

Sheriffhales Parish Magazine

June/July 2026



June and July, Midsummer Magic

In this issue we look back at the remarkable Sheriffhales community spirit in the early 2000's which led to the building of the village hall. Those who came to the village after 2011 may not know this extraordinary story.

The current hall with it's amazing facilities was built in 2010 to replace a dated timber church hall but only after the parish came together to raise an incredible sum of money between 2004 and 2010.

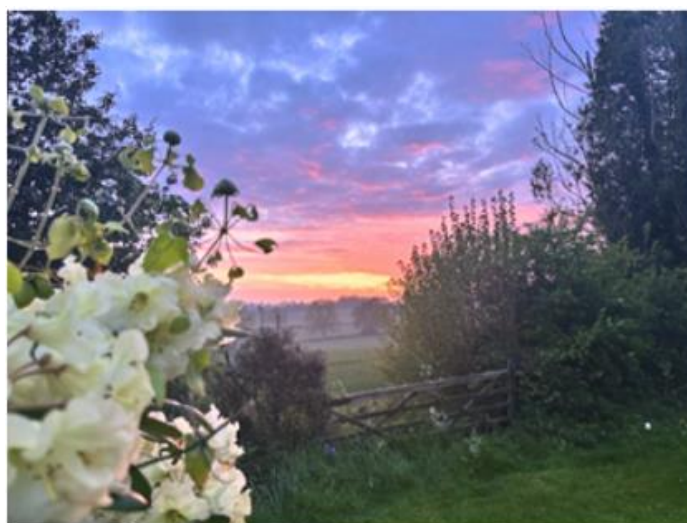
There were concerts, car boot sales, fun runs, suppers and many smaller fundraisers, but most significant of all was the amazing Country Fayre & Scarecrow Festival which ran from 2004 to 2010. Whilst all this fundraising was taking place, behind the scenes a village hall committee was tirelessly planning and campaigning to make the project a reality.

Our two archive stories try to give a brief overview of the village hall project and look back at the Country Fayre and Sheriffhales scarecrows.



"It was June, and the world smelled of roses. The sunshine was like powdered gold over the grassy hillside."

Maud Hart Lovelace



"In early June the world of leaf and blade and flowers explodes, and every sunset is different."

John Steinbeck



Sheriffhales Fundraising today

Sheriffhales has a history of amazing fundraising. After looking at the village hall legacy, made possible by activities in the 2000's, we also report on the fantastic efforts which are currently ongoing to raise funds for St Mary's Church.

It was great to see so many people turn out to the 2026 Tractor Rally which raised over £5000 for church funds.

There's an update from the church on page 7 and a thank you to the small team who are organising events to raise money.

The church finds itself in need of significant restoration and funds if it is to survive for future generations. There are more church fundraisers coming up this year starting with a concert by The Orchestra of Folk on 5th June. If you feel you could help with any of the events, the fundraising team would be delighted to hear from you! (You can always contact us at the magazine and we can put you in touch).



The Tractor Rally 2026, bigger and better

The 2026 Sheriffhales Tractor Rally and Road Run returned on 3rd May with even more vehicles taking part than last year. 88 Tractors and 4x4's set off on the 25 mile run through wonderful countryside via Beckbury. Taking place mostly on private lanes, not open to the public, the run was planned by Tony Shepherd. It was a spectacular celebration of agricultural heritage and technology.



Rev'd Valerie blessed the tractors and drivers before their departure

Thankfully the rain held off, and a large crowd gathered at the public viewing, enjoying breakfast in the field and village hall. There were squeals of delight from children walking through the village every time another tractor arrived!

Several families, who were staying at Teds Camp Site for the bank holiday, joined villagers and tractor enthusiasts all helping the fundraising cause. **The organisers were delighted to raise over £5000 for St Mary's Church, an amazing amount.**

Organiser Mike Bubb thanked the drivers, sponsors and public for supporting the rally and making the event such a success explaining what was behind the fundraising campaign. "The church has been here at the centre of the village for 1000 years and we need to work together to make sure it continues to survive on our watch for future generations." Mike also thanked everyone who had helped organise the road run and prepared and served the ploughman's lunch and breakfast.

After the tractors departed the annual Rogation Service took place in the church with Reverend Valerie and Sheriffhales Community Choir. A delicious ploughman's lunch and desserts were served in the village hall for public and the drivers on their return. It was a lovely, happy village event which honoured our parish's rural heritage.



Organiser Tony Shepherd led the rally out



A large crowd turned up to view the field full of tractors and 4x4's





The rally headed out down Marsh Lane



The village hall team cooked up 140 breakfast rolls and 109 lunches and the bar sold out of beer!

Finally, John Banks driving the last tractor watched the drivers safely back to the village ready for a late lunch.



Over the finish line and ready for a break!



Happy Birthday 74th birthday Sheriffhales WI



Our WI celebrates its birthday in the month of May and this year was our 74th year! We celebrated with the usual coming together of food, friendship and fun with entertainment from Gabriella, a singing ukulele player who really got the party going. We had a floral theme for the party and ladies dressed in flowery outfits and brought along floral table decorations. A great evening as always.

May is also the month of the Shropshire Federation Annual meeting which some of our members attended. There were invited speakers, an author who reflected on world disasters, The Air ambulance service and Benjamin Butler speaking about the challenges of modern day living for young people. This is followed by the National meeting in June, the main theme of which will be space related. Every year the WI as a whole votes on a resolution for change for the coming year and these will be discussed at the national AGM. This year the top resolutions are accessible public toilet facilities and action on womens' homelessness. Campaigns will follow throughout the year to highlight these issues and to fight for change. The WI continues to strive for change so as well as having fun it remains a strong influencing organisation.



June and July are set to be interesting meetings for us with guest speakers and a visit from some exotic creatures, hopefully not the scary kind of creepy crawlies! So as usual an eclectic mix of entertainment. We are forging ahead with our poppy making challenge and encourage as many members of the community as possible to join us, see the posters for information or please contact us if you are interested in helping or donating any wool to the cause.

We hope to have a wonderful display in the village and hope to grow the number of poppies year on year. It will also be nice to see the WI and local residents coming together for this great cause and hopefully to encourage more of you to join our group.

Please just pop in to see us any second Thursday of the month 7.30pm in the village hall, I can assure you of a warm welcome.

Kindest regards
Linda Boddison



Sheriffhales Poppy Challenge

*Calling all who knit or
crochet to knit/crochet a poppy or 2*

**This year, as a community, we thought
we could mark Remembrance by
making a display of handmade poppies.
To cascade from St Mary's bell tower
and cover the triangle by the flag pole.**



We are asking for poppies to be between 4" and 12" in size.

You can choose your own pattern, acrylic wool apparently works best for longevity.

