



## Business Plan 2024 – 2029

The parishes of Great Ness and Little Ness are located between Shrewsbury and Oswestry and represented by Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Council. Over the years, like many others, the parishes have seen their fair share of change; from a thriving homestead for the farming community to a much more diverse population. Yet despite these changes, the parishes still manage to retain the pleasant nature of a typical Shropshire rural area.

The parish council serves the communities of Great Ness, Nesscliffe, Wilcott, Kinton, Felton Butler, Hopton (Great Ness parish), Little Ness and Valeswood (Little Ness parish) and is represented by nine councillors.

This Business Plan uses info from a range of sources, such as the Place Plan, Parish Plan, consultation etc.

This Business Plan will allow the Parish Council to make key decisions and focus its resources to achieve its Vision and Objectives.



## Introduction

### What is a Council Business Plan?

It is a statement of the Council's vision for the Parish, its **purpose, values, objectives** and **key priorities**.

It is not intended to be a traditional 'Parish Plan' which sets out aims and ambitions that are delivered by the community and partners as a whole. Rather, it is a document that sets out what Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Council itself can achieve, either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant delivery body, such as Shropshire Council or West Mercia Police. Core to the Business Plan is working with partner organisations in the parishes e.g. village halls and the community.

The aim of the Business Plan is to give Great Ness and Little Ness parishioners a clear understanding of what the Parish Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to deliver this. It details what the Parish Council intends to focus on over the next four years. The Business Plan will be used each year to plan activities and set the budget for the coming year; please refer to the accompanying Action Plan which is monitored regularly and reviewed yearly.

### Why has the Parish Council decided to produce a Business Plan?

Having an agreed strategy will provide a framework for the Parish Council to work within, enabling it to operate in a more consistent and co-ordinated way. The on-going development of the Business Plan will be based on community engagement and involvement, which will allow the Parish Council to become more confident and proactive in its decision-making.

At the same time, the Business Plan will help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Parish Council does, and also to clarify what it doesn't do; in other words, to explain what issues fall under the responsibility of other delivery bodies such as Shropshire Council, National Health Service or the West Mercia Police.

It is a 'live' document which the Parish Council will update regularly, enabling it to track and monitor its progress against the key priorities. Because the Business Plan will be publicly available, residents will also be able to monitor progress.

### Community Involvement in the Business Plan process

To ensure that the Business Plan truly represents the Parish's best interests, the Parish Council will invite the local community to participate in its development. While there has been similar consultation in the past this was felt to be out of date for the purpose of on-going development a Parish Council Business Plan.

### Monitoring the Business Plan

Evaluating progress against the list of activities which make up the 'Action Plan' (Appendix 1) will take place at Parish Council meetings. It will consider the Business Plan themes and will seek to understand the progress made, where further work is needed and if there are any blockages to progress. The whole Business Plan will be reviewed annually and updated to keep the document relevant and up-to-date.

The Business Plan will be available on the Council website.

### The parish council has two key types of expenditure:

- **Capital** – this is for new items and projects; capital is normally funded by grants, CIL but can also be funded by the precept.
- **Revenue** – a working budget for running costs, such as maintenance, insurance. Revenue is generally funded by precept.

### Key sources of funding are:

- **Precept** – this is the parish council portion of the Council Tax paid to Shropshire Council
- **Grants** – these can be from a number of sources such as War Memorials Trust. Generally used for project work/capital items/
- **Environmental Maintenance Grant** – a grant of up to £1,500 for Shropshire Council to maintain highway land, including verges, footpaths. For every £1 spent, up to £1,500, Shropshire Council matches the funding by £1.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** – this is a charge levied on developers, predominantly for new open market housing. The parish gets 15% of the CIL collected and this is called Neighborhood Fund (CIL NF), Shropshire Council administers the rest of the CIL. Sometimes extra CIL is available from the countywide funding pots for big projects – this is called CIL Local and CIL Strategic. An example of where CIL Local may be used is the project to improve the Nesscliffe Country Park. CIL Local was also obtained to partly fund the play area at Nesscliffe.

Our Business Plan will continue to be the main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community. It's a two-way conversation. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know. We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan.

It is our intention to review the Business Plan regularly, publish progress and make any changes considered necessary as a result.

