
PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Pencombe Group Parish Council
held on
Tuesday 23rd May 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. T. Burge	Cllr. J. Lewis

In Attendance: Ward Councillor Bruce Baker, Allan Drew Parish Clerk

Members of the Public: 4 members of the public attended

First business

57/23 Acceptance of Office and Election of Chairman

- (a) *All Councillors to sign their Acceptance of Office forms.*
All Councillors signed their Acceptance of Office forms
- (b) *To elect:* a Chairman for 2022-23.
Cllr. Brazier was proposed and seconded for the role of Chairman. The vote was unanimous.
- (c) *To receive:* the elected Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office
Cllr. Brazier signed his Declaration of Acceptance of the Office of Chairman for the next 12 months.

58/23 Election of vice-chairman

To elect: a vice-chairman for 2022-23
Cllr. Lewis was proposed and seconded for the role of vice-Chairman. He was elected by a unanimous vote.

59/23 Apologies for absence

To receive: any apologies for absence.
Cllr. Barrett sent his apologies that he would be delayed and would join the meeting later. All other Councillors were present

60/23 Declaration of interests and dispensations

- (a) *To receive and record:* any declarations of interest in agenda items in accordance with the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.
- (b) *To consider:* any applications for dispensations from the rules on participation by members with a disclosable pecuniary interest, in accordance with Standing Order 2.18.
None received

61/23 Minutes of the last meeting

- (a) *To approve:* the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 25th April 2023. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- (b) *To note:* any matters for report arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
The Clerk reported that he had obtained email addresses (xxxx@pencombegrouppc.org.uk) for all Cllrs. and proposed that from now on all papers should be issues electronically. Cllr. Hadley requested that meeting papers be issued as early as possible and the Clerk agreed saying that he aimed to get the papers

to Members on the Friday before the meeting. It was agreed that all Council business would now be transacted electronically wherever possible.

62/23 Chairman's Announcements

To note: any announcements from the Chairman.

The Chairman had no announcements.

Annual business – previous year

63/23 Annual reports 2022-23

(a) *To receive:* a report from the past-Chairman.

The Chairman stated that the Clerk's report (following) covered all the items he wished to report on and he had nothing further to add.

(b) *To receive:* a report from the Clerk

2022-23 was a year where the Parish Council changed considerably. Over the year three new Councillors took office and they marked a move towards a younger group of residents starting to play their part in community life. This development is to be applauded given that many younger people have pressured jobs and like all residents have to work hard just to pay their bills in these difficult times. However, it is inevitable that eventually the younger generations will have to take over the running of community affairs and the last year has marked a most positive step in that direction.

The Council has expanded its activities to a marked degree. A project to build a car park is well underway, the NDP is (hopefully) approaching its conclusion within the next 12 months and some Councillors are closely involved in a Community Benefit Society to purchase the Wheelwrights Inn in Pencombe. Much of this activity is driven by the general trend towards localism which in the round should see local communities taking more and more charge of local affairs. The somewhat stifling influence of larger authorities is still much in evidence but relationships with other elected Members are good and there is optimism that we can work together to get more control over local matters such as drainage, public transport, minor highways work on the local lanes etc.

This expansion of activity is obvious in the financial results for 2022-23 where for the first time turnover was such that the annual accounts now have to undergo a Limited Assurance Review by the External Auditor.

Attendance by residents at Council meetings has gradually increased over the year and typically there are now up to eight residents coming along to see the Council conduct business. Again, this is a most welcome development since many of these attendees are younger and their interest in local community affairs is commendable. These attendees are usually at the core of village activities and over time have started to encourage some of their peers to come along and help organise and deliver events.

So in summary this Council is set on the welcome path of leading community change that, by and large, the community supports. Residents are more involved than in the recent past and younger people are gradually but inexorably taking the reins from the old hands. This is as it should be and the next few years can only see that trend accelerate.

The Chairman proposed that the Clerk's report be accepted and Council agreed this proposal unanimously

(c) *To receive:* reports from representatives of the Parish Hall Trustees

Mr. Mottram reported that post COVID Hall activities were slowly recovering both financially and in booking numbers. It was likely there would be a small deficit for the coming year but that next year would see a return to surplus. Baseline running costs are nearly £10,000/year and there is a need to check that the hourly rate is in line with costs. Financially the bar helps considerably with revenues

The Hall is suited to a heat pump when the current oil-fired boiler finally expires. An electronic booking system has already been “soft launched” and will shortly become available to all customers using the Hall.

