



Shropshire's Outstanding Community



CELEBRATING OUR GREAT COMMUNITIES

Shropshire's Outstanding Community 2021

Shropshire is known as one of England's most rural and arguably least discovered, yet beautiful, counties. With no cities, it comprises of 22 towns and hundreds of villages and hamlets. Its historical role as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution is still apparent with an enterprising and entrepreneurial spirit, plus a strong sense of community identity which helps define our county.

Divided into two distinct halves, The North Shropshire Plain has Shropshire's largest towns and population, whilst South and West Shropshire is dominated by hills, woodland and river valleys, and home to villages and more sparsely populated areas. Administratively, 'ceremonial' Shropshire has two local authorities: Shropshire Council and the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. Shropshire Council looks after just under 92% of the land area of ceremonial Shropshire including the county town of Shrewsbury whilst Telford, an original 'New Town', was created over fifty years ago by merging a number of smaller towns and is now the largest town in the county and is one of the fastest growing towns in the UK as a beacon of technology, innovation and light industry.

A pioneering Shropshire Community initiative, **Shropshire's Outstanding Community** wants to offer all communities within our county the opportunity to be recognised. To celebrate the strong, supportive community spirit. Whether it's a community within a town, a village or even a street or housing development, we want to shine a light where people come together and support each other. A community of people who have developed a safe and thriving environment in which to live.

Plenty of great things go on within our communities which does not always get duly recognised. 'Community' is a term that can be used very broadly. In this context it is not about aesthetics -gardens, borders and flowers! It is more about relationships, bonds, identity and where people have come together with a collective investment in their neighbourhood, where attitudes and interest are commonly shared.

We encourage people who take pride in their community, both rurally and within our towns, to come forward and showcase what they have achieved. It is an opportunity to tell us about the great things that are going on within your community and celebrate why it's great to live in Shropshire.



ENTRY FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE IN BLOCK CAPITALS AND RETURN TO:

shropshire@outstanding.community

or

The Community Foundation for Staffordshire, Communications House, University Court,
Staffordshire Technology Park, Stafford, ST18 0ES

CLOSING DATE 25th JUNE 2021

NAME OF REPRESENTATIVE: ANDY MUNRO (Mayor)

EMAIL ADDRESS: cllr.andymunro@churchstretton-tc.gov.uk

TEL NO: 07899 902832

NAME OF COMMUNITY: CHURCH STRETTON

NAME OF ORGANISING GROUP: CHURCH STRETTON TOWN COUNCIL

DETAILS OF CORRESPONDENT

NAME: ANDY MUNRO

TEL NO: 07899 902832

ADDRESS: CHURCHTOWN COUNCIL, 60 HIGHST, CHURCH STRETTON, SY6 6BY

EMAIL: cllr.andymunro@churchstretton-tc.gov.uk

This award is seeking to identify communities that exemplify all that is great about our wonderful County.

1. Describe your community and its location (e.g. street, housing estate, village, town, group of houses, block of flats, other)

Church Stretton is a small historic market town in the heart of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has a population of 4,800, half of whom live in Church Stretton itself, with the other half divided between the separate settlements of All Stretton and Little Stretton north and south of the town. Housing is spread mostly along the valley floor with some extending up the surrounding slopes.

Over a third of the population are of retirement age, 20% of whom live alone and 20% of households have no car. It is a reasonably affluent area, largely based on retirement income, but local wages in this rural area are low. There are pockets of deprivation with growing numbers now reliant on Universal Credit.

The local economy is heavily dependent on tourism, accounting for 30% of local employment in retail, recreation and accommodation, with 226 registered social landlord homes. All four of the local care homes have been converted into nursing homes, with health services becoming increasingly important. With improving digital reception, there are an increasing number of small home-based businesses. The town is immediately adjacent to the major visitor attraction of Carding Mill Valley.

2. How many people does your community extend to?

Historically, Church Stretton has supported with services the rural villages to the north and east of the town, accounting for another couple of thousand residents. The need for this support is growing because the average age of residents in these settlements is now above 65 years of age.