Key to timescale – O= Ongoing, S= Short term (within a year), M= within 3 years, L = within 5 years



*Vision: "To support an engaged, active and caring community where all residents can thrive."*

*Mission: "Your parish council operates at the grassroots of local government. We are committed to enabling residents to actively participate in the life of the community and its future development. We strive to be a strong voice for both residents and local businesses, actively enhancing the overall quality of the parish, encompassing both its built and natural environments."*

**Outcome Theme A:**  
Community Engagement

**Outcome Theme B:**  
Infrastructure, Highways and Utilities

**Outcome Theme C:**  
Economic Opportunities

**Outcome Theme D:**  
Housing

**Outcome Theme E:**  
Health and Education

**Outcome Theme F:**  
Environment

**Outcome Theme G:**  
Governance

## Theme A Community Engagement

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	FUNDING REQUIRED	PROGRESS
<b>A1. To support and work with Nesscliffe Village Hall and Little Ness Village Hall regarding the maintenance and development of facilities for the benefit of parishioners.</b>	A1.1 Work with Village Hall Management Committees to apply for external grants and CIL to upgrade the facilities (detailed action plan to list each hall's projects). Areas of focus for both halls are upgrading the insulation to make the halls more energy efficient. Little Ness would also like modernise the toilet and repair the roof.	O	YES – CIL (NF)	04/24- The halls are in the process of seeking quotes.  03/24 - A new noticeboard has been bought for Little Ness VH
	A1.2 Ensure Council engages with the Hall Committees and identify where Council assistance could be used.	O	NO	03/24 – the council has given grant forms to both halls and receives minutes of both hall's committee meeting.
<b>A2. To investigate need for new facilities to promote social interaction, sport and leisure.</b>	A2.1 Consult with the community to identify any evidence of demand and interest and pursue if supported and feasible	S	This will be covered through newsletter budget, room hire budget and having a survey tool built into the council's new website	
	A2.2 Wilcott play area upgrade.	O	YES – S106, possibly CIL NF for more immediate replacement, grants if available	03/24 – Quote obtained to replace medium risk items, circa £9,000 excluding climbing frame. Crowd funding being investigated
	A2.3. Outdoor sports facilities at Nesscliffe – pump track, table tennis table?	M/L	YES – S106 OR CIL	
	A2.4. Nesscliffe community land, Stonehouse Close – new seating.	S	YES - CIL	
<b>A3. To support existing community groups and work with existing communities and new housing developments to become part of the same 'community'.</b>	A3.1 Work with Shropshire Council, community groups and other appropriate bodies to promote activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Remembrance</li> <li>- Social Care Service</li> <li>- Samaritans</li> <li>- Mobile Library</li> <li>- Food Bank</li> <li>- Time capsule</li> </ul>	O	NO	
<b>A4. To consult with the community to identify local needs and views which can be addressed by constructive council action.</b>	A4.1 Review Community Engagement Policy and methods	O	NO	11/23 - Policy adopted.
	A4.2 Start community engagement activity and monitor impact	O	YES	

<b>A5. To reduce crime and to help parishioners and businesses feel better protected against crime.</b>	A5.1 Work in conjunction with the police and other services to promote the various 'Alert' and 'Watch' services, and the Police Community Charter, including inviting Neighbourhood Team to meetings	O	NO	03/24 – Community charter priorities reviewed.  Police invited to all meetings.
<b>A6. To ensure parishioners do not experience rural isolation</b>	A6.1 Promote existing bus services and lobby for their maintenance and improvement	O/M	NO	
	A6.2 Support Baschurch rail station re-opening	L	NO	
	A6.3 Work with Shropshire Council to ensure full access is maintained-to key services and facilities	O	UNKNOWN	
	A6.4 Work with local groups such as Bridleways Association	O	NO	
	A6.5 Footpath upgrades Wilcott to Nesscliffe to enable access to services	M/L	YES – S106	

## Theme B Infrastructure, including Highways and Utilities

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	FUNDING	PROGRESS
<b>B1. To ensure Broadband and Mobile Phone infrastructure is of a level to enable the community to fully access these services.</b>	B1.1 Lobby Shropshire Council and other bodies to ensure all avenues to improve services are investigated and actioned.	M	NO	03/24 – councillors and/or clerk have been attending update seminars with Freedom Fibre.
<b>B2. To resolve residents' concerns with drainage in Nesscliffe</b>	B2.1 To consult with residents to identify scope of problem.	M	UNKNOWN	Ongoing - Feedback with residents is always fed back to SC.
	B2.2 To work with Shropshire Council, and partners to identify possible solutions	M	UNKNOWN	03/24- a project with SC Country Parks Team will include looking at drainage on Nesscliffe Hill.
<b>B3. Electricity network – review of its adequacy</b>	B3.1 Raised with SC via Place Plan	M	NO	01/24 – results of SP Energy Networks monitoring in Nesscliffe awaited.
	B3.2 Looking at sustainable energy options	M	UNKNOWN	
<b>B4. Water network – continual leaks</b>	B4.1 Raise with SC and Severn Trent the number of leaks and request pipe replacement programme	L	NO	
<b>B5. To address highways concerns of residents and businesses and seek solutions</b>	B5.1 Liaise with SC re planned highways maintenance	O	NO	Ongoing and updates in Clerk's report at each meeting.
	B5.2 Liaise with SC re re-surfacing plans and winter gritting	O	NO	Ongoing and updates in Clerk's report at each meeting.
	B5.3 Forward complaints to Highways	O	NO	Ongoing and updates in Clerk's report at each meeting.
<b>B6. To seek solutions to speeding traffic</b>	B6.1 Report specific incidents to police and SC	O	NO	Ongoing and updates in Clerk's report at each meeting.

