



Oswestry Rural Parish Council

## Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024

### Introduction

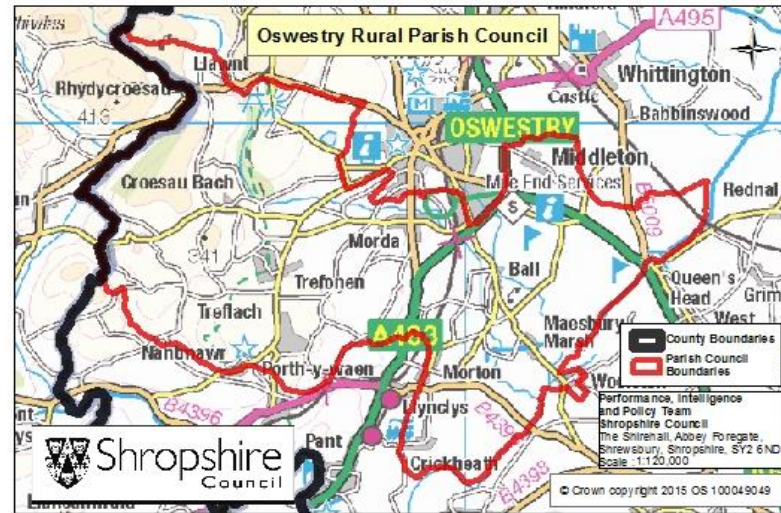
The parish of Oswestry Rural covers 24 square miles and is the largest civil parish in Shropshire. It lies south of Oswestry with Rhydycroesau bordering Wales on the west side. The population is circa 4,500 (2011 Census).

Oswestry Rural does not have a main village but has several populated communities. For electoral purposes the parish is divided into 5 wards: Maesbury with Aston, Morda with Sweeney, Rhydycroesau with Llanforda, Sychtyn and Trefonen with Treflach. The Parish Council has 15 councillors who represent the community and make decisions which in their opinion are for the benefit of the community whom they serve.

Within the parish there are 93 listed buildings recorded in the National Heritage List for England of which 3 are Grade II\*, whilst the others are Grade II, the lowest grade. The earliest listed buildings are timber framed or have a timber-framed core. Most of the listed buildings are farmhouses, farm buildings, houses and cottages including three country houses, a holy well, road bridges, a public house, two former mills, two milestones, a former chapel and three pumps with basins.

The Montgomery Canal passes through the parish, as does Offa's Dyke, sections of which can be seen in Treflach and Trefonen.

This Strategic Plan builds on and replaces the Business Plan 2015 – 2018 adopted by the Parish Council in April 2018. It has been developed to assist with key decisions and help to achieve the Council's aims and objectives which are intended to improve the quality of life for the parish of Oswestry Rural.



## Purpose of this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan sets out the Parish Council's aims and objectives, the actions required to achieve them, the timescale, and the budget required. These planned activities form the basis for setting future budgets and spending plans.

## Reason for this Strategic Plan

This Plan is a strategic guideline for the Council to work within in order to deliver the aspirations of the local community within a planned budget and timeframe.

This Plan is a 'live' document that will evolve through community engagement and will assist councillors to make decisions in the best interests of those they serve.

## Community Involvement in the Strategic Plan Process

To ensure that this Strategic Plan adequately represents the best interests of the parish, members of the local community are invited to participate in its development. This Plan is the Council's main source of communicating its actions and welcomes comments from community members to help shape how the Plan evolves.

## Monitoring the Strategic Plan

As a 'living' document this Strategic Plan will be reviewed by the Parish Council on a regular basis, at least annually, so that progress can be monitored. It will be updated as actions are completed and where progress is impeded the Council will consider what actions are necessary and whether further work or funding is required.



*The old water pump at Aston Square*

## THEME 1

### Parish Council Governance

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
1. Ensure adequate and regular communication between the Parish Council and the local community.	Communicate the council's activities to aid transparency and openness.	a) Maintain and keep up to date the council's website, ensuring it complies with WCAG 2.1.	Ongoing	£460 (hosting, domain name) Included in Clerk's duties Printing costs Included in Clerk's duties Included in Clerk's duties Printing costs
		b) Publish agendas, supporting information and minutes of council meetings on website.	Monthly	
		c) Post agendas on notice board.	Monthly	
		d) Publish an Annual Report.	Annually	
		e) Publish regular newsletters.	At least Quarterly	
		f) As information points ensure that notice boards throughout the parish inform about council meetings and other pertinent information e.g., local elections.	Ongoing	
		g) Share information with the local media where wider coverage is needed.	As required	
		h) Offer opportunities for Councillors to meet residents e.g., councillor surgeries.	At least quarterly	
2. Ensure the effectiveness of the Parish Council.	Provide the necessary resources to councillors and employees so they are sufficiently adept in understanding how best to serve the local community.	a) Review the training needs of councillors and employees.	Ongoing	£910 (2021/2022 budget) None Included in Clerk's duties
		b) Regularly review employee performance.	Annually	
		c) Review the performance of the council by monitoring outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Ongoing	

