

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

Tuesday 22nd November 2022 at 7.30pm in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall

Councillors Present;

Cllr. W. Brazier, Chairman Cllr. C. Hadley
Cllr. D Legge Cllr. S. Barrett
Cllr. S Walsh

In Attendance: John Harrington Ward Councillor, Allan Drew Parish Clerk

Members of the Public: 6 members of the public attended

138/22 To receive: apologies for absence

All Councillors were present (Cllr. Hope had sent his resignation item 141/22)

139/22 To receive: Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation

None received

140/22 To receive and approve: the minutes of the ordinary meeting of 25th October 2022

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman

141/22 Matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes

The Chairman had received the resignation of Cllr. Philip Hope from the Council. The Clerk advised that since the vacancy had arisen within 6 months of an ordinary election there was no legal requirement to fill the vacancy. No election could be claimed but Council could fill the vacancy by co-option. It was resolved that candidates to fill the vacancy by co-option would be sought.

The Clerk had received a letter from Jill's Haiselden's daughter requesting that Jill's ashes be spread in Pencombe cemetery by the grave of her husband. Council agreed that the ashes could be spread. Council also resolved that the usual fee of £100 would be waived due to Jill's significant contribution to the Group Parish.

The Clerk informed the meeting that the road at Rams Corner would be closed during December

The Locality Steward had advised that at the exit of Faggots Lane the gravel from the lane was spreading too far onto the highway and remedial action was required. There was no registered keeper of the lane so the default position is that the landowners either side of the lane are responsible. In such circumstances Mr Hope and the Parish Hall would be responsible. It was resolved that the Clerk would inform the Locality Steward that Council was aware of the problem and would progress a solution in association with the Parish Hall ramp modifications.

142/22 To receive: an update on the Parish Hall

Mr Mottram reported that the trustees were preparing a business plan to feed into the precept setting exercise.

143/22 To receive: a finance report from Cllr. Sally Walsh
Cllr. Walsh reported that-

Bank balances on 18/11/2022 were as follows-

Unity Trust current account £20,852.78

Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	£337.65	Clerk's October salary
2	HFSP GPC	£95.93+VAT	Shared cost of two toner cartridges 25% HFSP; 75% PGPC
3	Kirkwells	£3032.21+VAT	Preparation of first draft NDP + ance at workshop (6 days+printing)
4	D C Gardening Services	£520+VAT	September grass cutting
5	D C Gardening Services	£80.00+VAT	Additional misc. grass cutting

Income received since last meeting

Nil

Payments for Authorisation

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	337.45	Clerk's November salary, pay on 25 November
2	Berrys	514.50+VAT	Staged payment for planning application
3	Berrys	540.00+VAT	Re-design charge
4	D C Gardening Services	1732.00+VAT	Drainage grant work on C1115. Under query.
5	A M Drew	32.48+VAT	Refund for purchase of Parish Hall lights (external)
6	D C Gardening Services	520.00+VAT	October grass cut

The RFO reported that the Lengthsman query (item 4 on above list) had now been resolved and the final invoice for payment had been reduced to £761.50+VAT.

The above payments were agreed

Bank reconciliation Qtr 2

The discrepancy of £100 between the cash book remains. As reported last month this discrepancy arises from the unpresented cheque dated 25 August 2022 in favour of the H&G Canal trust. The RFO has contacted the Trust to urge presentation of the cheque. It was agreed that the cheque should be cancelled and the RFO should make a payment by BACS of £100.

Pay review

HALC has advised that the Local Government Association, (LGA), representing employers has agreed a salary settlement for local government staff. The Clerk's salary rises by £1.00/hour with effect from 1 April 2022, from £12.95/hour to £13.95/hour. Interestingly all grades received this flat rate award of £1.00/hour irrespective of position on the pay scales.

Council agreed this increase, and the RFO will arrange for the Chairman to inform Autela of the change.

Donation to Royal British Legion

The annual donation to RBL is due following use of the wreath on Remembrance Day. The usual Council donation has been £30 for quite a few years now. Council agreed that the donation should be increased to £50.

Deposit account.

With interest rates on the rise it is time to look at bringing a savings account back into use. Unity Bank offers an instant access account at 0.95% pa. Their other savings products are only available for deposits of more than £0.5m.

Initial research shows that United Trust Bank offers 2.2% on a 40-day notice account. This is amongst the best available and sets an upper limit on what could be achieved for Council deposits.