Mr Mottram confirmed that he would step down after 15 years as Chairman of Trustees and he looked forward to an invigorated team of Trustees taking over the Hall running. As ever the search for younger residents to assist continues.

Cllr. Legge reported favourable comments from Mr Simon Wells following a large conference of cherry growers which had been held recently using the Hall. The only short coming was the lack of car parking for large events.

(d) *To receive:* a report from Parish Footpath Officers

Mr Mottram had submitted a report on Pencombe footpaths which he summarised-

Footpaths are now back “in house” with Herefordshire Council and he sensed a new energy and commitment to improve this important County facility. Some Parish Councils are extremely active in the improvement and marketing of their footpaths with initiatives such as “Adopt a footpath”. There were 4 common themes-

Maintenance clearing crops, undergrowth stile/gate repairs etc

Bridges – nearly 200 bridges are in need of repair

Dogs – seen as a major problem particularly regarding stock. Council officers are very supportive of bye-laws to insist dogs must be on a lead when on PROWs

Definitive map errors – there were data entry and corruption errors in the transfer from paper to digital.

Mr Mottram confirmed that Herefordshire would now fund supply of gates.

There was discussion about the cost of renewing the bridge on PG4 which had cost £70,000 - far in excess of what was required. Such profligacy was one reason why there was insufficient funds for other repairs and both the Clerk and the Chairman emphasised to Cllr. Baker that the Parish could have done an effective fix for perhaps only one tenth of the cost. Cllr. Baker asked that he receive a report on this bridge which he would circulate amongst other County Members and officers as appropriate. Mr Mottram mentioned that there were now bridge “kits” – prefabricated in both wood and metal - which the County would be happy to supply and have properly accredited Parish Lengthsman to fit. Mr Mottram would check if the Parish could progress repairs on the bridge below Hawkshurst.

Mrs. Legge as footpath officer for Little Cowarne was not present but had provided a report-

Little Cowarne PRow Report May 2023

Following on from my report May 22, this is pretty much the same as nothing has really changed for better or worse!

The only thing to add is the bridge at LC9 has collapsed and the double stile nearby can be difficult to manage.

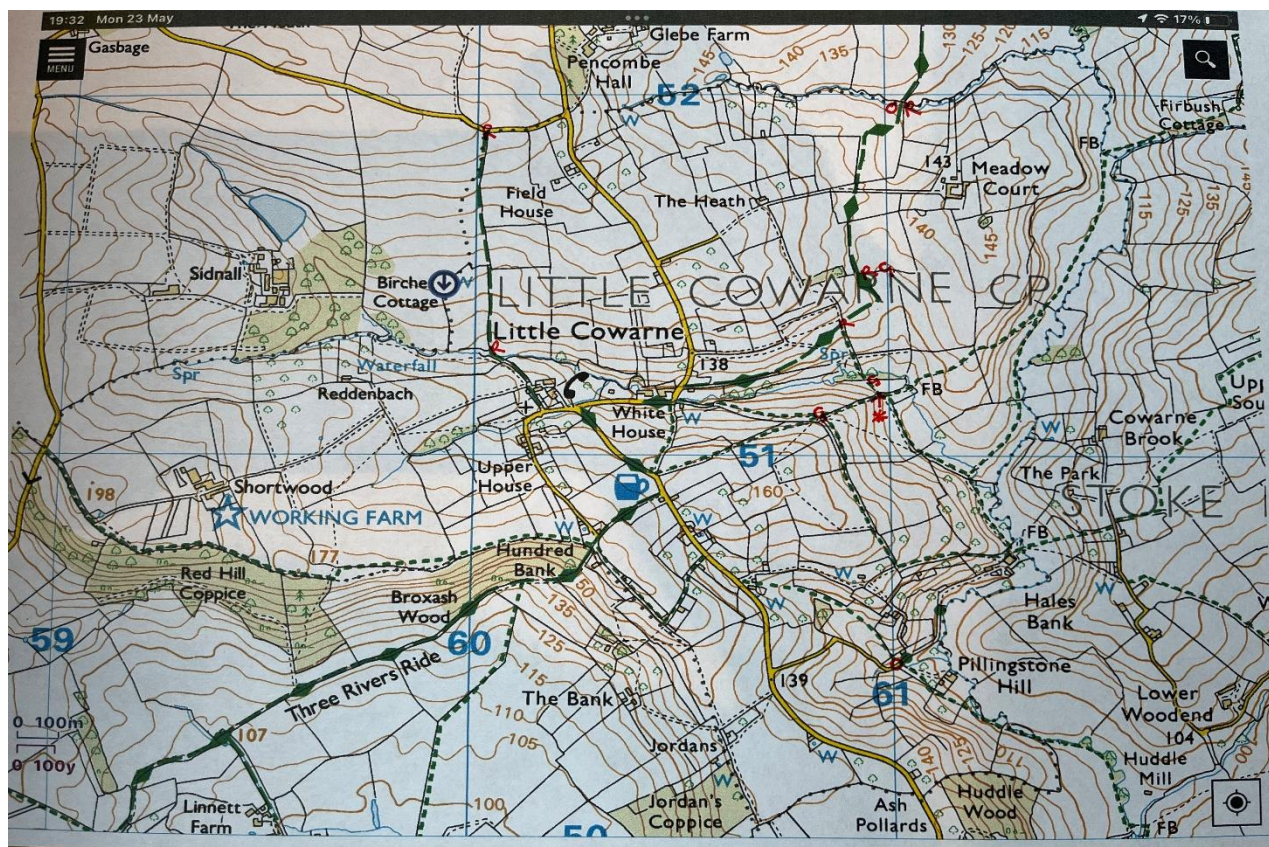
See map below for issues that need addressing.