Look out for some WI lead Poppy making coffee mornings to help with folks that would like to be involved but may need instruction.

Any donations of wool would be gratefully received.

For further information, contact Pippa on 01952 460474/07811 143195



Cardiff ... Sheriffhales ... Liverpool

Neil Cowley Trio wow at St M's

The large crowd at the latest 'St M's Presents' concert was in for a treat as the fabulous Neil Cowley Trio took to the stage in Sheriffhales as part of their 'Built on Bach' UK tour.

Fans had travelled for miles to see the concert - even as far as Spain! Locals seeing the band for the first time left impressed. The Trio were captivating, blending their signature infectious jazz style with the inspiration of the music of Bach.

They had a charming rapport with the audience, receiving a standing ovation after several encores. It was an amazing opportunity to see a band of this quality without even leaving the village and Peter's specially constructed bar (so much better to lean on!) did a good trade.

The Trio had played Cardiff the previous night and left the village en route to their next concert in Liverpool.

The St M's concerts aim to blend contemporary music with the amazing acoustics and history of the 14th century building. With a great crowd, atmosphere and music, sometimes the stars align and the old building feels alive.

Coming soon



St.M PRESENTS

ARTHUR JEFFES
OF PENGUIN CAFE

Playing original compositions and the music of Penguin Cafe

SHERIFFHALES
SHROPSHIRE

3 JULY
2026
7.30

ST MARY'S CHURCH
21st Century music in a 14th Century building

BAR OPENS 7PM
TF11 8RD

TICKETS
SKIDDLE.COM



The Trio, with Neil Cowley on piano, bassist, Rex Horan and drummer, Evan Jenkins had a great rapport with the audience.



The church was packed with fans travelling from as far away as Spain!



St.M
PRESENTS



Bowling club marks special milestone and seeks new members

Sheriffhales Indoor Short Mat Bowling Club continues to enjoy a thriving and sociable season, with membership now almost at full capacity. We currently have just two places remaining for anyone interested in joining our friendly club, so if you've been thinking of giving bowls a try, now is the perfect time to get involved. For anyone interested in becoming a member, please contact club chairman, Tom Leath on mobile 07795 965841.

This year also marks a very special milestone for one of our most valued members. Janet Jones has retired from her role as Club Treasurer after an incredible 22 years of dedicated service. Janet's commitment, care, and steady stewardship of the club's finances have been greatly appreciated by all, and she leaves the role with our heartfelt thanks.

Alongside her retirement, Janet also celebrated her 80th birthday in style, with a wonderful gathering of club members at nearby 'The Fox Inn'. It was a fitting occasion to recognise both her contribution to the club and her special birthday, shared among friends. Janet is pictured with her aptly named 'HAPPY BIRTHDAY' rose bush, a gift for her 80th



In keeping with the club's strong sense of community, members once again chose to donate to a local Shifnal charity, 'LIVE AT HOME', instead of exchanging Christmas cards. This thoughtful gesture raised a total of £90.00, demonstrating the generosity and spirit that make our club such a welcoming place.

We look forward to another enjoyable season on the green and thank all our members for their continued support.

This interesting map shows England's largest towns in 1377. Surprisingly medieval Shrewsbury appears as one of the country's largest settlements with only London, York and Bristol being bigger. It was thought to have around 3000 inhabitants by the 13th century and had a mint since the 10th century.

In the 14th century, Shrewsbury's significant size was partly due to its strategic location situated between England and Wales. It was thought to have reached the peak of its national and economic importance during the middle ages largely because it was a centre for the wool trade and a finisher of imported Welsh cloth.

The town was at the heart of a prosperous trade of Welsh wool and flax. Shrewsbury also had an important leather industry of skinnners and tanners as well as numerous drapers and tailors.



The town was also on the front line of frequent warfare between the English and Welsh.

Shrewsbury - at the heart of the medieval wool trade



There are fascinating signs of Shrewsbury's past hidden away in the town. The 13th century remains of Bennetts Hall are incorporated in a restaurant on Pride Hill. Other shops on the street have 14th century rear walls and cellars behind their 18th century facades.

News from St Marys



At the Annual Parochial Church Council meeting in May, there was an update on the financial position at St Mary's including a review of the incredible fundraising effort by the small group of members and friends of St Mary's.

In 2024 when we launched the Weathering the Future project, the church was in a worrying financial position. We were losing £1,000 a month keeping the church doors open, with very little money coming in from supporters and few fundraising events taking place.

Now in 2026, huge fundraising efforts by a small team have made an incredible £20,000 during the last year. The generosity of the congregation has also increased slightly, with collections and planned giving showing a small rise.

We as a church PCC are committed to keeping the doors open and while some of the money has been used to meet the day to day running costs, money has been spent on plans, reports and paying the professionals we need in order to start the planned project. The plans have needed to be agreed by the Diocese, and this has not been a quick or easy process. However, most of the plans are now agreed (aside from the heating changes which are still being considered), and we have some money in restricted funds solely for starting the building project.

Once we have navigated the next big challenge of finding a new vicar, we will be ready to start with the grant applications to support the fundraising efforts.

If anyone wants a full breakdown of the financial report, please get in touch with our PCC Treasurer. (stm_treasurer@shifnalbenefice.org.uk)

Don't miss our next fundraiser, the Orchestra of Folk on 5th June!

Reverend Valerie joins the St Mary's team

The lovely Reverend Valerie Fairclough has recently joined the St Mary's team, many of you will have seen her blessing the vehicles at this years Tractor Rally fundraiser. We asked her to tell us a bit more about herself.

I'm Reverend Valerie. I'm an Associate Priest in the Benefice of Shifnal, Sheriffhales and Tong. I'm also known as The Minister at Sheriffhales as I usually take two Sunday Communion services at St Mary's every month. I usually take one service a month at St Bartholomew's, Tong. I joined the Benefice around August 2025. Before that I was a priest in the Parish of Central Wolverhampton. I'm married, with two daughters and three granddaughters. I currently have a dog and a cat living with me and my husband, although we're just about to add another dog to the household! Plenty of dog walking to do. I'm rather partial to watching crime fiction on TV and I go to regular Crime Fiction and Poetry book clubs, as well as a Writer's club. I love singing too and sometimes a gentle class or two at the gym. A busy life!



A few of the fantastic fundraising events which have helped St Mary's church over the last year



Jackfield Brass Band concert



Mr G and Friends concert



The Greening Festival and Wreath Sale



Petals and Pimms at Shropshire Petals



The Harvest Fayre



From the Vicarage

Are you a hoarder? Do you squirrel things away just in case?

Or are you a minimalist with a feng shui tidiness? As part of our run up to retirement in July we've been having a sort out! Over the past few weeks I have been going through the house, room by room and sorting out what needs to go or to stay! I think I have been a hoarder!

