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**PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL  
Minutes of the Meeting of Pencombe Group Parish Council  
held on**

**Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 at 7.30pm in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

**Councillors Present;**

Cllr. W. Brazier, Chairman

Cllr. D Legge

Cllr. C. Hadley

**In Attendance:**, Allan Drew (Parish Clerk)

**Members of the Public:** 13 members of the public attended

**27/22 Apologies for absence**

Cllr. Hope sent his apologies having contracted COVID. Council accepted the reason for his absence.

**28/22 Declarations of interest and written requests for dispensation**

No requests had been received

**29/22 Draft minutes of the previous meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022.**

The minutes of the meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> February were agreed and the Chairman signed the draft minutes as a true record of the meeting.

**30/22 Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda**

The Chairman reported that there were five candidates standing in the election scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> March. He wanted to take this opportunity to thank them all for standing for the Parish Council and how pleased he was that, compared with previous elections, the number of candidates well exceeded the Council places available.

**31/22 Open Session**

**31.1/22 To receive an update from the Ward Councillor.**

Cllr. Harrington was unable to attend and had not sent a report.

**32.2/22 To receive queries or concerns from local residents.**

No questions were raised by residents.

(NB. There was an error on the agenda numbering system and item 32/22 was incorrectly presented. The numbering presented in the agenda has been retained so that the minutes and the agenda remain aligned).

**33/22 To receive an update on the Parish Hall.**

Mr Mottram reported that the activities held in the Hall are producing about £5000 income but the projected costs for the coming year are not particularly encouraging. The COVID support grants had been spent on considerable improvements but prudence would be required.

The Chairman thanked the Parish Hall committee for keeping the Hall running so well during a difficult period.

## 34/22 To receive a report from the Responsible Finance Officer

### Bank Balances

Bank balances on 18/3/2022 were as follows-

Unity Trust current account £28312.07

Council to note the breakdown of the bank balance as regards reserves and grants-

Use of Reserve	£
Winter maintenance & management	5000.00
Neighbourhood Development Plan	8778.60
Flood protection capital fund	5000.00
Village car park	5200.00
TOTAL	23966.60

The RFO informed the Council that he had received the request from Groundworks to pay back the unspent balance of the NDP grant as required at the end of the financial year. The general reserve to fund activity for the remainder of the financial year stands at £4346.

### Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	300.63	Clerk's February salary
2	Berrys	870.80+VAT 840.50+VAT	2 invoices - car park planning fee
3	A M Drew	68.80+VAT	Refund for HT advert re grass cutting
4	A M Drew	23.99+VAT	Refund for (2) monthly ZOOM payments
5	HALC	396.47+VAT	Annual subscriptions
6	M A Walsh & Son	300.00+VAT	Cemetery works
7	Steve Edwards	400.00	Hall paving slabs
8	Viking Direct	32.75+VAT	Paper, flip chart pens A4 folders

### Payments received since last meeting.

No income has been received.

## Payments for authorisation

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	300.63	Clerk's March salary
2	Society of Local Council Clerks	144.00	Annual membership
3	British Telecommunications	1.00	Purchase/adoption of Pencombe telephone kiosk
4	A M Drew	11.99+VAT	Refund for monthly ZOOM payment
	TOTAL	460.02	

Council resolved that these payments should all be made.

It was agreed that ZOOM would continue for another month.

## Budget and Spending

The budget position with one month remaining of the financial year remains satisfactory.

Forecast income for year                      £ 14680

Forecast expenditure for year                £13753

Forecast surplus                                 £927



## Draft Budget for 2022-23

Line No.	PENCOMBE GPC DRAFT BUDGET 2022-23	Budget 2022-23
	<b>Income</b>	
1	Precept	13875
2	Cemetery	1000
3	Grants	13000
4	Other	200
5	VAT Reclaim	924
6	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>28999</b>
7	Clerk	3730
8	Bank Charges	72
9	Administration	500
10	Insurance, audit, professional	685
11	IT	340
12	Cemetery Rates	329
13	Training and development	200
14	Equipment	500
15	Lengthsman	5500
16	Maintenance	3500
17	HMRC	1000
18	NDP	10000
19	Other	1200
	<b>Special Projects</b>	
20	Defibrillators	
21	Little Cowarne	0
22	Sparrington	150
23	Pencombe	100
24	Village Car Park	2500
25	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>30306</b>
26	Reclaimable VAT in expenditure	2000
27	<b>Surplus</b>	<b>693</b>

The RFO presented the draft budget for the following year 2022-23 which had been amended since the February meeting. The main change is the increase in grant funding with a new NDP grant and hopefully a drainage grant from Herefordshire.