<b>AIM</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIMESCALE</b>	<b>ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £</b>
3. Deliver services in a cost-efficient manner.	Ensure best value is fundamental in delivering local services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Monitor expenditure against budget.</li> <li>b) Ensure that financial transactions are carried out in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.</li> <li>c) Publish financial information on the Council's website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly</li> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>Monthly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Included in RFO's duties</li> <li>Included in RFO's duties</li> <li>Included in Clerk's duties</li> </ul>
4. Local Council Award Scheme	Strive to meet the minimum criteria to maintain the Foundation Award.	To work towards 'Quality' and 'Quality Gold Award' to demonstrate best practice.	Ongoing	£150

## THEME 2

### Community Resources

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
5. Support local community facilities.	Provide assistance to maintain local community facilities that provide sport and recreation, aid social cohesion, promote social capital, and improve health and well-being.	a) Ensure that funding for grant aid is included in the Council's budget.	Annually	£3070 (2021/2022 budget)
		b) Provide council representation on village hall management committees if invited to do so.	Annually	None
6. Support community resilience and social cohesion.	To assist local community groups with their recreational pursuits.	a) Ensure that sufficient funding for grant aid is allocated in the council's budget.	Annually	£3070 (2021/2022 budget)
		b) Support/provide groups with resources and practical help as necessary.	Ongoing	None
7. Acknowledge the good work carried out within the community.	To promote and raise awareness of the benevolence of groups and individuals.	To recognise the good work carried out by groups and individuals through the Tony Cheetham Community Service Award.	Annually	£55 (2021/2022 budget)

## THEME 3

### Green Spaces and Infrastructure

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
8. Enhance local green spaces and help preserve the rural character of the parish.	Ensure that Council owned land is well managed and maintained to a good standard.	Provide a regular maintenance programme to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trefarclawdd cemetery</li> <li>• Trefonen Cross cemetery</li> <li>• All Saints churchyard at Trefonen</li> <li>• The green and post box area at Trefonen</li> <li>• Bellan Lane verge at Trefonen</li> <li>• Signs at Trefonen</li> <li>• Silverdale Drive at Trefonen</li> <li>• Treflach Green</li> <li>• The cliff face at Rhydycroesau</li> <li>• The bench area at Maesbury</li> <li>• Glentworth Green</li> <li>• The triangle at Coed-Y-Go</li> </ul>	Ongoing	£5655 (2021/2022 budget)
9. Preserve opportunities for walking and recreation.	Ensure walking routes and tourist attractions are accessible.	a) Provide support to local groups e.g., Trefonen and Treflach P3 Group, Walkers are Welcome etc.	Ongoing	None
		b) Negotiate with Shropshire Council the possibility of devolving green space to the Parish Council where feasible.	As opportunities arise.	None
		c) Report overgrown hedgerows/vegetation to Shropshire Council.	As necessary	None
10. Promote community development.	The transfer of land into community ownership.	a) Assist with taking on disused land for allotments, heritage park, or other community use.	As opportunities arise.	£5,000 + possible CIL

## THEME 4

### Property

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
11. Provide adequate burial space.	Ensure the cemetery at Trefarclawdd is well maintained and provides a place of peace and tranquillity for visitors.	a) Ensure health and safety regulations are adhered to and carry out regular risk assessments. b) Review cemetery policies. c) Review cemetery fees. d) Ensure the cemetery plan and burial records are kept up to date and kept in a safe environment.	Annually  Every 3 years Annually Ongoing	Included in Clerk's duties Included in Clerk's duties Included in Clerk's duties
12. Offer shelter from the weather for public transport users.	Ensure that bus shelters are cleaned and maintained regularly.	Provide cleaning and maintenance for bus shelters at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treflach</li> <li>• The Terrace at Morda</li> <li>• Morda (off Weston Road)</li> <li>• Trefonen</li> <li>• Maesbury Marsh</li> </ul>	Monthly	£1020 (2021/2022 budget)
13. Preserve War Memorials at Trefonen Cross and Maesbury.	To ensure a well-maintained focal point for annual Remembrance services.	a) Provide regular maintenance to the land on which the War Memorials are erected. b) Carry out inspections as required.	Ongoing  Annually	£470 (2021/2022 budget) None
14. Provide local information of interest.	To ensure there are sufficient notice boards located at strategic places for the display of pertinent information.	Carry out regular maintenance as agreed in the approved notice board maintenance plan.	Annually	Included in Clerk's duties



