

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

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023 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	Cllr. J. Lewis

**In Attendance:** Allan Drew Parish Clerk

**Members of the Public:** 5 members of the public attended

**15/23 Apologies for absence**

Cllr. Harrington sent his apologies

**16/23 Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation**

None received

**17/23 To receive and approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

Cllr. Hadley raised a point of accuracy on item 12/23 – The Wheelwrights. Cllr. Hadley had pointed out that having a tenant in place was important to ensure that the loan repayments could be maintained. Some other community owned pubs had struggled to find suitable tenants. The Chairman accepted this point but did not feel that this was the most important current issue when there was as yet no funding plan in place for the purchase of the pub. The Clerk undertook to amend the minutes which were then duly signed.

**18/23 Matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes**

The Clerk raised a number of matters-

The working group had asked that some bulbs be planted around the villages, particularly close to the War Memorial and near the Little Cowarne phone box. Mrs Legge suggested that native varieties such as daffodils, cyclamen and snow drops are preferred. Poppy planting around the Memorial would also be attractive. Another suggestion is to buy a kilo of sunflower seeds for use by any families who wished to plant the seeds. The Chairman mentioned that the car park bank also needed attention and Mrs Drew reported that large stones are planned for installation. Cllr. Walsh suggested that this topic be placed on the working group agenda and Mrs Drew would be invited to attend and explain the plan. For the bulb planting a £150 fund to be spent in the autumn was requested and an additional £15 for spending now for sunflower seeds. Council agreed these expenditures and the Clerk would re-imburse the £15 expenditure on receiving a receipt.

The Coronation was imminent, and the Clerk had received a Government letter outlining the various activities communities could organise such as street parties, lunch, volunteering etc. There is an intention to serve the LinC Lunch on Saturday whilst watching the Coronation in the Parish Hall. Little Cowarne is planning an event for Monday 8 June. The Clerk had

allocated £500 in the budget to assist the community with the costs of running events but it was decided to await more information at the March meeting before finalising details

Voter ID had been publicised quite extensively and the Clerk reminded everyone that photo ID would in future be required for any elector voting at a polling station. Any of the usual photo documents such as a passport or a driving license would be acceptable, but if a voter had no suitable document then the Electoral Commission would provide an ID document specifically for this purpose.

### 19/23 Update on the Parish Hall

Mr Mottram was not present, but he had sent the Clerk a report which was read out-

- The burns Night had been successful and much enjoyed though not as profitable as had been hoped.
- The cooker had developed a fault which cost £699 to repair (the cooker was 7 months outside warranty).
- Some of the plastic plumbing in the kitchen is starting to deteriorate and will be replaced when required.
- Although residents were keen on the idea of film screening in the Parish Hall the numbers actually attending make the event barely viable.

### 20/23 Finance Report

Cllr. Sally Walsh presented the finance report-

Bank balance on 23/02/2023 was as follows-

Unity Trust current account £14,417

#### Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	337.45	Clerk's December salary,
2	A M Drew	337.45	Clerk's January salary,
3	Autela	45.00+VAT	Q3 payroll
4	Viking	57.95+VAT	Paper + stapler (NDP)
5	A M Drew	10.99+VAT	Refund for plan for Wheelwrights ACV listing
6	W A Brazier	130.00	Fabrication, painting and fitting letterbox drain cover in Pencombe village centre
7	Mrs Shirley Palliser	70.93+VAT	Dog poo bags, holders, signs etc

Total for payment - £989.77+VAT as appropriate.

**Income received since last meeting - Nil**

### **Payments for Authorisation**

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	623.55	Clerk's February salary. Includes salary award arrears.
2	HALC	426.41+VAT	Subscription for 2023-24

Total for payment - £1049.96+VAT as appropriate

Cllr. Walsh asked that the HALC newsletter could be distributed (by email) and also the login details for accessing the HALC site.

### **Deposit account.**

The Clerk explained that he had approached a number of deposit takers but so far had not found one which would accept deposits from Parish Councils. He had now written to Tony Ford at HALC asking for advice on this matter and would report back on progress

### **Microsoft 365 software for Council computer**

Microsoft have advised the RFO that monthly billing will now replace annual billing for the software used in the Council laptop. (The price remains the same at £7.90+VAT/month).