3. Facilities in your community (please tick)

NOTE This section has no bearing on the judges scoring but is just for them to be able to contextualise your application.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Community buildings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Communal areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	School	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Doctors
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Park/Playing fields	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public house	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Shop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dentist
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Seats /benches	<input type="checkbox"/>	Telephone box	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Place of worship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Toilets
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Cycle racks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bus shelter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Transport links	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Dial a ride
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Café	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Allotments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Post box	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Signage
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Litter Bins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Facebook/ Social Media	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	WhatsApp group	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Other (list)
Library,
Leisure Centre with swimming pool,
Two Nature Reserves
Mayfair Community Centre

4. Tell us about/what is special about your community

Church Stretton has a long tradition of strong community involvement and activity. Focus, our community magazine lists 143 clubs and societies which cater for a wide range of interests including sports, local history, music, theatre, amateur dramatics, arts & crafts, photography, walking, biking, U3A and nature and wildlife.

We are lucky to have various venues for events including the Sylvester Horne Institute (SHI), three church halls in Church Stretton and a village hall in both Little Stretton and All Stretton. Concerts are held occasionally in St Laurence church, United Reformed Church and All Saints church in Little Stretton.

Church Stretton Arts Festival, runs over two weeks in the summer and provides daily concerts provided by professional musicians including international artistes. It also puts on the largest Art Exhibition in the county. The festival, run by volunteers with financial support from local businesses, has been running for the last 54 years. Flicks in the Sticks show films at Church Stretton secondary school and in All Stretton village hall. The Town Council runs a programme of musical events at SHI through the autumn, winter and spring.

Before the pandemic there were many social events held locally, arranged by local groups such as musical concerts, quizzes, talks, amateur dramatics, ceilidhs as well as outings to theatres and concerts further afield. These will be restarting once lockdown restrictions are lifted.

There are various toddler groups and Rhyme Time is held in the library once a week. The Scouts, Brownies and Cricket Club have all celebrated their centenaries in recent years. Recent new initiatives include The Long Mynd Music Academy providing music lessons to children from age 3 plus and a youth drama group. The Town Council and Mayfair Community Centre will be re-starting a youth club this September.

The Long Mynd Adventure Camp is a registered charity which encourages young people to discover and enjoy the countryside. They offer camping and bunkhouse accommodation for young people including Scouts, Girl Guides and DofE. That income, supported by donations, helps them provide free country breaks to deserving children's groups.

There are strong faith communities which work well together, fostering the ethos of community support. St. Laurence Church runs the Church Stretton Food Bank, which is well supported financially by local community groups and resident donations. The United Reformed Church has purchased a grand piano which it is generously making available for community music events.

Both Little Stretton and All Stretton have very active village societies putting on events and activities. In Little Stretton 'Teas To Please' takes place across three days over the August Bank Holiday weekend at All Saints' Church and raises funds for charities, both locally and farther afield. All Stretton boasts a village society, village hall committee, history society Women's institute branch, and a renowned Amateur dramatics society. Highlights of village life include the annual pantomime, Christmas pudding, summer party and a Macmillan cream tea.

b. Community initiatives and support

Some twenty-five years ago, the community rallied round to convert an old people's home into a Community Centre. The Mayfair Community Centre now has a national reputation with over 330 volunteers, offering a wide range of community support services for all ages. This includes support for adults with learning disabilities, support to help people remain independent, Ring & Ride transport for people less mobile and a listening and befriending service. Hot meals are cooked and served in the café and delivered by volunteers to people's homes by Good Neighbours. Good Neighbours also provides transport to medical appointments for people without their own transport, and runs a lunch and social club to help combat loneliness. A second lunch group run by local volunteers operates in the URC church hall.

Six years ago, the community again mobilised to raise £138,000 in six months to ensure that an underused health clinic could be converted into a Health & Wellbeing Centre. This is currently being used as a Covid vaccination centre for south Shropshire. It is testament to the commitment to community support that Church Stretton has the highest level of vaccine take-up in the county.

Five years ago, the prospect of the Library being relocated prompted a campaign group to be formed to take legal action to retain it. This then led to the formation of a Charity to raise funds to help safeguard its future and to develop a range of other cultural activities.

