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

Tuesday 28th March 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: Ward Councillor John Harrington, Allan Drew Parish Clerk

Members of the Public: 5 members of the public attended

28/23 Apologies for absence

None

29/23 Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation

None received

30/23 To approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting of 28th February 2023

Cllr. Hadley raised an objection to minute 25/23 which stated that (in connection with the Wheelwrights Inn)-

The Parish Council would not be further involved in the purchase other than through some form of sponsorship if required.

Cllr. Hadley thought this minute was insufficiently definitive since the Chairman had assured the meeting that the Parish Council would not be involved in the purchase of the pub in any way.

The Clerk agreed to remove the phrase “.....other than through some form of sponsorship if required” whilst pointing out that such sponsorship would be non-financial. Should some form of (non-financial) support be required from Council in future then the issue would be debated at Council and a vote taken if required.

The minutes remained unsigned pending amendment and submission for approval at the next meeting.

31/23 Matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes.

The Chairman sought the views of the meeting on repeating the project of a few years ago when the Council provided a skips service in both villages for the use of residents wishing to dispose of items. The view was that this initiative had been useful during COVID but that recent changes in legislation had tightened up considerably on what could be disposed of in a skip. The suggestion was not further progressed.

32/23 The Parish Hall update

Mr Mottram reported that the Trustees had met the previous evening and had started dividing tasks in preparation for his forthcoming retirement from the role of Chairman of Trustees.

A bigger problem is that the Hall has insufficient Trustees to function properly since, for all events, at least some (and perhaps all) of the work falls on the Trustees. Ideally the current 5 active Trustees should increase to 10 and ideally more younger people would be involved.

There are still financial concerns given the reduced booking levels and the Trustees would be progressing this concern over the next few months. Although there is £7000 in reserves this is earmarked against specific uses. The Council has allocated £2500 to assist the Hall in the coming year.

33/23 Finance Report from Cllr. Walsh, March 2023

Bank Balances

Bank balance on 23/03/2023 was as follows-

Unity Trust current account £13,281.76

Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	623.55	Clerk's February salary including arrears from 1 April 2022
2	HALC	426.41+VAT	Annual subscription for 2023-24

Total for payment - £1049.96+VAT as appropriate

Income received since last meeting - Nil

Payments for Authorisation

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	363.35	Clerk's March salary.
2	HMRC	334.15	Q4 PAYE for payment 6 April
3	NDP meetings Hall hire	68.00	Hall 4 hrs 17 Oct '22=£46.00 CR 30Jan & 20 Feb=£22.00
4	Microsoft 365 software	7.90+VAT	Charges for February. Refund to Clerk

Total for payment - £773.40+VAT as appropriate.

Council resolved that these payments should be made.

Deposit account.

The RFO contacted HALC for advice and Lloyds Bank was suggested. Unfortunately, it turns out that Lloyds will only provide savings accounts if you already have a Lloyds current account.

Cllr. Hadley suggested checking with the Coventry Building Society. On checking both by phone and on the web-

Personal use only The account is for personal use, not for business, unless it's one of our special accounts for organisations (see the Specific Terms). (There are no special accounts for Parish Councils as conformed by the telephone agent)

Cllr. Walsh suggested that other Clerks might have some useful input but the Clerk had covered this possibility by contacting HALC.

The situation is an unseen consequence of the move to Unity Bank where the deposit accounts have a minimum £500k funding requirement. In the past Council had an HSBC savings account which was associated with the HSBC current account. It has to be a possibility that a current account with a mainstream bank has to be opened and Council business moved from Unity, simply to obtain a savings account.

Microsoft 365 software for Council computer

Microsoft support have a way of changing from monthly to 12 monthly billing. In these circumstances the RFO will continue to pay for the software every 12 months and reclaim the amount from Council.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

When the NDP started in 2021 Council agreed that the extra hours worked by the Clerk on this project would be paid for. (November 2021, minute 132/21). The Clerk now keeps a timesheet for NDP work and so far has received payment for extra hours worked between June 2021 and January 2022. Between January 2022 and February 2023 a further 68 hrs. 20mins have been spent on NDP work. These 68hrs 20 mins consist of 8 hours in 2021-22 and 60hours 20mins during 2022-23. The salary rates are-

2021-22 @ £12.98/hour so 8 hours = £103.84

2022-23 @ £13.98/hour so 60hours 20 minutes =£843.45

Total =£947.29

Cllr. Walsh asked that in future these payments could be presented for single financial years. The payment was authorised and the RFO will inform Autela that this payment should be made through the salary system.