So many things stored away that we are never going to need again! It has meant lots of trips to the charity shops, and as many to the waste and recycling centre. We have been learning what is and isn't needed by different charities, and what can be recycled and what will go to landfill! It has been fun to offer items on Facebook and to see them given a new lease of life for those who need them.

Getting ready for the move has reminded me of Jesus sending the disciples on ahead of him to visit the villages and towns around them, to share the good news of God's love. He said "Take nothing for the journey, no staff, no bag, nor bread, nor money, and do not have two tunics" It's the very essence of travelling light! But why? You can certainly travel faster and further if you aren't weighed down with loads of kit! But I think it was also something to do with the disciples learning to be less self-sufficient, and to learn to accept other people's kindness and hospitality.

There is a kind of independence that can be quite isolating. I need to have everything, so I won't need to ask for help! Learning to share can have so many advantages. It helps us to build bonds of trust and community, to become interdependent. Sharing tools and equipment, being prepared to lend and to borrow kit means that we don't all have to own everything ourselves! This can be great for the bank balance, as well as for the planet.

Scarce resources can be fully utilised instead of sitting in the garage unused. Jesus also encouraged us to travel light in other ways. So many of us carry a heavy weight of regrets and hurts in our backpack. Life can feel heavy because we carry painful memories and experiences with us. This is a great time to have a personal spring clean, sort through the baggage, leave some of it behind, and step forward with lighter tread.



Diary dates

Services at 10am unless otherwise indicated

5th June - Concert 7.30pm
Orchestra of Folk
Tickets £10

7th June Trinity 1 Holy Communion

14th June Trinity 2 Holy Communion

21st June Trinity 3 Holy Communion

28th June Trinity 4 Holy Communion

3rd July STM Presents Concert in Church. Arthur Jeffes
(Tickets - Skiddle.com or Peter Bonsall)

5th July 3pm Celebrating Sheriffhales and Farewell Service for Revd Chris Thorpe

12th July Trinity 6 Holy Communion

12th July Farewell Service in Shifnal at 10.30am followed by Picnic Lunch

19th July Trinity 7 Holy Communion

26th July Trinity 8 Holy Communion

2nd August Lammas Service with the Community Choir

The Story of Sheriffhales Village Hall

A remarkable legacy of community spirit

It's very easy for us to take for granted our village hall, built in 2010, it's a fantastic facility for the parish with its modern facilities and pretty setting. It has proved to be a great venue for parties, concerts and many other events. But the project didn't happen easily and behind it there is a remarkable story of Sheriffhales community spirit and determination as well as an extraordinary fundraising campaign in the early 2000's.

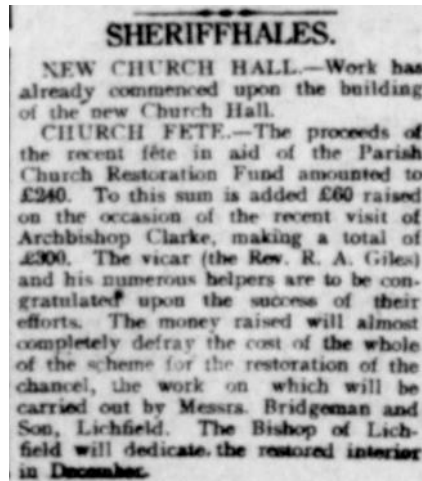
There had been a desire to build a 'community hall' in the parish since 1946 but discussions and committees over the years failed to get the project off the ground. In the late 1990's the momentum began to grow and between 2004 and 2010, villagers (and friends) raised an incredible £70,000 through a campaign of fundraising events. The most famous was the ambitious 'Sheriffhales Country Fayre & Scarecrow Festival'. Behind the scenes, complicated negotiations were taking place between the church, parish council and county council to turn a long held dream into a reality. Eventually a new Village Hall Charity was set up, construction began and all the hard work left the village with an amazing legacy. This all makes it sound simpler than it was! A lot of people dedicated a huge amount of their time to this project, but we'll try to give a brief overview.

The original 'Church Hall'

The first 'community' hall at Sheriffhales was the old timber 'Church Hall' constructed in the 1920's. The building was already second hand, having started life as a WWI Nissen hut at a military camp, it was only ever designed as a temporary structure. It's believed that the building came from Prees Heath Camp, an army training base built in 1915 and was secured after the war by then vicar Revd RA Giles. Old period photographs of the camp huts certainly appear very similar to the old hall. A local press cutting in 1923 reports that construction had started on a church hall at Sheriffhales. But by 1930 a further cutting details a fundraising concert in the hall to raise money for improvements.



The original Sheriffhales 'Church Hall' was a re-purposed WW1 army hut moved to the village in 1923. By the 1990's the old building was in poor condition.



The Shrewsbury Chronicle in Sept 1923 reported that building had started on a church hall in Sheriffhales

A temporary building showing it's age

By the 1990's the hut was in a poor condition and well beyond economical repair. The school were still using it as a lunch hall, with meals cooked on site, although the kitchen facilities were poor. The hall's narrow width and low ceilings were not ideal for music and dancing and there was no insulation. It was clear that both the pupils and parishioners needed more modern facilities.



Many will have fond memories of happy events in the old hall which was nicknamed 'the potting shed' (yes, that's where the bar at the new hall got its name). It did have a certain atmosphere but visits to the dark, basic outside toilets were only made as a last resort!

The old hall (which clearly looked like a old army hut) set up for school lunches. Sheriffhales School used it as a lunch hall from as early as 1946.

A long held desire for a new hall

A press article dating from 1946 reported that villagers and the parish council were already expressing the view that the church hall was unsuitable for use as a community centre partly because the school (which was already using it as a lunch hall) were occupying it until 3pm. At one stage Mr Henry Rudolph had offered land at Attwell Park/Hilton Bank for building a hall for youth activities. Parish Council records also show that between 1950 and 1971 there was a desire to build a community centre. However, despite discussions and a committee at one point being formed, nothing was built. The WI did have the use of a former hut from the WW2 POW camp in the southern part of the private drive for some years, donated to them by William and Elizabeth Slater of Manor Farm. They vacated the building during the 1990's due to damp and structural issues and moved their meetings to the Church Hall.

The parish council's intention led to a new village hall committee

The parish council always had the intent to build a new hall, and some funds had been put aside. During the late 1990's councillor Edward Orgill decided to give the project some momentum and formed a Village Hall Committee where he was joined by other councillors and villagers. Negotiations began with Shropshire County Council who, keen to secure up to date facilities which could be used by the school, pledged an initial £120,000 in funding. The parish council had £22,500 put aside, but this still left a significant funding shortfall.

Architects were employed to create a design that would work for both the community and the school in 2004. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of Edward and the committee, it wasn't a good time to secure funding from grants or The Lottery Fund coming so soon after many millennium projects and funding for a Sheriffhales hall was turned down by the National Lottery.