Council resolved that the savings products available should be investigated and a decision made at the next meeting.

144/22 To receive: a planning report Cllr. Colin Hadley

Planning applications/decisions:

New applications

Cllr. Hadley reported that there are no new applications in the Group Parish.

Existing applications

222579 Hollybush Cottage, Pencombe Construction of a new oak framed balcony to an existing games room.
Approved with conditions

The digester at Whitwick Manor (222728) was discussed briefly and Cllr. Harrington gave some background information. However, the Parishes would not be directly affected by the scheme, though it seemed likely that the application would be decided by the Planning Committee.

145/22 Lengthsman Scheme/Grass cutting:

Cllr. Brazier reported that there was still grant money available and further work on the drainage system remained possible. Discussions with the Lengthsman would be held to agree the next project.

146/22 Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr. Legge reported that-

- A photographic competition would be held to generate photos for use in the NDP. The closing date is 31 May 2023 and a prize will be given for each photo used in the NDP.
- Formation of a writing group to build the second draft of the NDP. A group of 5-10 volunteers has been sought. So far three residents have replied volunteering to join the group.

Notices have also been placed on the website and the notice boards and wider publicity will be sought through Facebook, Parish Hall newsletter, pub posters, Roundabout etc.

147/22 Provision of a village car park.

Cllr. Brazier reported that the next step would be to achieve planning consent.

148/22 Open session:

148.1/22 **To receive:** a verbal update from the Ward Councillor

Currently the major issue for Herefordshire Council is setting the budget for 2023-24, which has to be completed by February. There is currently a gap of £21.6m in next year's draft budget and work is currently ongoing to close this gap. Inflation is currently at 11.1% and many sources of revenue were now closed, for example the Government Revenue Support Grant, worth about £62 m/year in 2000 was now zero. Cuts in services are a real possibility.

A trial of a drainage assets mapping system has started in the Parish of Walford.

Cllr. Hadley raised the matter of grass cutting at Yarpole and Cllr. Harrington undertook to look into the matter.

Cllr. Walsh asked about

- the DWP household support fund and how that might be accessed.
- are there any grants available for providing warm hubs.
- can the Pencombe name sign to the east of the village be replaced as it has no longer there.

Cllr. Harrington would seek clarification on these matters.

148.2/22 **To receive:** queries or concerns by local residents on parish matters

A number of residents had discovered that the Pencombe pub "The Wheelwrights" is for sale. Very unusually the adjacent house owned by Ms Clarke was also for sale and there was a suggestion from residents that the council should consider buying both the pub (as a community pub) and the house (as a holiday let). One resident, Mr Foster, had produced an outline set of



financials based on typical business costs of borrowing and anticipated income from a number of facilities which could be run from the pub and the holiday let-

Anticipated capital costs (to purchase and upgrade facilities)	£900k - £950k
Annual cost of loans	£60k
Annual maintenance charges	£3k
Annual running costs – pub	£24k
Annual running costs – holiday let	£2.4k
Turnover pub	£96k
Turnover – holiday let	£14k
Tenant rent per year (to cover cost of loans)	£66k
Residual income to tenant	£17.6k

When the loan is repaid the village would then own assets in excess of £1m at current prices.

Council thanked Mr Foster for his work and the full set of financials provided by Mr Foster are shown at Appendix 1

Council then discussed the proposals and were enthusiastic about the unusual opportunity of purchasing both the pub and adjacent house as a holiday let. After the discussion it was agreed that the Council should progress the case to buy the pub and house. The Clerk explained that the Council could list the pub as an Asset of Community Value which would freeze the sale for up to six months. Council thought such a listing would be necessary to allow the time for the community to create an offer.

Council resolved that the Clerk should progress the listing of the Wheelwrights as an Asset of Community Value.

These financials presented are first approximations and do not take account of special borrowing facilities open to Council.

The Plunkett Foundation was mentioned as an excellent source of impartial information on buying and running a community pub. Their report is at

Plunkett Foundation Community Pubs 2022

In conclusion Council felt that the proposal to buy the pub and the house were worth full investigation and a more comprehensive report would be made at the next meeting

Matters for discussion at the next meeting

No matters were raised

Date of next meeting Tuesday 24th January 2023

Signed (Chairman).....*W. Brazier*.....

Date.....*24-01-2023*.....