The timesheet for the above follows-

31/01/2022	01:00	Circulating draft vision output, hallbooking, NDP emails
01/02/2022	01:00	Posting notices, copies to Post Office
15/02/2022	01:00	Email 21 Feb workshop
21/02/2022	05:00	Prep & workshop
12/04/2022	02:00	End of grant report & return of remaining grant
22/06/2022	05:00	NDP grant submission
24/06/2022	04:00	Integrated vision document
25/06/2022	04:00	Integrated vision document cont'd
19/07/2022	03:00	Clarifying application with Bryony
23/07/2022	03:00	Call for sites letter, map , submission form
24/07/2022	02:00	26 July meeting papers - Call for Sites
15/08/2022	03:00	Call for sites documentation and website NDP updates
16/08/2022	04:20	Call for sites letters, maps & forms
30/08/2022	01:00	Kirkwells invoice, LOCALiQ payment
15/09/2022	01:00	Assistance note on map of sites
29/09/2022	01:00	David Pritchard sites info
30/09/2022	00:30	Rachel Barnard - Hegdon sites
30/09/2022	02:00	Liaising LK, workshop invitations, website (for 17 Oct)
14/10/2022	03:00	Processing site submissions, workshop planning, email
17/10/2022	02:00	17 Oct workshop
18/10/2022	02:00	Correcting Jones application & submitting to AECOMM
18/11/2022	01:00	Emails for photo comp & writing team
18/11/2022	00:30	Ruth Crosskey email
28/11/2022	01:00	Discussion with Ishaq Khan AECOM
01/12/2022	00:30	HFC call for sites & Pencombe settlement
30/01/2023	03:00	Prep for writing group meeting
30/01/2023	02:00	Attending WG meeting
31/01/2023	02:00	Follow up on WG meeting: workspace etc.
20/02/2023	02:00	Summarising workshop comments for publication
20/02/2023	03:00	Sections 1, 2 & 3 draft plan
20/02/2023	02:30	Writing Group meeting
Total	68:20:00	

Finalising the budget for 2023-24

Councillor Walsh and the RFO met to discuss and agree the budget for the coming year, 2023-24. Cllr. Walsh was generally happy with the budget but suggested that an allocation should be made for the Working Group which looks at possible Parish wide initiatives. It was agreed that Line 20 "Other Expenditure" with a proposed budget of £1000 would be split into £300 for the Working Group and £700 for Other Expenditure.

In the light of the discussion on the Wheelwrights (item 30/23) it was no longer correct to have line 28 in the budget (£3000 seed funding for The Wheelwrights). Instead it was proposed to create a reserve of £3000 against "Community Projects" which would be available to fund suggestions of such projects as may be agreed by Council.

The above changes have been incorporated into the budget. Now follows the recommended budget which Council has resolved to adopt.

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
Income						
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	Total Income	28999	29276.79		59456.45	
Expenditure						
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	700	Includes £500 subsidy for Group Parish Coronation event
Special Projects						
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	Community Projects	0	0		0	£3000 to be held as a Reserve earmarked as "Community Projects" following discussion at March 2023 meeting
29	Lengthsman				3500	Assumes £1000 grant + £2500 normal Council budget
30	Working Group initiatives				300	New budget line
31	Total Expenditure	30620	33917		56387	
32	Reclaimable VAT in expenditure	2000	3500		6400	Based on £32000 VATable spend
33	Surplus	379	-4640.21		3069.45	

34/23 Planning report from Cllr. Colin Hadley

New applications

230672 & 230645 - Brooklands, Little Cowarne, Proposed new kitchen, new WC/Utility area, plaster removal and staircase handrail PLUS erection of wooden shed (Retrospective)

Cllr. Hadley had visited applicant but was unable to make contact. Council examined the plans but concluded that the kitchen was already fitted and there was no further comments to make.

230625 – The White House, Little Cowarne. Proposed agricultural dry manure storage building. Council concluded that the proposal would have environmental benefits and should be supported.

Existing applications

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.
Approved with conditions

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

35/23 Lengthsman Scheme/Grass cutting:

Report on current Lengthsman work from Cllr. Tony Brazier.

It is anticipated that the grass cutting will re-start probably within the next few weeks.