O – Overgrown

R – Rider friendly gate catch needed

G – Problem gate

Red star – Hazardous stile



Without suitable tools I have done what I can to record the state of the paths.

Over-grown areas include the steps at the bottom of Pillingstone Hill. Rider friendly catches would probably be appreciated in the places indicated and could be sourced and fitted easily?



Gates vary in their state of dilapidation, some only for the adventurous or very bendy! Many stiles would be better replaced with swing-to gates, increasing accessibility for all. Signage is limited but apps probably help.

After receiving the report Council discussed a number of the issues presented. The discussion however. Was inconclusive with Members being unable to completely agree about the location of problems. Mr Motram offered to discuss the issues with Mrs Legge and produce a documented list of problems.

64/23 Statement of Accounts and Annual Return for 2022-23

- (a) *To consider:* a report from the Responsible Financial Officer
- Activities expanded significantly during 2022-23 and show no sign of slackening off. During the year the precept remained at the same level since 2020 but income and expenditure moved significantly higher with more income coming from grants to support expenditure on the NDP and drainage.

- In summary income was nearly £25,000 and expenditure was about £30,700 resulting in a negative surplus of about £5,700. The “loss” of £5,700 was partly planned and partly unplanned. The planned part was for the costs of submitting a planning application for the proposed village car park and amounted to about £4,000 and had been budgeted. The unplanned part was the costs of the election held in March 2022 but paid for during 2022-23 and amounted to £2,100. Action has been taken to recover this £2,100 in the year 2023-24 by raising the precept.
- The precept for 2023-24 was set at the Council meeting in January 2023 when inflation since January 2020 had been 17.9%. To keep pace with inflation the adjusted precept would be $£13875 \times 1.179 = £16358$. However, with the election costs the £2000 must be added so the precept for 2023-24 was set at £18,300.
- Currently the intention is to retain this level of precept for 2024-25 and so create a reserve of £2000 in 2024-25 should another election arise. For 2025-26 the financial climate at the time and the level of Council commitments will determine the precept.
- During 2023-24 the Council expects to complete the village car park using a loan from the Public Works Loan Board and also to take the NDP to referendum and hopefully adoption as a legal document.