Similarly, when the local swimming pool faced possible closure, a Stretton Pool Action (SPA) group was formed to research the level of community support for the retention of the pool and to raise funds for improving the facility.

A new Community Skate Park has recently been created in the local Recreation Ground, as a result of a local resident's initiative in securing unwanted ramps, raising £9,000 and recruiting volunteers and local businesses to provide the skills and materials needed for the installation.

A recent on-line survey on the future of the Recreation Ground had over 680 responses and over a hundred offers of practical and financial help from residents.

During the pandemic, the community came together and adapted how it worked to support people, especially the large number of residents who had to self isolate. Through the first pandemic lockdown, the mayor convened a weekly remote meeting of public services, the Mayfair Community Centre, community support groups and local shops to share intelligence, co-ordinate the deployment of volunteers and keep the community informed.

On day one of the first lockdown, Newsworld/Stretton Hardware co-ordinated home deliveries of goods from a number of local stores. Residents isolating could telephone the shop with their order for groceries, meat, bread and these were purchased by volunteers from local shops and delivered to people's houses. Newsworld/ Stretton Hardware was chosen as one of 12 regional finalists for the Heroes Awards by the National Federation of Independent Retailers for outstanding service to the local community through the pandemic.

Because the majority of Mayfair volunteers are elderly and were therefore isolating, 120 younger residents responded to a call for new volunteers to undertake the more risky home deliveries. Approx 27 hot meals a day were delivered 7 days a week to people unable to cook for themselves and over 700 prescriptions delivered. Older volunteers stayed at home and made supportive phone calls. Over 100 people received information and support through telephone befriending through liaison with the GP Practice.

Arrangements were also put in place so people could order their fruit and vegetables from the Thursday market and volunteers helped on the day to pack the orders and deliver them. The local Midcounties Coop supermarket also started to make home deliveries with the support of more volunteers. They made more home deliveries to households in a five-mile radius than any other Coop store in the Midcounties region. Another local independent store, Entertaining Elephants, was the Central England winner of the Lifestyle Store of the Year Award for 2020/21 "The judges were impressed with the personal touch of store staff, consistency of reviews and community feel. You seem to go over and above for your customers."

The Little Stretton Village Society delivered leaflets to residents telling them what support was available and giving them a telephone number to call if they needed assistance. All Stretton village society met at the start of lockdown and identified all vulnerable people in the village. They divided the community into six zones, with a 'go to' person identified for each zone. They also distributed information to each household including the telephone numbers of villagers to contact in an emergency and the takeaway menu from the local pub. They encouraged older residents to pick up the phone for a chat, to mitigate against the effects of isolation. Local neighbourhood social media groups were also used to provide mutual support.

With financial support from Rotary and the Masonic Lodges, the Food Bank and Good Neighbours drivers delivered free school meals to needy families. A separate volunteer initiative, started by a local coffee shop, funded Christmas hampers for those families. Residents also donated digital equipment and funding to allow all primary and secondary students to maintain their home schooling.

In September 2020, the High Sheriff of Shropshire paid a visit to the town to commend the award-winners and the Mayfair Centre for their efforts during the pandemic. The Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire has presented British Empire medals to two community volunteers who have been running a luncheon club in the town for over thirty years.

Meanwhile, local groups adapted to provide social events in Covid secure ways to help keep people's morale up. Engaging Issues, a group which meets for talks and discussion in the winter, ran them online. Stretton Players, a local amateur dramatic society met regularly by zoom during the first lockdown to read plays and went on to perform an outdoor play in the summer of 2020. The Rotary Club ran a 'cheese and wine evening' by Zoom delivering the cheese and wine to participants' houses earlier in the day. All Stretton Village Society arranged a Treasure Trail. Friends of Church Stretton Library invited local residents to write poetry during the summer lockdown and then ran socially distanced poetry workshops for small numbers of people in the Autumn of 2020. Their Geology Talk in the Autumn became a Geology Walk following covid secure guidance.

c. Communication & connectivity

Though many people now receive information via the internet not everyone has access to the internet. Local groups have a variety of ways to communicate with local people.