	B6.2 Maintain and monitor effects of traffic calming measures installed -VAS, gateways, crossings	O	YES – if any modifications needed and for maintenance.	
	B6.3 Seek mobile police speed enforcement and speed camera vans	S	NO	03/24 - Request has been made via PC Walters.
	B6.4 Install gateways in Little Ness and advised speed limit	S	YES- CIL NF	03/24 – Cllr. Davis assessing possible sites for gateways, aiming to install in 2024.
	B6.5 Extra VAS at Oswestry end of Nesscliffe	M	YES – CIL NF	
	B6.6 Great Ness -gateway – modify gateways wording and add advised speed limit	S	YES – CIL NF	03/24 -will be done when the Little Ness gateways are.
<b>B7. To keep roads and lanes clean for the enjoyment of parishioners and visitors.</b>	B7.1 Keeping pathways clear on key walking routes. Signpost reporting of problem areas of dog fouling to Dog Warden.	O	YES	
	B7.2 Install dog poo bag holders and bags	O	YES	10/23- Bags and holders purchased and installed
	B7.3 Encourage parishioners to report incidents of littering and fly-tipping to Shropshire Council	O	NO	
	B7.4 Publicise enforcement penalties	O	NO	03/24 – PC supported updated Public Spaces Protection order with clearer penalties for dog fouling and dogs out of control
	B7.5 Work with community groups, such as Great Mess to Little Mess to carry out litter picks.	O	NO	An ongoing programme of litter picks in planned and publicised online and in newsletter
	B7.6 Monitor SC waste collections and ensure waste collected regularly from key public sites like cemetery, playing field. Keep community informed of changes to waste collection arrangements.	O	NO	
	B7.7 Problem spots – liaise with landowners	O	NO	

## Theme C Economic Opportunities

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	FUNDING	PROGRESS
<b>C1. To improve coordination between parish businesses and Parish Council.</b>	C1.1 Engage with local businesses to understand their needs and identify opportunities	O	UNKNOWN	
<b>C2. To encourage economic development.</b>	C2.1 Work with Shropshire Council, businesses and other partners to encourage suitable opportunities	O	UNKNOWN	

## Theme D Housing

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	FUNDING	PROGRESS
<b>D1. To continue to comment on all key strategic planning documents and consultations that affect the Parish ensuring the Parish Council's knowledge and understanding of the local context is considered in decisions.</b>	D1.1 Work with Shropshire Council and other partners to ensure documents and consultations are fully understood and communicated effectively to the community.	O	This will be covered through newsletter budget, room hire budget, Zoom subscription and having a survey tool built into the council's new website.	
	D1.2 Residents are consulted to ensure parishioners' views are known.	O	This will be covered through newsletter budget, room hire budget, Zoom subscription and having a survey tool built into the council's new website.	
	D1.3. Communicate to residents to encourage them to respond through the most effective channels	O	This will be covered through newsletter budget, room hire budget, Zoom subscription and having a survey tool built into the council's new website.	
<b>D2. To influence and challenge stakeholder organisations appropriately to steer new housing is in right locations and meets local needs</b>	D2.1 Nesscliffe = focal point, other areas reverting to Open Countryside – continue to support this approach via Local Plan Review and comments on planning applications	O	NO	03/24 – LP Review delayed – a re-consultation will take place early summer.
	D2.2 Use existing housing needs data and monitor housing needs – work with SC to do so?	O	NO	
	D2.3 Work with housing associations to manage their assets in the area e.g., the garages area, publicising tenancies that become available to encourage local people to apply.	O	NO	

## Theme E Health & Education

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	FUNDING	PROGRESS
<b>E1. Community emergency healthcare access</b>	E1.1 Maintain community defibrillators	O	YES – maintenance and spare parts	03/24 – Instruction sticker purchased for Little Ness defib.  04/24 – councillors invited to a CPR course run by Ford parish  Ongoing – Oswestry CFRs check defibrillators monthly.
<b>E2. Promote improvements to health and social care services</b>	E2.1 Liaise with the relevant statutory and voluntary bodies, groups and agencies to ensure health and social care services meet residents' needs and expectations.	M	NO	02/24 – contact made with Prescott Surgery to ask for newsletters.  02/24 - Cllr. Nick Bardsley is co-ordinating a local group of councils who are liaising with Prescott Surgery re their future plans – Cllr Brooks is GNLN PC's representative.