At one point the old hall was home to Sheriffhales Youth Club which attracted around 25 youngsters on Thursday evenings. Many of those who grew up here will remember some fun times. There was also some mischief, as reported in the Shropshire star in 1978.

celebrations on June 8. On the subject of the proposal to form a Community Centre, the Parochial Church Council wrote stating that while it did not oppose the project it wished it to be understood that the Church Hall and the adjoining grounds were at the disposal of parishioners every day after 3 p.m. After some discussion the view was expressed that the Church Hall is unsuitable for use as a community centre, and its facilities are inadequate now that the building is being used as a school canteen. Mr. Henry Rudolph offered sufficient land on his Attwell Estate for youth activities. The site is on

By 1946, a local press report on the parish council meeting shows the PC and villagers were already expressing the view that the Church Hall was not suitable as a community hall



We believe the kitchen was condemned as unsafe some years before demolition leading to school lunches being bought in from Shifnal



Staff get hopping mad over a toad

A rogue toad made canteen staff hopping mad and was one reason for a showdown at Sheriffhales Youth Club.

The club, set up in 1975, uses St Mary's Church Hall, which is also used as the canteen for the village primary school.

The canteen staff had complained that children were abusing the property. A fire extinguisher had been emptied, a window broken, tables re-arranged, dirty footprints -- and the toad -- left in the kitchen, they said.

The Rev Norman Raybould, Vicar of St Mary's was among the 50 parents and children who turned up at a meeting to help sort out the problem.

Christine Phillips (18) the youth club leader, said that they kept the hall in good order.

"Children will be children and we have always offered, in good faith, to repair any damage."

A new youth club committee was set up to deal with the problems and future of the club. The committee is: Christine Phillips (18), Eileen Hoskins (19), Philip Leath (17), Miles Parker (18) and Tim Johnson (17).

Whether or not the toad was left in the kitchen or wandered in of its own free will, remains unexplained!

Sandra's scarecrow plan lights a spark

In 2003, Sandra Orgill placed a notice in the parish magazine asking people to join her at the old hall to discuss her idea for fundraising. A lot of people turned up that evening keen to support her and Sandra unveiled her idea – scarecrows! Having done some research into scarecrow festivals, she believed that a trail through Sheriffhales could raise money. She suggested this be part of a Michaelmas fayre in early September, after the main calendar of summer events, but while the weather was still warm.



Sheriffhales do it their way—go big and go bold

Everyone loved Sandra's initial idea which then grew and grew! Enter farmer, Stephen Yates who convinced those packed into the hall that it was time to go big and go bold and make some serious money which would make the village hall project a reality. From this merger of ideas, 'The Sheriffhales Country Fayre & Scarecrow Festival' was born. Stephen was confident that we could close the road and create an event which would involve the entire village and a team was formed to start planning. Whilst a few obstacles were met along the way in such an ambitious plan, as Stephen would say, we're not looking for problems, only solutions! (See p15 for more on the fayre and scarecrows)

The many fundraising events that helped

Although it was the scarecrows that made the headlines, many community events were organised in the early 2000's. The 'Sheriffhales Shuffle' was a 7K off road race, organised in conjunction with Newport Running Club, for 7 years. 40's style big band 'D Day' concerts took place on the village playing field and, after one mammoth effort, in a barn. During a day of torrential rain on 6th June, villagers pulled together to clear, clean and decorate a cow shed at Attwell Park Farm in an afternoon, relocating the band and saving the event in an unforgettable display of blitz and community spirit! Car boot sales were held, Abba tribute bands and barn dances were held at Laburnum Farm and there were many more concerts and smaller events.

Many people who still live here were instrumental in the both the fundraising campaign, organisation of the Country Fayre & Scarecrow Festival and ultimately driving forward the construction project. Many of them are still actively involved in the community serving on the parish council, village hall committee, as members of the WI and other clubs. We can't mention everyone by name but thank you to all of those involved who left this amazing legacy for future generations.

The complicated hall ownership

The earlier timber Church Hall was owned by the church diocese and crucially in 1997 the parish council concluded that it would not be viable to have two halls in the village. This led the way for discussions with the diocese about the possibility of an 'Aberlmale Scheme'. This is an agreement which allows the church to lease a building no longer required for full time ecclesiastical purposes to another charity for a very small rent providing a certain number of hours are reserved for the church's use.

A new Sheriffhales Village Hall Charity was set up by Edward Orgill and after lengthy negotiations involving the church and council, the church hall was transferred to the charity through such a scheme. The Village Hall Charity's role would be to build and maintain a more suitable new village hall which would be available to all members of the community as well as providing facilities for the school.

The dilapidated church hall was later demolished to make way for the new Sheriffhales Village Hall. Although the land on which the new hall sits is still owned by the diocese, the new hall is owned in trust by the village hall committee for the community.

Funding and construction

Planning permission for the new hall was granted in 2006 and building began in 2010. The construction project (as well as the later addition of a bar area) was managed by Pat Kind due to his background in the building industry.

The new village hall was built in 2010 at a cost of around £280,000 plus fitting out. The County Council were the largest financial contributors with an education contribution of £120,000 plus a further community grant of £45,000. The parish council also contributed around £25,000 and the committee fought hard to raise a proportion through small grants. Some private donations were also received. But around £70,000 was raised by the community through the Country Fayre and other events.



Many events helped with the fundraising including concerts, barn dances and car boot sales



By the time of the 2010 Country Fayre, visitors were invited to see the project in progress. The official opening took place on Saturday 21st May 2011. The ribbon was cut by Frank Dodd, a parish councillor who had long supported the project and served on the Village Hall Committee, Ruth Garrett, whose husband Roy had provided invaluable legal advice due to his career as a barrister and judge and Lucy Skidmore, a pupil picked in draw to represent the school. It was a day of great celebration as all the years of work finally came to fruition. Villagers enjoyed a hog roast, and Cadence Singers gave a concert in the evening.



Reflections on the hall and the spirit which built it

"Congratulations to the parish magazine on producing a brilliant article regarding the background leading to the construction of the current Village Hall. The first class facilities now in place did not come about without a great deal of hard work as set out in the article.