Work currently required in the Group Parishes

The Clerk explained that consent to proceed with the New House Farm-Gasbage piping project was still awaiting BB approval. He has escalated the matter to Cllr. Harrington.

36/23 Neighbourhood Development Plan Update on NDP from Cllr. David Legge

The writing group has completed the majority of the work to create the second draft of the NDP. Unfortunately, one group member has lost her work due to an IT failure and another member is still developing her topic for inclusion in the draft. Completion of draft 2 of the NDP will be completed as quickly as possible.

The grant period expires at the end of March with a balance of approximately £4000 to be returned to Groundworks. . This remainder of the grant funds will be re-applied for as soon as the fund opens in 2023-24.

This year £4300 of grant monies was spent with a further spend of Council funds of approximately £1000 Assuming all runs to plan 2023-24 will be the final year and the NDP should be adopted before March 2024.

In response to a question about the life of the NDP the Clerk reported that the validity of the NDP was the same as the Herefordshire Local Plan, 2011-2031. The current revision of the Local Plan, when completed, would extend this to 2041. However, it would be unlikely that the NDP would have such a long term validity without some further revision.

37/23 Provision of a village car park. Update on the car park from Cllr. Tony Brazier

The Clerk updated the meeting with new information received on the meeting day. The report from Cotswold Wildlife Surveys had now been received by Berrys, so clearing the way for the

planning application to be submitted. PJ Triplow of Berrys expected to submit the application within the next few days.

38/23 An update from Cllr. James Lewis on the potential purchase of The Wheelwrights

Cllr. Lewis reported that-

- The “Expression of Interest” required to submit a grant application has been accepted. The current window for grant requests closes on 14 April and it was judged too soon to submit a well-researched application. The next round of applications is likely to be late spring/early summer.
- Registration with the Financial Conduct Authority is necessary in order to register a Community Benefit Society which will become the legal entity for submitting grant applications. Eventually if all progresses well, this is the legal entity which will buy and hold the pub. The registration is progressing.
- Ultimately the grant funding can meet 50% of the cost of purchase.
- There is news (unconfirmed) that there will be a temporary tenant in place from early April.

39/23 Update from the Clerk on elections 2023

The Clerk reported that the Elections are well underway and the Notice of Elections was posted on 6 March. Candidates have until 4pm on Tuesday 4 April to submit Nomination Packs. Checks on Nomination papers will be carried out by Electoral Services on forms received on or before 4pm, 3 April. No appointments are required to submit Nominations.

The list of valid candidates will be published on 5 April.

The current Council will “retire” on the fourth clear day after polling day, which this year looks like it will be 11 May.

Election expenses returns have to be submitted by all candidates, even if a nil return, and must be submitted by 8 June.

40/23 Open session:

40.1/23 Ward Councillor’s report

Cllr Harrington reported that-

Purdah limits what can be said at present but-

- The Eastern Road crossing was progressing. Cllr. Legge asked how quickly the crossing could be built assuming it was authorised. Cllr. Harrington thought that 2028-29 was possible, although the election could change this situation if the new administration was so minded.
- All the technical staff (80-100) currently with Balfour Beatty would be brought back in house though would not take effect until April 2025.
- In reply to a question from a resident there is a written guarantee that the bus service will continue for at least the next year.

Cllr. Harrington left the meeting after giving his report.

40.2/23 **To receive:** queries or concerns by local residents on parish matters

Mrs Barrett asked about the facilities for the Post Office van for disabled access. There was still debate about the facilities and the Chairman offered to check on the tail lift.

Cllr. Legge asked about donations for the Coronation and the Clerk confirmed that £500 was available to distribute on a per head basis around the villages.

There would be a meeting on 5 April to discuss Pencombe village arrangements for the Coronation. Little Cowarne has decided to run an event on the Monday 8 May in the new facility in the grounds of the Three Horseshoes. All residents are welcome to attend. The event would be bring your own food and drink (the pub will not be open though there will be toilet facilities available).

Mr Nicholson reminded those present that there would be a presentation on carbon reduction and energy saving by Caplor on 19 April.

41/23 **Matters for discussion at the next meeting**

Cllr. Hadley suggested that salt boxes should be discussed and a policy agreed.

Cllr. Walsh would present a proposal at the next meeting for uses of the Pencombe kiosk.

Meeting closed at 9.55pm

Date of next meeting Tuesday 25th April 2023

Signed (Chairman)



Date 25 April 2023