To ensure continuity of service and economy of effort the RFO seeks authority to either-

(Preferred). To set up a monthly standing order payment to Microsoft directly from the Council bank account

Or

(Alternative if necessary). Set up a monthly standing order to refund £7.90+VAT to the RFO's personal credit card.

Council decided that if possible a standing order from the Council bank account would be the preferred option. The RFO would progress the matter with Microsoft.

### **Setting the budget for 2023-24**

The RFO had produced a draft budget for 2023-24 shown below. It was agreed that the RFO and Cllr. Walsh would meet to discuss the draft budget and a firm recommendation made to Council at the March meeting.

# Pencombe Group Parish Council

## Approved Minutes

Line No.	Budget and Spend 2022-24	Budget 2022-23	Forecast Outturn 31 March 2023	Notes 2022-23	Forecast Budget 2023-24	Notes 2023-24
	<b>Income</b>					
1	Precept	13875	13875		18300	Precept uplifted by inflation + election costs
2	Cemetery	1000	500		1000	
3	Grants	13000	13000	£4000 lengthsman: £9000 NDP	16750	£1000 lengthsman: £5000 NDP £750 contribution to kiosk re-furb, £10000 grant (car park)
4	Loans				20000	Car park land purchase
5	Other	200	200		100	
6	VAT Reclaim	924	1701.79		3306.45	Relates directly to 2022-23 expenditure
7	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>28999</b>	<b>29276.79</b>		<b>59456.45</b>	
	<b>Expenditure</b>					
8	Clerk	4044	4300		4400	Based on 2022-23 Salary award
9	Bank Charges	72	80		72	
10	Administration	500	2500	Includes £2092 election costs	420	Uplifted by 5% and election costs removed
11	Insurance, audit, professional	685	685		720	Uplifted by 5%
12	IT	340	423		450	Uplifted by 5%
13	Cemetery Rates	329	329		350	Uplifted by 5%
14	Training and development	200	0		500	Training for new Council May 2023 onwards
15	Equipment	500	500		525	Uplifted by 5%
16	Lengthsman	5500	6500		0	Now treated as a project
17	Maintenance	3500	4200		4000	£3500 grass cuts, £500 other
18	HMRC	1000	1200		1200	
19	NDP	10000	6000		6000	£5000 NDP grant, £1000 Council budget
20	Other	1200	2200	Includes £1000 village Jubilee contribution	1000	Includes £500 subsidy for Group Parish Coronation event
21	<b>Special Projects</b>					
22	Defibrillators	0	0			
23	Little Cowarne	0	0			
24	Sparrington	150	0		750	Kiosk refurb
25	Pencombe	100	0		0	
26	Village Car Park	2500	5000	costs of submitting planning application included	30000	£20000 land purchase, £10000 to create car park
27	Parish Hall	0	0		2500	Letter from Parish Hall chair of Trustees
28	Wheelwrights	0	0		3000	Seed funding if required and to be recovered in future revenues as available
29	Lengthsman				3500	Assumes £1000 grant + £2500 normal Council budget
30	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>30620</b>	<b>33917</b>		<b>59387</b>	
31	Reclaimable VAT in expenditure	2000	3500		6400	Based on £32000 VATable spend
32	<b>Surplus</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>-4640.21</b>		<b>69.44</b>	

### 21/23 Planning.

Cllr. Hadley reported that the only new application was from Hennerwood Farm, Pencombe and did not require prior approval. No comments were necessary from Council.

#### Existing applications

There had been no change in the status of existing applications within the Parishes.

224305 Land at Upper House, Little Cowarne. Re-use of 3 redundant barns. **Undecided**

224269 Meadow End, Little Cowarne. Installation of 28 solar PV panels on garage roof.

**Undecided**

221751 Land at the 3 Horseshoes, Little Cowarne. **Pending appeal**

### 22/23 Lengthsman Scheme/Grass cutting:

Cllr. Tony Brazier reported that the Lengthsman had been instructed to start work on the piping project between New House Farm and Gasbage. The cost will be £4143+VAT paid from the drainage grant and from some Council reserves.

Cllr. Hadley asked if there had been an inspection of the drainage around Mr & Mrs Willcock's property, The Steppes. The Chairman and vice-Chair had independently visited the area and had concluded that the drains were not blocked. The road had been swept and a covering of leaves removed.

### 23/23 Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr. David Legge reported that the writing group had met twice and that draft 2 of the NDP was almost completed.