(b) To approve: the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS-				
	Outturn 2021-22	Outturn 2022-23	Year on Year Variance	Notes
Income				
Precept	13875.00	13875.00	0.00	
Cemetery	400.00	0.00	-400.00	No cemetery income at all in 22-23. Forecasting very difficult.
Grants	9550.00	9275.00	-275.00	£4339 drainage grant from Herefordshire Council still to be received
Other	605.67	142.46	-463.21	Repayments on loan made to Parish Hall ended in May 2021. (£312.50 received for 21-22)
VAT Reclaim	0.00	1701.79	1701.79	£1701 represents 2 years of VAT claim, both received in early 22-23
Total Income	24430.67	24994.25	563.58	
Clerk	3795.07	4361.80	-566.73	CiLCA increment + salary award arrears ~£50/month over 12 months
Bank Charges	72.00	80.00	-8.00	Chq. No. 24 stopped. £8 bank charge
Administration	510.65	2467.22	-1956.57	Electors claimed by-election in March 22. Recharge from Herefordshire £2100 for running the election.
Insurance, audit, professional	800.80	686.74	114.06	New edition of C. Arnold-Baker purchased for Clerk in 21-22 (£144)
IT	257.80	430.79	-172.99	Replacement laser printer needed (£218)
Cemetery Rates	303.75	329.34	-25.59	
Training and development	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Equipment	425.00	432.48	-7.48	
Lengthsman	780.00	2486.50	-1706.50	Increased 22-23 due to grant from Herefordshire. Will be reclaimed when work completed.
Maintenance	2898.10	4193.42	-1295.32	New grass cutting contract let for 22-23. Price increased by £1260pa
HMRC	676.40	1234.25	-557.85	One payment of £253 slipped from 21-22 into 22-23
NDP	1242.88	4364.14	-3121.26	NDP activity increasing significantly over these 2 years.
Other	40.38	2074.04	-2033.66	22-23 Platinum Jubilee village events: trees planted and subsidy of £1000 to community events
			0.00	
Special Projects			0.00	
Defibrillators			0.00	
Little Cowarne	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Sparrington	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Pencombe	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Village Car Park	1711.30	4286.86	-2575.56	Major project - costs of planning application
Repayment of NDP grant balance	8826.34	0	8826.34	Unused grant to be repaid at year end. £4842 returned in May 23
Total Expenditure	22340.46	27427.58	-5087.12	
Reclaimable VAT in expenditure	896.92	3334.66	2437.74	More variable expenditure mainly due to grant enabled Lengthsman work
Surplus	1193.29	-5767.99	6961.28	

Council received the statement of accounts which has been presented in the same format as required by the external auditor (year-on-year variances).

(c) *To approve:* the Bank Reconciliation Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

Pencombe Group Parish Council

Financial Year 2022-23

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at end of year (14/4/2023)

Prepared by Allan Drew (RFO)

Date: 08/05/2023

Balance from Bank Statements

Unity Trust current account dated 30/4/23

Petty cash in hand

Balance as at 14/4/2023

As at 14/4/2023

£	£
	12741.73
	40.60
	<u>12782.33</u>

Less unrepresented items

0.00	
	<u>0.00</u>

Plus receipts not banked/cleared

0.00	
	<u>0.00</u>

Net balance at 14/4/2023 12782.33

The net balance reconciles to the cash books for the year to 14/4/2023 as follows:

Balance in current account cash book

Opening balance at 01/04/2022

Add: receipts to 13/4/2023

Less: payments to 13/4/2023

18500.12	
24994.25	
30752.64	
	<u>12741.73</u>

Net balance at 13/4/2022

Balance in petty cash book

Opening balance at 01/04/2022

Add: receipts to 14/4/2023

Less: payments to 14/4/2023

50.00	
0.00	
9.40	
	<u>40.60</u>

Net balance at 14/4/2023

All Cash Books

Net balance at 14/4/2023 12782.33

Difference

0.00

Signed:



RFO

Date

17.5.2023

Countersigned



Councillor

Date

23-05-2023

Your Account Statement

1194170910 | 00077

Mr Allan Drew
Pencombe Group Parish Council
The Coach House
Pencombe
Bromyard
HR7 4RL



For Businesses. For Communities. For Good.