I became involved whilst a member, and ultimately Chairman, of the Parish Council. Discussions had taken place and funds set aside by the PC over several years, but little progress had been achieved. A steering group was established of which I was elected Chairman assisted by a number of hard working local people. Ultimately, a registered charity was created and with the help of an outside advisor, things slowly began to move forward. However, progress was difficult. Before the Millennium, grants had been readily available for new Village Halls. After 2000, when we started, such help was difficult to obtain. Therefore substantial financial assistance provided by the County Council was extremely welcome. The community rallied round and through their (and others) support, sizeable additional funds were raised. **Well done - Thank you**

It took almost 10 years to see the new hall built, when I stepped aside. Thanks to all who played their part in seeing a successful conclusion to this sizeable venture. **Long may the hall provide the facilities for which it was created".**

Edward

After 60 years a new hall finally opens



The old timber church hall was demolished in 2010 and construction of the new village hall began

"Built by the community for the community"

"We have been involved since moving into the Parish 2003. When Sandra suggested a scarecrow festival, the idea soon gathered momentum. Everyone got involved, there was a team of organisers that worked to make the festival run smoothly, with volunteers from everywhere, WI, church, school, all the main bodies got involved. Stalls were run, ice cream was sold, tea and cake, BBQ's fired up to help feed the visitors over the years.

There were always over 100 scarecrows to view when visiting and people came from afar for the day. We were lucky to have Warburtons and Muller sponsor the events and gave away thousands of bread rolls and yoghurt. Local farmers also offered potatoes and lettuce. The road through the village was closed for the day to allow people to roam safely. The parking attendants became very good at getting everyone in and out. We also did a deal with the Red Lion Ice cream company at Haughton, so local ice-cream was available for every fayre.

From dinner safaris to Abba concerts, the fundraising committee organised many different events over 8 years. All of this time, the Village Hall committee were looking into planning, building and finishing the hall that we have today.

(cont.)

"At some point, everyone from the Parish has been involved with the project, whether it be full commitment to the various committees and events to attending and buying raffle tickets. The fundraising committee saw some changes of the guard so to speak, after the first few successful years, Ian & I took over the co-ordinator role and since then, I don't think I've not been on some form of committee to serve the community and that was mainly down to Sandra introducing us to everyone when we first moved into the village.

The hall means so many things to us all. For instance, the hall was built with specific dimensions to accommodate the indoor bowling club.

The hall's first event once opened was a wedding reception for locals Nicola and Stuart, who again were involved in the fundraising and build project.

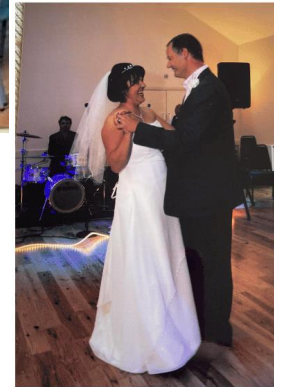
The hall committee has changed guard over the years too, the longest serving chair being Pat Kind, who was instrumental in the build and it was Pat's desire to build the Potting Shed which was completed 2022. Tina Whitehouse who, sadly is no longer with us was the bookings clerk for many years.

I now find myself chair of the hall committee and I look at it as being part of a custodian team of a community facility. Built by the community for the community".

Pippa



The first event in the new hall was a wedding reception for villagers Nicola and Stuart following their wedding in Mauritius. Both were involved in the fundraising project.



"Together ordinary people can achieve extraordinary results"

Becky Sauerbrunn

Now you've read the hall's amazing story

Can you help steer the hall's future?

The hall is still run and managed by the Village Hall Committee Charity for the benefit of the Sheriffhales community. This small group of volunteers manage and maintain the hall and take bookings to generate income.

If the village hall is to continue to be available to us all, the committee needs more members to help. We understand that people have busy lives which may make them think twice about volunteering, however whatever time and commitment people could offer would be greatly valued. New ideas on how to move forward to meet the needs of our community would help to ensure that the facility is used in the most effective way and accessed by a wide range of users. The committee should represent our always evolving community. If you feel you can support the hall committee in any way, please e-mail the committee at info@sheriffhalesvillagehall.co.uk. Thank you.

Villagers in 1990's and early 2000's worked so hard to make the hall a reality. Now we need a new generation to get involved



SHERIFFHALES VILLAGE HALL



A modern, versatile venue in a charming village setting

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The main hall can accommodate up to 120 people. A smaller room for up to 20 people can be hired separately. Facilities include a fully equipped kitchen, bar area, wi-fi and an excellent music system.



What's On

St Mary's Playgroup

Exploring and sharing!

Term Time Fridays
9:00am - 11:00am
at St Mary's Church
Sheriffhales

Children to be accompanied by an adult.
 Small donation asked for tea, coffee and resources








Come and join us!
 Fun for pre-schoolers and their carers. Games and activities, Opportunity to meet, chat and play.
 Contact Jo Tel: 07841 286915



Reaching out together to share God's amazing faith, hope and love.



the WI

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Sheriffhales WI



We meet the second Thursday of every month in the Sheriffhales village hall.
Commencing 7.30pm until 9.30pm.
Want to belong to an unique network of women?
Meet new people in your community?
Like to enjoy a variety of activities such as inspirational speakers, crafting, baking, dance, local issues, music and art?
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Membership is £51 a year.
First 2 sessions are free.
Each session is £2.50 for refreshments.
Come along and meet us.
Contact Linda for more details on 07396 288909
thebods@hotmail.com







This month's quiz

1. What is the name given to a small field used for rice cultivation?
2. From which substance do bees manufacture honey?
3. In which century was margarine invented?
4. What is the world's costliest spice by weight?
5. What is a male duck called?
6. In which century was tea drinking introduced into Europe?
7. Which condiment was used for it's medicinal properties in the 1800's?
8. Andalusian, Berkshire and Duroc are types of what?
9. What was normally used as a sweetener before sugar was available?
10. Which country provides about half the coffee consumed in the world?

The concert by the fantastic Orchestra of Folk is the next fundraiser for St Mary's Church.

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7.30 PM

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From folk, 80/90's pop, classical to classic rock & back again!

A Scarecrow Spectacular

How the traffic stopping Sheriffhales Country Fayre & Scarecrow Festival helped to build the village hall

The Sheriffhales Country Fayre & Scarecrow Festivals took place between 2004 and 2010 and were the major fundraising events contributing to the building of the new village hall.

The event was created when Sandra Orgill's initial idea for a scarecrow festival merged with Stephen Yates vision of closing the road and creating a large village wide fundraising event. The events varied slightly, with the earliest being the largest, but generally followed a similar format. The main road through the village was shut for several hours on the Saturday afternoon with essential traffic diverted through the 'private drive'. Car parks were created in fields off the drive at either end of the village and visitors paid for a programme which included a map of the scarecrow trail and voting form.



The story of the village raising money to build a community hall caught the imagination of local journalists and the resulting press coverage helped bring in the crowds.

Stalls and refreshments were organised by villagers throughout Sheriffhales alongside the trail of scarecrows.



It was a remarkable team effort, often different streets or areas worked together to create fundraising stalls and activities in their area.



The organising committee divided the village into areas with different activities taking place in every street as well as at the village playing field, a farmyard area and the school. Many people provided refreshment stalls, sometimes in their front gardens serving BBQ's, ice creams, afternoon teas

Almost everyone in the village got involved and Sheriffhales was filled with palpable excitement and community spirit.