When finalized this draft will be forwarded to Louise Kirkup, our planning consultant, for her to review. Once Louise has commented a Group Parish residents' workshop will review the document for (most likely) further development. This writing/review process will continue until all stakeholders are happy that the plan is ready for final adoption.

The sites submitted for review back in November are now being processed by AECOM. Feedback is expected shortly on which sites are suitable for development.

### 24/23 Provision of a village car park.

Cllr. Brazier reported that the only outstanding work before submission to planning is the wildlife survey instructed last month with Cotswold Wildlife Surveys. Mr P J Triplow of Berrys has advised that once this survey has been received an application for planning consent will be made.

The Clerk has asked Cotswold for an update on their progress but none has been received as yet.

### 25/23 The Wheelwrights

Cllr. Lewis reported that since the last meeting-

- The purchase of the Staple Cottage had to be abandoned due to the costs.
- Purchase of the pub through the PWLB had been considered but again the costs for a full loan at current interest rates appeared too high.
- The Parish Council would not be further involved in the purchase.
- Other possibilities were now being considered especially a community-based fund-raising initiative.

- A 50% grant is available through the Community Ownership Fund (which is not available to Parish Councils). Cllr. Lewis proposed setting up a Community Benefit Society to apply for the grant.
- The remaining 50% could be raised by a combination of a community share issue scheme and perhaps a small commercial loan.
- The grant can be applied for before securing other funding and there would be a 12-month period for the community to raise the remaining funding required.
- There was also a further grant available (not match funded) to assist with refurbishment costs.
- In conclusion the first step should be to secure the match funding which, if successful, would encourage residents to consider supporting the share subscription.

The Chairman reported that a steering group is being formed to work through the financial case and apply for the match funding. A Parish meeting would then be held to establish the support available from residents for carrying forward firm proposals to purchase the pub.

### **26/23 Open session:**

#### **26.1/2 Update from the Ward Councillor.**

3

Cllr. Harrington was not present but had sent a report. The full report is contained in an appendix to these minutes.

#### **26.2/2 Queries or concerns by local residents on parish matters.**

3

Cllr. Hadley reported that there was a broken bridge in Little Cowarne which had been reported to Cllr. Harrington but no action had yet been taken. There was also a stile to be replaced on LC13 at the access point from the C1117 highway approx. 100m north of Three Horseshoes public house and the Clerk requested a photograph so that a replacement stile could be ordered from Herefordshire Council.

Mr Maynard asked if there was any update on ensuring the weekly bus service to Pencombe would be maintained. The Clerk would progress with Cllr. Harrington.

The PO van had failed to turn up and no one was told it would not be coming. Also though disabled access had been promised there were in fact no facilities to assist residents with disabilities. The Clerk will progress these problems with the Post Office.

Cllr. Walsh mentioned that there would be another energy saving talk from Caplor at 7pm on 8 March in the Parish Hall.

### **27/23 Matters for discussion at the next meeting**

None raised

Meeting closed at 8:45pm

**Date of next meeting Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Signed (Chairman)**



**Date 25 April 2023**

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Appendix 1 – Pencombe Ward report from Cllr. Harrington

### Pencombe Ward Report

28<sup>th</sup> February 2023

We have a lot of items coming up at the Cabinet meeting this Thursday, which is followed by the last Full Council meeting of this 4 year election cycle on Friday. Below is a summary of some of the items with the link to the more detailed papers below.

