pontesburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/public-consultation/>

Appendix 2 to Pontesbury Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement

2020 Pontesbury Neighbourhood Plan Household Survey

The following is a summary of the 9-page Household Survey which was sent to all parish households in 2020. The full Survey, together with analysis, may be found on the Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan website:

<https://www.pontesburyneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/public-consultation/>

- Q1 Do you agree with the draft vision statement?
- Q2 Please write any comments about the draft vision statement here:
- Q3 With the above in mind, can you think of any specific green spaces that you would like to see designated as a Local Green Space? E.g. The School Green
- Q4 Should views towards the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty be safeguarded?
- Q5 Should special attention be taken to safeguarding conservation areas within the parish?
- Q6 How often do members of your household use these local facilities?
- Q7 If the opportunity arose, what new facilities would you like to see in the Parish?
- Q8 What type of dwelling(s) do you think should be developed? (Please tick as many boxes as you like)
- Q9 What is the maximum number of storeys that should be permitted in any new development? (Please tick one)
- Q10 Please indicate the type of development your household would like to see.
- Q11 Do you have land suitable for development for community use, such as: allotments, employment, parking, or new footpaths?
- Q12 Neighbourhood Plans can have design policies. Do members of your household agree with the following statements?
- Q13 Do have any comments on proposals for the number of car parking spaces per household?
- Q14 Do members of your household use public footpaths and rights of way in the Parish?
- Q15 What are the main reasons for using local footpaths and bridleways etc.? (Please tick all that apply)
- Q16 Which of the following suggestions for improvements to footpaths and rights of way are important?
- Q17 Would you like Pontesbury Parish to have a designated car park?
- Q18 If you or anyone in your household runs a business within Pontesbury Parish, how many people work there?
- Q19 What is the nature of this business? (Please tick all that apply)
- Q20 Do any members of your household work within Pontesbury Parish but NOT in your/their own business?
- Q21 Would any of the following improve your household's experience of working in the Parish or support the growth of the business or service?

- Q22 Should the neighbourhood plan allocate more land to encourage employment?
- Q23 If yes, where should such employment land be located? (please give details)
- Q24 Should any existing employment locations be protected from changes of use?
- Q25 Thinking about the kind of employment the plan could encourage, do you support the following:
- Q26 Do you think it is a good idea to encourage more tourism in the Pontesbury Parish?
- Q27 What opportunities for developing tourism do you think are appropriate within Pontesbury Parish?
- Q28 If you agree with an increase in the amount and range of visitor accommodation, which of the following development do you think would be appropriate in Pontesbury Parish?
- Q29 What information improvements do you think would be effective?
- Q30 If you have any land available or any comments about what would support farming diversification which would also bring community or landscape benefits please give details here.
- Q31 At the full council meeting in December 2019, Pontesbury Parish Council resolved to support the declaration of a climate emergency and to support drawing up a detailed action plan in pursuit of ensuring the council and parish are carbon neutral by 2030. What additional policies/activities would you like to see within the Neighbourhood Plan to help achieve this aim?
- Q32 Do you have any other comments, or is there any aspect of 'land use' that you would like to see covered in the Neighbourhood Plan that you think we may have missed? Please let us know in the box below.
- Q33 Are you the only person in your household completing a survey?
- Q34 Please write the number of individuals in your household in the relevant box. Please include those temporarily away from home
- Q37 How many years has your household resided in the Parish?
- Q38 Which of the areas of the Parish do you consider your household to be at?

Appendix 3 to Pontesbury Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement

Community Engagement for Regulation 14

1. The following images show examples of community engagement within Pontesbury Parish during the Regulation 14 Consultation period of the Neighbourhood Plan:

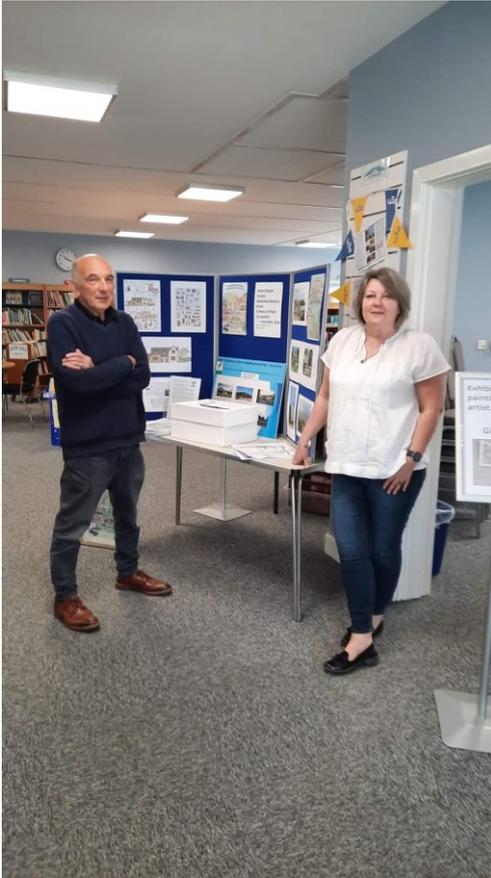
a. Photo of banner outside Pavilion – similar banners were displayed around the village and the wider parish throughout the Regulation 14 consultation.



b. Photo of consultation display at Pavilion – on display at the Pavilion throughout the period of the Regulation 14 Consultation.



c. Consultation engagement – Steering Group members ready to meet the public at one of the Regulation 14 drop-in consultation events.



Appendix 4 to Pontesbury Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement

Consultees

1. The following table shows a list of all Statutory and other consultees contacted by the Steering Group during the drafting of the Pontesbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan:

Consultees (listed alphabetically)		
AgroMerchants	Green Shropshire	Severn Trent Water
Amec Foster Wheeler Engineering	Grundon Waste Disposal	Shropshire Council
Arriva trains	Hanwood Parish Council	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Avison Young	Herefordshire Council	Solihull Council
Birmingham Council	Highways England	South Staffs Council
BT Connect	Historic England	SP Power Systems
CAA	Homes and Communities Agency	Sport England
Canal and River Trust	Malehurst Industrial Estate	SSE
Cheshire East Council	Malvern Hills Council	Staffordshire Council
Cheshire West and Cheshire Council	Minsterley Parish Council	Stoke Council
Client Earth.org	MOD	SW Development Plan
Coal Board	MSN.com	Telford Council
CPRE	National Grid	Tyler Parkes
CTIL Infrastructure	National Gypsy Traveller Federation	United Utilities plc
Culture.gov	NATS	Wallsall Council
Cy Foeth Naturiol Cymru	Natural England	Warwickshire Council
DFE	Network Rail	West Mercia Police
DGL Planning Consultants	Newcastle-Staffs Council	Western Power Distribution
Dudley Council	NHS Property	Wolverhampton Council
Dwr Cymru Water	Oil and Gas Authority	Woodland Trust
Dyfed Powys Police	ORR Rail Safety	Worcestershire Council
ee.com	Planning Directorate, Wales	Wrexham Council
English Heritage	Post Office	WW Utilities
Environment Agency	Powys Council	Wyre Forest Council
Forestry Commission	Sandwell Council	