The bunting lined streets and incredible scarecrows created a spectacle and a real festival atmosphere. This built during the preceding days as more and more scarecrows appeared. It certainly slowed the passing traffic the day before as people stopped to look (and someone was usually on hand with a collection bucket!)



The fayre's were advertised mostly by hand made banners and signs to keep costs down. A lot of village children had garden play dates in the summer while their parents painted.



"It was a nervous wait on the afternoon of the first Fayre. If nobody came, all the hard work would be for nothing. But as the clock approached 2pm, a steady stream of families began walking up from the car park and then more and more. Suddenly the streets were full of people with scarecrow maps and voting forms. Much to our relief, we knew we had done it!"
- Julia

"We didn't set targets but aimed at getting everyone in the village involved and had a fantastic response from the community."
- Stephen

Villagers served up BBQs, hog roasts, ice creams, cake afternoon tea and drinks to wash it down.



"I remember peeling so many onions outside - it still makes my eyes water! And Paul, Andrew and Tim trying to work out how to get a pig on a spit to cook overnight. We sold loads of onions in baps to vegetarians as the spit roast onions were so delicious. When we had an Abba tribute band in our barn so many people turned up to help clean before and popped up the day after to make sure everything was ok."
- Diane



A deal with Red Lion made sure ice cream was available and Warburtons donated bread.



The farm yard area located at Sheriffhales Christmas Trees was a big attraction with animals, tractors and donkey rides.



We're still not sure how we got away with closing the road for several hours! (We did have permission!)

Visitors enjoyed having their photographs taken with the scarecrows.



The scarecrow competition

Typically around 80-100 scarecrows were entered into competition by those in the parish, either displayed in gardens or bought into public areas by those living outside the main village area. Each was allocated a number by Sandra and the public used the voting form and boxes to pick a winner. They were fantastically inventive and great fun.

The winner of the very first scarecrow competition in 2004 was 'Miss Apple Tart' in Church Lane. In subsequent years Miss Apple Tart re-appeared first as a bride and later with a family!





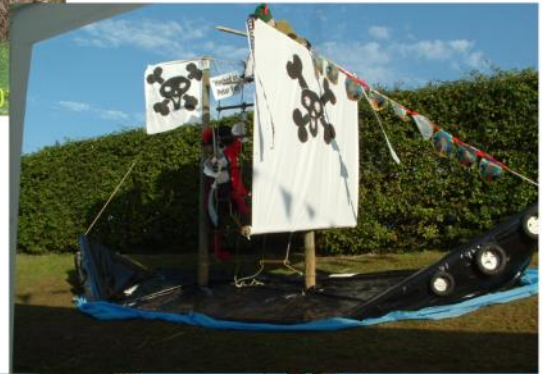
Jack Sparrow and the enormous 'Gruffacrow' were highly placed entries



From Spectacular



Jenny's 'Sing a song of sixpence took first prize in 2009



To traditional



And funny



The scarecrows created an unforgettable spectacle



Report from Parish Council

AGM 12th March 2026



SHERIFFHALES
PARISH COUNCIL

Pippa Hodgetts was elected to the office of Chair and Alan Edwards was elected to the office of Vice Chair.

The Annual General Meeting is required to take place in May every year and it is when the Parish Council witnesses the formal start of the council's year. The Chair and vice chair are elected. It is also when the Parish Council review and adopt standing orders, financial regulations and policies as regulated legally. It's the time the council take stock on what the Parish have in inventory such as assets like the playing field, bus shelter, play equipment and benches which totals just over £137,000 and to ensure the correct insurance is in place.

The year's meeting dates are set for 2026/2027. The council will then continue with a normal meeting. Elizabeth Barker and Thomas Clayton attended the meeting and reported that the community should be getting the gullies cleaned over the next few weeks.

The Crackley Bank 'Triangle' is being investigated by enforcement with reference to what is happening on the land.

Pot holes remain a big issue and the sunken drain on The Rock will be investigated.

A vote of thanks was given for Elizabeth's commitment and support of the Parish, along with Thomas who keeps us abreast of the devolution situation in Shifnal and how it may affect us.

An update was requested on the tip access situation between Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, the Parish Council have also sent a letter of concern over the situation and have warned SCC of an increase in fly tipping.

A Speed Indicator Sign has been purchased by the council and we are awaiting the locations from highways to be agreed. This device will not only show the speeds, but it will also collect full data of the traffic through the Parish.

The council have employed new contractors to maintain the Parish; work has started to keep all areas of visibility clear along with verge cutting and sign hedge clearance. Star Housing have given notice on not cutting SCC grass around their areas. The Parish Council have approached SCC to take on the responsibility, but at present, it has been indicated that SCC will only cut once a year, so this is another expense the Parish Council will take on to keep it maintained properly. With this in mind the Parish Council will be putting together a formal complaint to SCC for the lack of services against a drastically increased council tax charge.

Further information on how the residents can deal with this to follow.

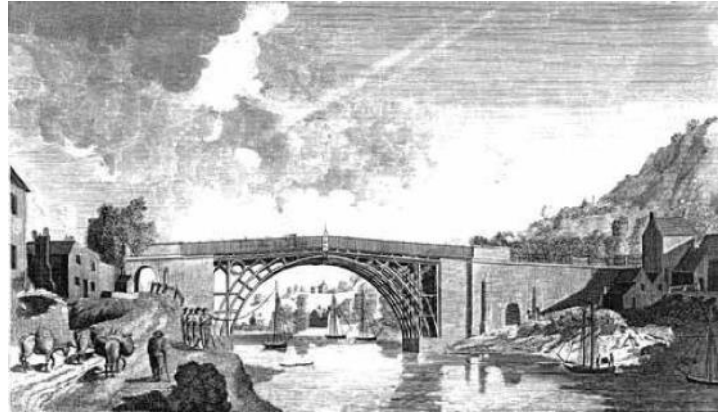
If you have anything to report from potholes to rubbish/fly tipping, please report to www.fixmystreet.com

We always welcome any feedback or requests from the Parish, please feel free to come along to the meetings or email clerk@sheriffhales-pc.gov.uk

Next meeting; Tuesday 7th July 7pm start.

‘All round the Wrekin’

Exploring the traditional dialect of Shropshire



Shropshire with its location on the Welsh border but in close proximity to the Black Country, has inevitably been influenced by both dialects. Georgina Jackson was a writer and teacher who was noted for her contribution to recording local dialect in the ‘Shropshire Word Book’, between 1879-81. She concluded there was no single Shropshire ‘accent’, the west of the county was inevitably influenced by the Welsh language whilst the eastern areas around Telford and Newport had common elements with the West midlands.