There are many notice boards dotted around town and in Little Stretton and All Stretton where people can put up posters and notices. Some residents living on roads leading to the shops also allow posters to be displayed on their garden boundaries.

A volunteer committee publishes Focus, a monthly magazine, promoting local activities and businesses. It reaches over 1,500 households each month and has evolved over its 52 years of existence. It also runs a grant programme which supports local initiatives with £55,000 contributed to date. Known as "The Voice of the Community", Stretton Focus has received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The library also houses a Visitor Information Centre, which stocks leaflets about forthcoming events as well as details of local support groups.

The Community Messaging email service is an initiative started by Eileen Roberts, a popular Church Stretton town councillor. When Eileen sadly died, two volunteers took over running this service. Local groups and organisations send Community Messaging brief details of events and announcements, which are then emailed out to any local resident who has subscribed to receive Community Messaging.

There are also various local community Facebook sites and All Stretton has a well subscribed Next Door group. Little Stretton and All Stretton also both have village societies which keep their residents updated.

Other local organisations maintain their own websites to keep their supporters informed about their activities - e.g. Friends of Church Stretton Library, All Stretton Village Society, Arts Festival, Scrappies, Sylvester Horne Institute, Stretton Climate Care.

d. Health & wellbeing

There are numerous activities on offer to help people remain healthy at the leisure centre, Mayfair and in church halls. These include Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, Zumba and dance. A boxing club opened in 2019 offering boxing classes to men, women and children.

The Town Council maintain playing fields and Pavilion, which are used by local football and cricket clubs. Tennis, bowling, and croquet clubs run using facilities in the town park. On weekdays, in the afternoon, the local swimming pool is used solely by the local primary school, so children can receive regular swimming lessons.

The surrounding hills are perfect for walking, horse riding, and mountain biking and cycling. The Mayfair runs a Walking for Health group which offers walks of various length and difficulty ranging from half an hour on the level to two hours including hill walking.

There are two other walking groups in the area, run by volunteers, offering longer and more demanding walking. A Walking Festival is run each summer offering a four-day programme of walks. The Long Mynd Bridleways Association is a focal point for local riders organising escorted rides, camps and bridleways clearance parties.

It was important to encourage people to take exercise during lockdown. Fitness instructors and Pilates teachers sent videos of exercise classes to encourage people to continue exercising at home. One fitness instructor put videos on Youtube, which received over 5,000 downloads in the community. She then started running live zoom classes four times a week, which with preparation totalled over 250 hours of volunteering with many thousands of hours of teaching delivered. She refused to take payment citing some residents who were furloughed might become excluded. When the gym reopened one regular attendee organised a collection for her chosen charity raising over £500.

Once it was permitted, Walking for Health volunteers resumed leading walks for small numbers of people, following Covid secure advice from the government.

e. Sustainable/green initiatives

Stretton Climate Care is a local community support group, founded in 2007 to promote carbon reduction. Since then, it has provided advice and support to over 550 households, seeking to comply with this climate imperative. It is a key member of the community group which is now developing the plan to make the whole community carbon-neutral by 2030. They have encouraged people to use electric cars and Church Stretton now has four electric charging points.

Scrappies is a local charity that collects and sells recycled and end-of-line items, donated by businesses and the public, primarily for use in creative arts and education. Their store in Church Stretton is run by a small dedicated team of staff and volunteers and is open to everyone. Profits from sales are used to run the charity and organise craft clubs, workshops and other outreach programs for adults and children.

Residents run a volunteer management committee to plan the conservation work on the two Nature Reserves, owned by the Town Council. Residents also serve on the volunteer work groups of the National Trust undertaking maintenance work on local footpaths in the surrounding Shropshire Hills. Another group of volunteers meet once a week to maintain the flower beds at Church Stretton Railway station.

The Long Mynd Bridleways Association works with Shropshire Council's outdoor partnership scheme to keep bridleway routes open and maintained throughout the county. They were recently a British Horse Society Chairman's commendation for their exceptional work. (<https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/press-centre/news/2021/june/bhs-awards-and-winners>).