Council resolved to approve the draft budget for adoption in 2022-23.

The RFO asked if Council would be prepared to authorise the purchase of Parish footpath maps for the use of the footpath officers and for installation in the Little Cowarne kiosk. The purchase of these maps was agreed.

Since kiosks were under discussion the Chairman opened a discussion on the use of the Pencombe kiosk. A number of residents had commented that the defibrillator would best be sited in the kiosk since it is a more obvious location than the Hall. Residents thought that the present position was also noticeable, although moving the defibrillator would provide a small saving in the Hall's electricity bill. The matter is not yet urgent so a decision was deferred for the time being.

## **35/22 Planning applications & updates**

No new applications had been received.

213184 Gt. Hegdon farm, proposed dry manure store remained undecided although the application was made on 13 August.

## **36/22 Lengthsman & Grass cutting**

### **36.1/22 Re-tendering of grass cutting contract**

The Clerk reported that he had received three responses to the advertising carried out on renewing the grass cutting contract. In the end however, only one of those expressions of interest resulted in a priced application. This response was from D C Gardening Services of Leominster and the price per cut was quoted at £520+VAT. Given the increase in prices experienced recently and that the previous contractor had not increased the price (£310 per cut) since 2018 Council felt that the quotation from D C Gardening Services was reasonable and resolved to appoint this firm as the contractor.

## **37/22 Pencombe Cemetery**

The Chairman explained the background to this item in that there is a site for tree planting between the cemetery and Mill Farm. The Pencombe & Little Cowarne Gardening Club had been consulted about suitable trees for the site and a vote resulted in a ranked list of trees which could be used. With the Queen's Platinum Jubilee just a few months away it was timely to progress such a planting scheme which also responded to suggestions of tree planting made by residents some time earlier. There was room for five trees and the voting favoured the following-

- |                   |         |
|-------------------|---------|
| 1. Bird cherry    | 6 votes |
| 2. Crab apple.    | 5 votes |
| 3. English oak    | 4 votes |
| 4. Copper beech   | 4 votes |
| 5. Sweet chestnut | 4 votes |

And out of interest, the next most popular with 3 votes were:

6. Damson
7. Silver birch

The Chairman pointed out that the hedge was a boundary hedge and subject to cutting which could be a problem for the smaller trees such as damson. There would also be an

opportunity for further planting around the proposed car park. Disease resistant elm was also a possibility if it could be found at a reasonable price. Pricing investigations suggested that five trees of this type could be found for between £250-£300.

There was also the possibility of using the cemetery as a nursery for young whips which could be bought cheaply, grown on and then used for the car park in due course.

Council resolved that five trees should be secured at the best possible price with a limit of around £300+VAT. Oak, sweet chestnut and copper beech would be the larger trees with damson and bird cherry being the smaller, faster growing "in-fill" trees

**38/22 To receive an update on the provision of a Village Car Park.**

The Clerk updated the Council on a report received from Berrys. The design was still not finalised but the tree survey had been completed and the consultant's report was presented to Council. Elm and ash should be removed due to disease. The remaining trees have limited value and could be improved if the car park goes ahead.

**39/22 Dog Fouling**

The Clerk had been in contact with David Hough of the Community Protection team who would be consulting with colleagues to help the Council make the proposed dog warden scheme successful. Mr Hough would be in touch when he had more information.

**40/22 Matters for discussion at the next meeting.**

Cllr. Hadley raised the matter of the Jubilee celebrations and thought that a Pencombe village meeting to organise activities would be helpful. Little Cowarne was already organising its own activities including lighting a beacon on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June to which all group Parish residents are invited. After some discussion it was agreed that a meeting for all Pencombe residents would be held on 29<sup>th</sup> March to discuss and agree activities for the Jubilee weekend.

PCSO Sue Berrett spoke for a few minutes at the end of the meeting to update residents with the latest developments in the PCSO team. She suggested that, following reports of poaching, this should be made one of the priorities for the Community Charter. PCSO Berrett encouraged residents to report any suspicious activities given the small number of officers available over such a large area. Finally she reported that a vacancy would be filled by the arrival of PCSO Toby Stevenson on 1<sup>st</sup> April, transferring from Kidderminster as an experienced officer.

The date of the next meeting is 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm.

Signed:  Chairman of the Parish Council

Date 26 April 2022