Many phrases local to this area such as ‘pithering about’ (messing around or wasting time) or ‘ow bist?’ (how are you?) to ‘sweating cobs’ (hot and sweaty) would have been instantly recognisable to our near neighbours in the industrial Black Country.

East Shropshire, of course, also gave birth to the localised phrase “all round the Wrekin” meaning taking an indirect route or not getting to the point of a conversation. It’s a saying probably not much recognised beyond Shropshire, Staffordshire, the Black Country, Worcestershire and Birmingham.

The Wrekin, an iconic tall hill in an otherwise flat Shropshire plain forced travellers to take long winding routes to go around it.

If there is such a thing as a Shropshire accent it tends to be a tendency to lose consonants and elongate or swap vowels eg: ‘inna’ for isn’t or ‘canna’ for can’t.



1758— the works at Coalbrookdale

Tracey spotted this glossary of Shropshire terms which was provided in a book set in Victorian Ironbridge. Anyone with links to the Black Country (or Wales) might recognise quite a few.

Arr – yes
Babby – baby
Bait – packed lunch
Butty – mate/friend
Coulda – could have
Couldna – could not have
Crowsty – bad tempered
Cwtch – a cuddle
Daff – a shy, silly or inexperienced person
Didna – didn’t
Doesna – doesn’t
Drodsome – dreadful/alarming
Dunna – don’t
Frit’ee – frighten you
Hadna – had not
Hasna – has not
Havna – have not
Inna – isn’t or am not
Little’uns – babies or children
Lollocking – easy, idle
Mon – man, a term of address for males
Owd – old
Proper jam – lovely, really good
Scuffling – weeding with a hoe
Shoulda – should have
Sniving – overrun with
Summat – something
Understrapper – boy
Wasna – was not
Wench – used for a young woman in a similar was to lass, not derogatory
Wonna – won’t
Woulda – would have
Wouldna – would not

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

Robert Louis Stevenson

A view for all seasons

We took a photograph of the same view every month for a year as a record of the beauty of each season in Sheriffhales.



May 2025



June 2025



July 2025



August 2025



September 2025



October 2025



November 2025



December 2025



January 2026



February 2026



March 2026



April 2026

Midsummer magic

On midsummer eve “the air is infectious with devils, spirits, ghosts and hobgoblins.” – anon 1723

Aside from the hopes of prolonging sunlight and the growing season, magic was thought to be at it's strongest during the summer solstice and mysticism and magic are common themes in midsummer folklore. Myths are told of the world turning upside down or the sun standing still at midsummer. According to Witchipedia, the summer solstice is a great time to gather herbs for healing and work magic of all kinds including healing, love, prosperity and peace.

[Midsummer was seen as] a time when the normal laws of nature or divinity could be suspended, when spirits and fairies could contact humans, when humans could exceed the usual limitations of their world. - Ronald Hutton, Professor of history at Bristol University.

A window to the future

Midsummer was also seen as the ideal time for divination and predicting the future. Most attempts were love spells to predict the possibility of future romance.



Lucky in love?

23rd June was thought to be a powerful time for love divination. If you gazed at your reflection in water, with luck you might also see the reflection of your future partner.

Other love spells involved a blindfolded young woman who should pick a rose at midday on midsummer day as the clock struck 12. She should fold the rose in white paper and put it away until Christmas day. If she performed it correctly, the rose should still be fresh and upon putting the bloom on her bosom, her intended should snatch it away.

Or, singletons should pick St Johns Wort on Midsummer Eve and if it was still fresh in the morning they would marry.

Another way was to head to the churchyard at midnight at midsummer eve and at the stroke of 12 run around the church scattering rose leaves chanting, “rose leaves, rose leaves, rose leaves I strew. He that will love me, come after me now” – hopefully not literally though, which may have provided something of a fright!

The summer solstice or longest day of the year occurs between 20 and 21st June in the northern hemisphere. Ancient Britons would have celebrated midsummer at this time but with Christian conversion there was a shift to celebrate on St Johns Day, 24th June which subsequently became known as Midsummer Day and 23rd June called became Midsummer's Eve.

Even before Christianity, midsummer was a time of celebration and importance. It was the time when the earth was at the peak of its growth, abundance and fertility when the sun was at it's highest. People danced, feasted, lit bonfires and did everything they could do to get the sun to stick around for longer.



Stonehenge keeps many of its secrets but we know it was aligned by it's ancient builders to frame the rising sun on Midsummer day.

Finding the fae

If you want to seek out fairies, you should wear St John's wort in your button hole and it's best collected at midsummer to keep away troublesome fairies (They are not all like Tinkerbell!)

Elder trees, like hawthorn and rowan, are steeped in fairy folklore and the best time to encounter fairies was thought to be under an Elder tree on Midsummer's Eve. The fairy folk love music and elder wood is ideal for making whistles, pipes and other instruments.

The veil between the human and world and that of the fae was believed to be gossamer thin on Midsummer 's Eve.



To release a problem, write it on a slip of paper and drop it into moving water on the summer solstice

Elderflower champagne

A taste of summer

This month, Jenny shares her recipe for a delicious family favourite which captures the flavour of the English countryside.

Ingredients

4 Litres hot water
700g sugar
Juice and zest of four lemons
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
About 15 elderflower heads in full bloom
A pinch of dried yeast (you may not need this)



Method

Put the hot water and sugar into a large container (a spotlessly clean bucket is good) and stir until the sugar dissolves then top up with cold water so you have six litres of liquid in total.

Add the lemon juice and zest, the vinegar and flower heads and stir gently.

Cover with clean muslin and leave to ferment in a cool, airy place for a couple of days. Take a look at the brew at this stage and if it is not becoming a little foamy and obviously starting to ferment, add a pinch of yeast.

Leave the mixture to ferment again covered in muslin, for a further four days. Strain the liquid through a sieve lined with muslin and decant into sterilised strong bottles with champagne stoppers (available from home-brewing suppliers) or Grolsch style stoppers or sterilised screw top plastic bottles. (A good deal of pressure can build up inside as the fermenting brew produces carbon dioxide so strong bottles and seals are essential.)

Seal and leave to ferment in the bottles for at least a week before serving chilled. The champagne should keep in the bottles for several months. Store in cool, dry place.

Never Munch on a Hunch!

Foraging is potentially dangerous so please make sure you know for certain what you are picking!

Delicate, floral and perfect for sipping on summer nights, elderflower champagne became popular in the late Victorian period. Elderflower cordial and syrups date back much further, at least to Tudor times.

It's always been a taste of the lazy summer days of England's countryside where elderflower blooms adorn the hedgerows.

Elderflower was traditionally used to soothe sore throats and treat the flu, we've no idea if there is any science behind this, but a glass of elderflower champagne will certainly lift the spirits!