The Strettons Allotment Gardens Association leases land off the Town Council which provides 42 plots. These are mainly used to grow fruits & vegetables. There is always a waiting list for these allotments.

f. Nature

There are many groups in the area involved in encouraging and protecting nature including the following:

The Strettons Wetland Group Trust raised £25,000 from local residents in three months during 2020 to enable the Middle Marches Community Land Trust to purchase an area of wetland to the south of the town. It is completely run by volunteers. The group is now carrying out work to support the restoration of the land as a wetlands flower meadow.

The Strettons Area Community Wildlife Group (SACWG) is a small and friendly group of about 90 local people. They have been active since 2012. The main work of the group is surveying locally threatened species and habitats. The results of the studies are provided to important bodies such as Shropshire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Natural England, and Shropshire Council to help them in their conservation efforts.

As part of the National Trust's Stepping Stones initiative, local residents are involved in a Verges project to promote a number of wildlife flower verges in the area. There are schemes to rewild grass verges in both Little Stretton and All Stretton. St Laurence's Church manages its church-yard to support wildflowers and a number of nest boxes have been installed in the churchyard. The Town Council and other local residents recently had swift nesting boxes installed on their premises.

The Town Council has a volunteer Tree Group who provide all the advice on planning applications relating to trees, particularly relevant as the town has two Conservation Areas, as well as being situated in an AONB area. The Tree Group is implementing a local tree-planting plan as part of the climate change response.

g. Security and safety

Church Stretton has a very low crime rate. There is close liaison with the local community police. The West Mercia Constabulary has funded a Smartwater crime prevention scheme for the local independent retailers to counteract visitor shoplifting.

There are defibrillators in Church Stretton, All Stretton and Little Stretton.

The Church Stretton first responders is a team of volunteers that have been trained by the ambulance service to go to 999 calls in our area

The Church Stretton Fire station is operated by a watch manager, crew managers and firefighters, who are on call and respond to the station from their home address or their place of work. A weekly drill session is held every Tuesday night.

h. Physical environment

Church Stretton is a busy, historic, market town and is the only town in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It earned the nickname 'Little Switzerland' from its picturesque setting in the Shropshire Hills. Today Church Stretton, together with its

immediate neighbours All Stretton and Little Stretton, is a centre for outdoor activities: walking, mountain biking, cycling, running and orienteering.

Church Stretton is also of national interest to geologists, as it includes some of the oldest rocks in England and lies in the heart of one of the most varied geological areas in the UK. You can observe the remains of ancient volcanic activity on the hills to the east of the town and the tightly folded strata of the Long Mynd to the west, with signs of ancient sea life and a long since eroded plateau.

Local people value the beauty of their surrounding area and are keen to preserve it. In a recent household survey, run for the community led plan, people were asked what they most wanted to conserve. The majority of people mentioned the beautiful landscape surrounding Church Stretton and the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This love of their surroundings was also reflected in a separate Youth survey carried out a year earlier.

The Church Stretton community has a strong conservation ethos and has resolutely resisted all attempts to extend house-building on to the surrounding scenic slopes. The community seeks to conserve not only its natural heritage but also its built heritage with a range of buildings dating back to the Tudor era. Plaques give a background history to the buildings and Time-line tableaux tell the history of Church Stretton from its original geological formation.

The town has benefited from land and building gifted by benefactors through deeds of covenant including the Sylvester Horne institute, Sandford Ave Recreation Park and Brooksbury recreation ground (known as Richard Robinson field). The Town Council acts as trustees for these charities.

The library building was conveyed to the Church Authorities in Church Stretton by a local landowner Charles Orlando Childe Pemberton with a deed of covenant stipulating it thereafter be used for educational purposes. It is now managed by Shropshire Council.

The Mayfair Community Centre, Health and Well Being Centre and local swimming pool were all built as a result of local fund raising efforts.

Volunteering Opportunities

Church Stretton is a special place thanks to the amount of volunteering that takes place within the community. Volunteers help by protecting and maintaining the local environment, providing educational and entertaining events as well as providing support to people in need.