## Theme F Environment

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	FUNDING REQUIRED	PROGRESS
<b>F1. To lead the community on issues related to the environment and climate change</b>	F1.1 Work with local groups including Great Mess to Little Mess and Bridleways Association	M/L	UNKNOWN – grants may be requested on occasions	
<b>F2. Work with Shropshire Council to improve Nesscliffe Country Park so it is accessible to all and well-maintained</b>	F2.1 Work with Shropshire Council to develop a strategic plan and management plan. Key improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage</li> <li>• Drainage</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Fencing</li> <li>• Path surfaces</li> <li>• Rocky Rd bridleway</li> <li>• Visitor management / services</li> </ul>	S/M	YES -CIL LOCAL, CIL NF, GRANTS. SC WILL HAVE OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FUNDING AS ITS THEIR ASSET	03/24 –Two initial meetings have been held with Country Parks team. A plan is being drawn up and consultation is key to this. Sources of funding are being researched. This is a SC project with parish council as a key partner.
	F2.2 Report to Shropshire Council issues of maintenance and monitor repairs.	O	NO	
	F2.3 Work with Country Parks team on the felling/tree management plan, ensuring community kept informed	O	NO	03/24 – article published in newsletter
	F2.4 Support and celebrate the heritage aspects of the hill	S/M	UNKNOWN	
<b>F3. To improve local public green spaces and common land under our control</b>	F3.1 Great Ness Pond restoration	M	YES – CIL LOCAL	
<b>F4. To manage and maintain heritage assets under the parish council's control</b>	F4.1 Nesscliffe war memorial – repairs need to pointing of the walls and coping stones added	S	YES – partly precept, hope to get a partial grant from War Memorials Trust	03/24 – quotes obtained, grant application submitted to War Memorials Trust. In parallel, drawings have been provided to SC conservation to conform if permission needed for the work.

## Theme G Parish Council Governance

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	FUNDING	PROGRESS
<b>G1. To improve communication between the Parish Council and residents and businesses</b>	G1.1 Develop and deliver new website	O	PRECEPT	
	G1.2 Publish a regular Parish newsletter three times a year	O	PRECEPT	
	G1.3 Use of social media effectively	O	NO	
	G1.4 Produce and publish Annual Report	S	PRECEPT (for printed copies).	
	G1.5 Engage with local people, including councillor surgeries	O	This will be covered through newsletter budget, room hire budget and having a survey tool built into the council's new website.	
	G1.6 Accessible meetings with hearing loops	O	NO – halls will install but may ask for grants	
<b>G2. To improve effectiveness of Parish Council</b>	G2.1 Provide training for Councillors and Clerk as needed	O	PRECEPT	
	G2.2 Achieve Local Council Award Scheme accreditation	M	NO	Ongoing
	G2.3 Carry out performance review of Council and Clerk	O	NO	03/24 – appraisal done.
<b>G3. To ensure Council delivers value for money</b>	G3.1 Regular review of expenditure against Budget	O	NO	Quarterly monitoring
<b>G4. To increase influence / coordination in matters that impact on Parish</b>	G4.1 Invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest (both to Council meetings and round table discussions)	O	NO	
	G4.2 Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees	O	NO	
	G4.3 Attend relevant conferences and meetings	O	PRECEPT – many are free but some are charged for, training budget in place.	
<b>G5. To ensure Council's assets are adequately maintained</b>	G5.1 Annual asset review and implement recommendations.	O	PRECEPT – required to implement asset maintenance. Grants where needed.	09/23 - last review complete
<b>G6. To deliver a fair and effective discretionary grant scheme</b>	G6.1 Set up Community Grant Scheme with award criteria and policy.	S	PRECEPT	02/24 – grant application procedure adopted.
<b>G7. To ensure in a diverse and rural parish, local solutions to emergencies are in place to support county and national plans.</b>	G7.1 Publicise and periodically review local community emergency plan.	M	UNKNOWN – depends on if paid support is needed	
<b>G8. To recognise individual identities of different communities, whilst cohesively being two joined parishes</b>	G8.1. Consult with residents re their views on this	M	YES	
	G8.2. Joint Annual Parish Meeting – celebrate differences and similarities within the parish	O	PRECEPT	03/24 – planned for 28 <sup>th</sup> May 2024

O = Implement within 1 year and thereafter ongoing/ S = By April 2025 / M =  
Within 3 years / L = Within 5 years