Use the flowers freshly picked before the fragrance fades. Only use the flowers not the leaves or stalks which are mildly poisonous and were used as an purgative in ancient times.



This is something else my mother always made. The children looked forward to having it when they visited their grandparents in Cumbria. I do think it is a little alcoholic but Mum never knew that!!!

We make it each year. There are elderflowers all around the village. You need to keep a look out for them the middle and end of June. The flowers need to be in full bloom and not going over at all. The recipe says can keep for several months! Well that's a laugh, not in our house.

Victorian Strawberry Ice

Served in a glass cup, an 'ice' was a Victorian precursor to ice cream and would have often been found at Shropshire summer fairs. Thanks to Tracey who came across this old recipe.

2 lb fresh strawberries
3/4 pint cream
3oz caster sugar



De-stem the strawberries, chop then mash or blitz in a blender. Push the strawberries through a sieve getting out as much juice as you can. Pour the sugar into the strawberry juice and stir until the sugar dissolves. Whip the cream in a separate bowl until stiff peaks form then slowly stir in the strawberry juice. Spoon the mixture into glasses and freeze overnight. Serve with a spoon—delicious.

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Quiz answers

1. Paddy
2. Nectar
3. 19th century
4. Saffron
5. Drake
6. 18 th
7. Ketchup which was promoted as a cure for digestive issues, jaundice and even TB
8. China
9. Honey
10. Brazil

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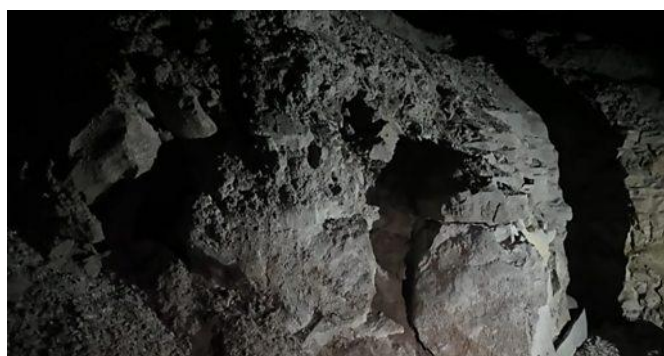
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Telford Shopping Centre's hidden secret

Rumours of an enormous rock hidden beneath Telford Shopping Centre were recently investigated by DJ Claire Ashford and Telford historian Steve Bowers on BBC's Radio Shropshire's 'Secret Shropshire'.

They were amazed to find the rumours were true and given an exclusive tour underneath the complex. They found a visible rock face at least 35m wide which Steve believed to be sandstone with iron ore layers, the ancient remains of a glacial lake. Apparently the rock was once visible from the old Sainsburys loading bay in the 1970's.

As the centre was expanded, the huge piece of stone was simply too large to move, so they built a room on top of it and built the shops on top!

Useful Contacts

Parish Council Chair; Pippa Hodgetts 07811143195

pippa.hodgetts@sheriffhales-pc.gov.uk

Parish Council clerk; clerk@sheriffhales-pc.gov.uk

Bowling Chair; Tom Leath 07795965841

WI Secretary; Linda Boddison 07396 288909

thebods@hotmail.com

Village Hall; Pippa Hodgetts 07811143195

Info@sheriffhalesvillagehall.co.uk

Church Warden; Catherine Rogers 07846 131098

families@shifnalbenefice.org.uk

Unitary Councillor; Elizabeth Barker

Elizabeth.Barker@shropshire.gov.uk

MOBILE LIBRARY DATES

The mobile library visits every second Wednesday. The easy way to remember: If its black bin on Friday, the library van is here on the next Wednesday!

Sheriffhales Old Post Office lay-by 10.00am to 10.50am,
Lilyhurst 11.05—11.20, Heath Hill 11.25 to 11.45am



About me

Hi, my name is Demi and I am offering structured dog walks around the Shropshire area. I have completed a dog training mentorship and I am currently shadowing my mentors and frequently attend dog training seminars.

I am fully insured.

I am based in Sheriffhales but willing to travel to surrounding areas.

Contact

07715824280

demiwhittam@hotmail.com

What I offer

Pre walk meet

Before any of these services, I will come to visit you and your dog to get to know more about them. It also gives you a chance to meet me.

Drop ins

I can drop in and have a play session with your dog or just spend some time with them.

Half an hour drop in £10

Structured walks

I will collect your dog from your house and walk your dog, sticking to the training you implemented.

- Half an hour solo: £12
- Hour walk solo: £16
- Two dog household hour walk: £22

Walk and train

I will work on any areas you are struggling with, for example, loose lead walking, obedience, confidence building, exposure, duration.

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Crows are intelligent birds, so much so that in Sweden they have been trained to collect cigarette butts, depositing them into a special machine in return for nuts!

AND FINALLY....



A picture of Sheriffhales WI in 2010 at their last meeting in the old church hall.



An early spring sunrise to make the heart sing, captured by Paul.

SOS From the Parish Magazine!

Since we took over the magazine in early 2025, we have produced the magazine on Microsoft Publisher but Microsoft are withdrawing Publisher from subscriptions on 1st October 2026.

We tried to produce this issue on Canva (which we use happily to produce posters for village events) but it didn't go well! Word will only allow us to produce something much simpler. (We have still to try Power Point.)

Although Publisher is an older package, it works well for the magazine, allowing us to include lots of content but still keep the file small enough to convert to a PDF and e-mail out.

Is there anyone more tech savvy who could help us to find a way to keep Publisher beyond the hard cut off date? Or who has any ideas? Please get in touch if think you can help. Thank you.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

Copy deadline for the next issue is Friday 17th July. If you are sending a large amount of copy, it's really helpful if you can give us an idea in advance to help us plan layouts. Please send images in a PNG or JPEG format. Thank you.

You can continue to send us news in between issues for publication via the Parish News WhatsApp group

E-mail: sheriffparishmag@gmail.com or leave in the PPE (the porch at Wisteria Cottage) marked for the magazine.

Sheriffhales Parish Magazine is edited and published by Pippa Hodgetts and Julia Gough. Thank you to Shropshire Petals for printing this issue which was funded with help from The Community Energy Fund.

Disclaimer - all views expressed in this publication are those of the individual authors of articles and not of the editors nor the collective views of the village of Sheriffhales. We are not qualified genealogists and although we look carefully, any assumptions about the lives of past residents are based on what looks likely from the parish records and census records

Summer Moon Gazing

June's full moon occurs on 29th on the month. Known as the Strawberry moon, it recognises the prime strawberry season.

July's 'Buck Moon' will also be full on 29th of the month marking the time when bucks get their new antlers.



Save the date

Sunset

PETALS & PIMMS

**Sunday
2nd
August
2026**

**More details
coming soon!**

advance tickets only