Examples of volunteering opportunities include:

Mayfair Community Centre - has over 300 volunteers who help in a variety of ways including receptionists, listening service, respite to carers, Ring & Ride drivers, digital support, Walking for Health and helping serve meals in the cafe . During Covid, volunteers worked with local traders to deliver shopping and medicine to people isolating and providing a telephone service to people isolated.

Charity Shops - there are four charity shops in town, run with the aid of volunteer staff selling goods donated by the local community.

Community Led Plan Steering Group - For the last two years, a group of volunteers has been canvassing local opinion on how the community would like to develop over the next fifteen years. This has prompted a number of task groups to be formed, not only wanting to contribute ideas but also to be involved longer term in the implementation of the Community-Led Plan.

First Responders - is a team of volunteers, trained by the Ambulance Service, to go to 999 calls in our area

Focus - is a monthly community magazine, totally run by volunteers. They also provide grants to local community projects. Most of the content is submitted by local residents. Volunteers can be involved in writing, editing, laying out content, delivering to people homes, awarding grants.

Friends of Church Stretton Library - is a charity totally run by volunteers which runs educational and cultural events to raise funds for the library. Volunteers assist with admin, managing finances, events, publicity & supporting library projects.

Library volunteers - includes young people helping in the library who are taking the Duke of Edinburgh award. Volunteers also provide a library service to people housebound and local history advisors provide advice to people searching their family tree or wanting to research the history of the local area.

Good Neighbours assist by taking bookings and providing transport to people without their own transport so they can attend medical appointments. This is needed as public transport to the hospitals in Shrewsbury and Telford is infrequent and takes hours. They also run one of the two lunch clubs operating in the town provide people with a meal and a chance to socialise.

Long Mynd Adventure Camp encourages young people to discover and enjoy the countryside. Volunteers help with the running and maintenance of the camp as well as the running of the charity.

National Trust in Carding Mill coordinate a working party of volunteers who help maintain the footpaths in the surrounding area. National Trust volunteers also help with running cafes, gift shop litter collecting, parking and supporting educational visits by schools.

Pride of Place - is run by volunteers and helps clear litter and maintain the flower gardens at the Railway Station.

Scrappies - is a charity that collects and sells recycled and end-of-line items, donated by businesses and the public, primarily for use in creative arts and education. Their store in Church Stretton is run by a small dedicated team of staff and volunteers.

Stretton Arts Festival - is a local charity which runs a two week festival each summer with professional musicians performing concerts everyday and a large Art exhibition. Volunteers assist in booking performers, publicity, ticket selling as well as supporting the events on the day.

Town Council volunteers - include working parties who help maintain the two nature reserves and Rectory fields and woods. New working parties are being set up to help maintain the town park.

There are also many other clubs and societies in Church Stretton run by volunteers, offering a range of activities.

Fund Raising

The people of Church Stretton are very generous in providing financial support. Regular fundraising takes place each year to support local services such as the Mayfair, library and swimming pool as well as national charities such as Macmillan, Save the Children, Cancer Research and the RNLI.

Fund raising activity was hampered last year as a result of the pandemic, but people still gave generously including:

- **Strettons Area Wetlands group** - raised £25,000 during lockdown, to purchase a piece of wetlands to the South of the town which is to be restored as a wild flower water meadow.
- **Mayfair Community centre** - ran an online appeal during the pandemic which has so far raised £12,962
- **Skate Park group** - local group of residents who raised £9,500 to help build a skate park in Church Stretton with work carried out by volunteer group.
- **Friends of Church Stretton Library** - managed to raise over £5,000 in 2020/21, despite having to cancel most of their fund raising events due to Covid.
- **Church Stretton Food Bank** - has helped over 1,700 people since it started in 2013. In the last year, it received 279 referrals – a 59% increase on the previous year.
- **The Rotary Club** - raised £3,383 through the Christmas Tree of light in support of Hope House Children's Hospice, Severn Hospice and Midlands Air Ambulance and approximately £13,000 in the last year for all good causes, despite having to cancel its Christmas Eve carol concert.