## THEME 5

### Community Safety and Policing

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
15. To help reduce crime and the fear of crime.	Help to make public spaces adequately lit and enhance community safety and well-being.	a) Continue to maintain Parish Council streetlighting and install new lighting where necessary.	Ongoing	£100 (2021/2022 budget)
		b) Invite the police to all council meetings.	Monthly	None
		c) Promote police contact information via the Parish Council's website, notice boards and newsletters.	Ongoing	Included in Clerk's duties
		d) Work with the police and other services to raise awareness of crime reduction initiatives/schemes.	Ongoing	None
		e) Share local intelligence concerning crime and safety with the police.	Ongoing	None
		f) Support and promote Neighbourhood Watch Schemes.	As necessary	£500
		g) To work with local police in accordance with the West Mercia Community Charter.		

## THEME 6

### Heritage and Tourism

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
16. Support infrastructure improvements to the parish of Oswestry Rural.	To make the area an attractive place for the local community and visitors.	a) Make improvements to the gateways of the parish.	Ongoing	To be agreed
		b) Ensure adequate signage and tourist information.	Ongoing	To be agreed
17. Promote tourism and celebrate local heritage.	To sustain and develop the local economy by recognising and promoting the rich heritage of the locality to ensure a good visitor experience.	a) Support local businesses and interested groups to promote and improve the visitor experience.	Ongoing	None
		b) Support the creation and continuation of visitor itineraries relating to local heritage, landscape, and visitor attractions.	Ongoing	None
		c) Support local groups with heritage projects through grant aid.	Annually	£3070
		d) Allocate Neighbourhood Funds and ensure CIL monies are used to support and encourage tourism to support the local economy.	Annually	(2021/2022 budget) £96663 in unallocated reserves

THEME 7

Highways and Traffic

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
18. To improve the safety of pedestrians and motorists	To seek solutions to highways and traffic concerns.	a) Report highway maintenance issues to Shropshire Council.	Ongoing	Included in Clerk's duties
		b) Work with partners and stakeholders to reduce/prevent speeding traffic.	Ongoing	£6812 (2021/2022 budget)
		c) Investigate the need for restrictions on narrow lanes.	Ongoing	None
		d) Allocate Neighbourhood Funds and CIL monies to fund improvements for traffic calming, road signage etc.	Ongoing	£6812 (2021/2022 budget)
		e) Support the establishment of community speed watch groups including training of volunteers.	Ongoing	£200

## THEME 8

### Planning and Environment

AIM	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMESCALE	ANNUAL BUDGET REQUIRED £
19. Influence future development within the parish.	Ensure that the views of the local community form part of the decision-making process for future development.	a) Respond to planning applications and consultations that affect the parish.	Monthly	Included in Clerk's duties
		b) Respond to policy review by representing the views of the local community.	Ongoing	None
		c) Encourage residents to participate in the planning process.	Ongoing	None
		d) Encourage councillors to attend pertinent training courses to ensure an informed response to planning matters.	Ongoing	£500 (2021/2022 budget)
20. To acknowledge the threat of climate change.	Support measures to help reduce global warming.	Raise awareness of the threat of climate change and take action in accordance with the Parish Council's Climate Change Action Plan.	Ongoing	None
21. To raise awareness of flooding and drainage issues	Support flood alleviation schemes	Report flooding and drainage issues to Shropshire Council and the Environment Agency. (Cllr. Roger Jones)	Ongoing	Funds to be allocated from Neighbourhood Funds

**Reserves allocated in 2021/2022 budget as at 31 October 2021:**

<b>BUDGET HEADING</b>	<b>£</b>
Allocated	
Professional/legal fees	1000
Councillor training	275
New streetlights	2000
Strategic Plan projects	6812
AED	400
Neighbourhood Fund Projects	96684
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>107171</b>
Unallocated	96663
<b>Total</b>	<b>203834</b>

<i>Revised:</i>	<i>October 2021</i>
<i>Approved:</i>	<i>26 October 2021</i>
<i>Minute no:</i>	<i>1175</i>
<i>To be reviewed:</i>	<i>October 2022</i>