- **Eastern Bridge** – we have completed the gap analysis work on an Eastern Crossing, from Rotherwas up onto Hampton Dene road and then across to the Ledbury Road. The Outline Business Case is currently nearing completion and will be finished in April. This will identify a route corridor, assess and resolve challenges and allow us to start the full and Detailed Business Case for submission. The bridge is costed at around £56 million at the moment compared to £250 million for the previous Western proposal, and is estimated to take 30% of traffic of the New (Greyfriars Bridge). We need two bridges in the City and we feel this is the most practical and more easily achieved option.
- We have nearly completed the **Hereford Masterplan** which is a document and plan that plans Hereford City's placemaking and transport strategically so we are not just ad hoc adding development to suit developers but thinking about how to allow people to move and live as sensibly as possible in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We have addressed school transport and other important issues in this plan and it will make central government more likely to give us grant funding for big projects because of the base work this report provides.
- To make sure everything is not just focussed on the City we have also started the refresh of the **Local Transport Plan** which deals with the County as a whole. This was in dire need of a refresh and this time will include, for the first time, an **LCWIP** (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan). It also will be informed and include the work we did through the **local market towns transport plans** we commissioned when we first came in in 2019. Market towns require proper planning and thought around traffic movement and active travel measures just as much as the City. Places like Ross, in particular need this planning as they have grown without proper strategic planning.
- The **Local Plan/Core Strategy** is moving towards a final draft stage but won't be ready for inspection until the end of the summer – partly because the government keeps changing their minds on how Local Plans should work (they are trying to reduce them in scope, possibly to make it more difficult for councils to have too much control in where development should take place). The key takeaway is we will be taking most of the smaller settlements, villages and hamlets out of the allocated land for development. We wish to ensure development in smaller settlements is more controlled, particularly by Neighbourhood Development Plans and that the bulk of new development is concentrated in the City and, to a lesser extent, the market towns.
- **Future Model for the Public Realm Contract** we have finished our extensive reviews of the public realm contract and the evidence seems to be that whilst Balfour Beatty are no better or worse than any other major civils company, it is Herefordshire Council that is failing to oversee the contract to achieve an optimal service. This report coming to Cabinet on Thursday asks officers to look at bringing technical and contract



management services back in-house so drainage, highways and other engineers sit with us and we can also manage local procurement to use local companies more easily than previously. Personnel we want coming back in house will include inspectors (so Locality Stewards or our equivalents). This will give us better control and we envisage us making the annual plan (schedule of works) and giving it to BBLP to deliver rather than the partner having responsibility for the entire service as they have done since 2013.

- <https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=251&MId=8905&Ver=4>

Separately we have potentially 120 asylum seekers coming to stay at the Three Counties shortly. We have objected to the use of hotels to house refugees/asylum seekers. It is not a good situation or way to deal with this issue. Herefordshire has taken many refugees over the last few years (several hundred) but they have been proportionally placed and assimilated into our communities. Ultimately this is a decision for the government and one we can only protest against. We remain to see what the final decision is.

Below further is some information that may be of use. If anyone knows anyone who would consider working as a social worker, no matter how old or young, with or without qualifications, tell them to have a look at the links. We are desperate for good social workers who will live and work in the County and provide the stability we need in the workforce to produce the very best protection and experiences for our vulnerable residents.

JH 28.02.2023

### Step Up To Social Work campaign

Social work can be a challenging but hugely rewarding career. We're recruiting now, so if you know of someone who'd like to know more, [take a look](#) and share this information.

[Find out if you have what it takes to #StepUpToSocialWork and how you can apply](#) in Herefordshire.



### New population estimates

New population estimates show that Herefordshire's resident population was 187,600 in mid-2021.

This is the first mid-year estimate based on the 2021 census. We previously told you that the Census 2021 estimates for Herefordshire show a slower growth than expected over the last decade. This was down to an over-estimated net migration into the county that affected most ages under 55, but especially the 25 to 44s and children.





The following are a few key points from the [Mid-2021 population briefing](#) note:

- The county still has an older population than nationally and numbers continue to grow
- Numbers of children and working age adults have fallen over the last decade
- There were fewer births (1.5K) than deaths (2.3K) in the year
- Growth over the year was driven by net internal migration from elsewhere in the UK

Visit [Understanding Herefordshire's Population webpage](#) for further information.

### New measures to protect women and girls from domestic abusers

On Monday 20 February the government has announced new measures to protect women and girls from domestic abuse. The new proposals will help to provide protection from harassment, aggression and violence, and focus on preventing domestic abuse.

Additionally, for those at risk of, or suffering from, domestic abuse, the Ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) scheme will be being piloted in 18 job centres and jobs and benefit offices across the UK. The scheme is already in operation in over 5,000 pharmacies across the UK in over 88 cities, towns and villages. A new postcode checker will also tell people where the nearest location is to access the service.

The government will also require police forces to treat violence against women and girls as a national threat, as set out in a new strategic policing requirement published on 20 February. This means tackling these crimes will be as important as tackling threats like terrorism, serious and organised crime and child sexual abuse.

The National Police Chiefs' Council is also writing to every police force in England and Wales to reiterate the expectation that forces must proactively identify the most dangerous domestic abusers in their area to prevent them from committing further crimes.

You can read more about the [government's announcement here](#).

Find out more about the [Ask for Ani campaign](#) and view a [list of safe spaces](#).