Young Heroes Award: The Rotary Club recently invited people to nominate young people, aged between 6 and 18, who had made a significant contribution to their community over the last 18 months. Nominations were received for 14 young people from Church Stretton and the surrounding area. The support these young people had given ranged from providing home delivery, online tuition and video of events during lockdown, litter picking in their local area, to raising significant funding for local

charities and community projects Only two could be chosen to receive the Church Stretton Rotary – Young Heroes Award. These were 9 year old Hannah Woods who set herself the challenge to swim 50 miles to raise funds for the Church Stretton Swimming Pool and in doing so she has raised over £1800, and 13 year old Poppy Cumberlidge who has taken on the role of young carer within her family looking after and supporting her younger siblings who have additional needs. She has also raised funds for the charity Empathy by making and selling bracelets.

5. Why do you consider your community to be outstanding (in less than 200 words)?

What makes Church Stretton special is the people who live and work here and their strong sense of community spirit.

Church Stretton is unique in the county in having so many volunteer-run organisations catering for all generations from youth groups through to elderly and disability support groups and for all different purposes, be it sport, cultural pursuits or mutual help. There is a long tradition of community service in the town which has been reinforced generation upon generation. People are generous in supporting others within the community, both through fundraising and in giving their time.

The Mayfair Community Centre is renowned nationally for the range of its community support services, recognised by the New Year's Honours for its Chief Officers. Volunteers, who have given particularly long service, have been recognised by both the High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire.

The Times newspaper recently nominated Church Stretton as one of the eight best places to live in the Midlands, making specific reference to its community spirit.

As demonstrated by the pandemic, when the need arises, residents of all ages willingly offer their services for the community good.

6. Please submit evidence in support of your application (e.g. photos, video clips, testimonials, press articles etc)

Please list what you have attached/submitted.

Attachments to Church Stretton's Entry in the Outstanding Communities Competition

1. Cuttings from Focus Community Magazine - Jan 2020 to March 2021
2. Links to Church Stretton Websites
3. 3 Photos - recent opening of the skate park and a poem left in the park during the first covid lockdown which says it all

- NB If you wish to use photos found in Focus or on the various websites linked to, we will seek permission from the people concerned. We have permission for the photos sent.

7. Do you have any plans for the coming year in your community? (in less than 200 words) (NOTE This section is optional and has no bearing on the judges scoring)

During lockdown, local groups running cultural events met by Zoom and are now well in the process of setting up an Arts Forum to provide a more coherent offer of local cultural events for both residents and visitors coming out of Covid. An online planning diary has been developed to support this.

Local events now being planned, coming out of lockdown, include:

- URC Church - A series of Saturday morning starting in June showcasing the new Bechstein piano bought for the community.
- Arts Festival - a scaled down Arts Festival in July with various concerts in local churches and three bigger outdoor music events in Rectory Field;
- Sylvester Horne Institute is hoping to resume indoor music events from October;
- Friends of Church Stretton Library are planning a quiz night in October and a talk on reindeers in December.
- Stretton Climate Care are planning a Zero / Low Carbon Day, electric cars and bikes in October;
- Stretton Players are performing a play in November;
- The local RNLI group are running a Bingo session in November to raise funds for the RNLI
- Stretton Choral Society start rehearsal in September for a concert at Christmas.

A community music festival is being planned for early 2022 to bring the community together again after the pandemic.

Ref [Strettons Planning Diary](#) -

CONSENT



By completing this form, you give The Community Foundation permission to keep your details securely on our database and use them for communication purposes.

Name	Church Stretton Town Council		
Address	60 High St Church Stretton Shropshire		
		Postcode	SY6 6BY
Contact name.	Andy Munro		
Contact telephone number.	07899 902832		
Contact email address.	cllr.andymunro@churchstretton-tc.gov.uk		

By ticking this box, you confirm that parental permission has been sought to submit photographs where children and young people, under the age of 18, are included.

By ticking this box, you give consent for any photographs and supporting evidence submitted to be used for promotional purposes and can be shared on The Community Foundation social media platforms and website.