

Unitary Councillor's May 2026 Report

Dear Councillors

I had the pleasure of meeting the Air Ambulance crew at RAF Cosford recently. Please see attachment above. I arranged a surprise "special birthday party" (70th) for my wife Pamela, also to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary. I requested no presents or cards, but a donation to this very special life-saving charity. It receives no government funding. We were happy to hand over a sum of £300. A big thank you to everyone who donated.

Stottesdon

Following on from the recent Stottesdon Parish Council Meeting, please see Shropshire Council information below, regarding the devolution of responsibility from County Council to Town and Parish Councils. I have requested more information, but this is what I have understood so far.

Kinlet

An application for a safety mirror to be put up at Winnal Court has been ongoing since last June. I have contacted the person who is responsible for authorising this. Apparently, it was classed as a non-prescribed sign, but I have managed to move this forward and am assured that the mirror will now be ordered.

I have reported the Meaton Lane potholes again and asked if the road be resurfaced.

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Neen Savage

I have contacted Andy Keyland, chasing up the level gauges for the ford and when the rest of the works at the ford will be scheduled? On my way to the recent Parish Council meeting, I saw the level gauges have been put up. I will report the other issues we discussed such as – Goesland corner, which urgently needs a safety barrier, also road repairs.

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Hopton Wafers

A question about the food waste collection was raised at the last parish council meeting. I made some enquiries and found that the food waste collection for all homes in England have come into force. But due to the very difficult financial position, Shropshire Council will ask the government to allow it to delay implementing food waste collections until 2039, the authority's cabinet says.

The Catherton to Cleeton St Mary Pothole is still there. Some of the other potholes along that stretch have been filled.

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Wheathill

I made some enquiries regarding the historical paperwork that is missing. The previous Chair does not have them.

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Farlow

If anyone wants to raise any concerns or would like me to follow something up or make enquiries, it would be helpful if it could be emailed to me please, so I can take it forward on your behalf.

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Cleobury Leisure Centre

The fundraising is still ongoing. The Friends of the Leisure Centre are doing an amazing job coming up with ideas for fundraising. A procurement process is now underway with the aim to appoint the next operator in early 2027. This is an exciting opportunity for the next ten years. The new contract will include new facilities. The total raised so far is £38,000, of which £15,000 has already been paid out to keep the leisure centre open so there is £23,000 in the bank. The total needed overall was £61,000. Another £23k is still needed. There is a food and ale trail planned to raise more funds.

Shropshire County Council

Shortlisting for the permanent Chief Executive role has now been completed. The next stage is an assessment centre at the Guildhall followed by interviews on Tuesday 28th April.

Update:- Tanya Miles has been appointed the new permanent Chief Executive, subject to ratification by Full Council on 14th May 2026.

Shropshire County Council's library service has been awarded £299,000 following a successful bid for Arts Council England Library Improvement funding. The funding will be used to support the refurbishment of 12 children's library spaces, plus the development of library spaces for young people within six of the council's larger libraries. The improvement work will be ongoing until December 2027. This is very good news for libraries.

A new crisis and resilience fund which will provide crucial support to residents experiencing financial hardship or sudden financial shocks. This important initiative is part of an ongoing commitment to supporting communities with the pressure of rising living costs. Replacing the previous household support fund, the new scheme is backed by central government through the department for work and pensions and will run from 1st April 2026 until 31st March 2029. Shropshire will receive £3.67 million each year to provide this support, alongside a further £758,558 in additional one-off funding to help rural households reliant on heating oil. The fund is designed to reach a wide range of low-income households,

and support isn't limited to those receiving benefits. Anyone facing short term financial strain or an unexpected drop in income can apply. There's more here: **What help can I claim from the Council** from Shropshire Council.

I understand there is some confusion within the local parish councils regarding the devolution of responsibility from County Council to Town and Parish Councils. I have asked for more clarification for myself regarding how this will work, what it will cost and what authority over spending is etc? Each town or parish can decide the level of self-governing they wish to adopt. Small parishes might not have the will or resource to take on this opportunity fully, so can cherry pick what they can manage. Or merge with another parish to allow greater autonomy. The county council will provide ongoing support to ensure town and parish councils are able to take on and manage this change. This will be in the form of face to face and online training. This will be continually reviewed to ensure the support is available and at a level appropriate for each parish.

Clearly this will have an impact on the workload so there is an opportunity to engage additional resources which can be funded via the precept. County will give details of monies allocated to the contractors at each parish, also the cost of these services. This should help when putting forward a spending plan for the precept.

Road Ranger Scheme. Pamela has been constantly chasing up trying to get a meeting arranged at Neen Sollars regarding this scheme. Neen Sollars have had the necessary training and equipment and enthusiasm to carry out the repairing of small potholes on minor roads and have been waiting three years! We have recently found out that Church Preen have recently started a pilot scheme already, even though Neen Sollars were up and ready to start. She is waiting to hear from Andy Wilde to see how much longer it will be before Neen Sollars get the go ahead.

I cannot believe it has been twelve months now since I took up the role of Unitary Councillor. It has been a pleasure meeting parish councillors and residents.

Kindest regards

David