Unity Trust Bank plc
PO Box 7193
Planetary Road
Willenhall
WV1 9DG

Date: 30/04/2023

Account Name: Pencombe Group Parish Council

Swift Code (BIC): NWBKGB2L

IBAN Number: GB93NWBK60023571418024

Sort Code: 608301

Account Number: 20431963

Your arranged overdraft limit is £0.00

Fraud Reminder

Unity Trust Bank will NEVER ask you to share passwords or PINs. If you receive a suspicious call, please hang up and contact our dedicated fraud number, freephone 0808 196 8420 or email fraud@unity.co.uk.



For eligible organisations, your deposits held with Unity Trust Bank are protected up to £85,000 under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS). For more information about eligibility and compensation provided by the FSCS, please visit: [FSCS.org.uk](https://www.fscs.org.uk) or refer to our FSCS Information Sheet and Exclusions List at [unity.co.uk/fscs](https://www.unity.co.uk/fscs)

Contact Us

-  Call us: **0345 140 1000**
-  Email us: **us@unity.co.uk**
-  Visit us: **[unity.co.uk](https://www.unity.co.uk)**

Your Current T1 account transactions:

Date	Type	Details	Payments Out	Payments In	Balance
31/03/2023		Balance brought forward	£0.00	£0.00	£13,263.76
14/04/2023	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: Portalplanquest It	£149.20	£0.00	£13,114.56
14/04/2023	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: A M Drew	£9.48	£0.00	£13,105.08
14/04/2023	Faster Payment Debit	B/P to: A M Drew	£363.35	£0.00	£12,741.73

END OF FIN. YR 2022-23

Page number 1 of 3

Statement number 040

**For Businesses.
For Communities.
For Good.**

Unity Trust Bank plc is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.
Unity Trust Bank is entered in the Financial Services Register under number 204570.
Registered Office: Four Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2JB.
Registered in England and Wales no. 1713124.
Calls may be monitored and recorded for training, quality and security purposes.
© Unity Trust Bank. All Rights Reserved.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Gold



- (d) To consider: the Internal Audit Reports and checklist

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL
WWW.PENCOMBEGROUPPC.ORG.UK TABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken	Name of person who carried out the internal audit
11/05/2023 DD/MM/YYYY DD/MM/YYYY	Mr. Ian Pardoe OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit	Date
	18/05/2023

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Council noted that the Internal Auditor was satisfied with the way Council conducted its financial business

(e) To approve: the Annual Governance Statement for year ended 31 March 2023

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		‘Yes’ means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

23 MAY 2023

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE 64/23

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

WWW.PENCOMBEGROUPPC.ORG.UK

The RFO explained the governance mechanisms in place – financial regulations, cash book reconciliation to bank every quarter, double signing on all transactions, rational precept setting process. Council agreed that governance was satisfactory and the Chairman signed the return.

(f) To approve: the Accounting Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL				
	Year ending		Notes and guidance	
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.	
1. Balances brought forward	17,357	18,550	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.	
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	13,875	13,875	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.	
3. (+) Total other receipts	10,556	11,119	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.	
4. (-) Staff costs	4,471	5,596	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.	
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).	
6. (-) All other payments	18,766	25,166	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).	
7. (=) Balances carried forward	18,550	12,782	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).	
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	18,550	12,782	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.	
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	8,280	12,310	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.	
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).	

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)				The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

[Signature]

Date 17/05/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

23 MAY 2023

as recorded in minute reference:

64/23

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[Signature]

The Accounting Statements reconciled with both the bank and the earlier Statement of Accounts and Council approved these Statements.

- (g) *To note:* since expenditure exceeded the £25,000 threshold the External Auditor will carry out a Limited Assurance Review

Council accepted that the period of Public Rights would run from Monday 19 June to Friday 28 July 2023

Annual business – review of current regulations and policies

65/23 Review of Standing Orders

To report: the Standing Orders (July 2018) have been kept under review and amendments adopted in October 2017 and November 2014. No further changes are proposed

66/23 Review of Financial Regulations

To report: the Financial Regulations (2020) have been reviewed by the Responsible Financial Officer. No further changes are proposed.

67/23 Review of Council procedures and policies

To receive: a report from the Clerk The Clerk has reviewed all the current Council procedures and policies and no changes are proposed.

Annual business – forthcoming year

68/23 Review of assets and insurance

- (a) *To receive:* the list of fixed assets.

ASSET REGISTER - PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL 2022-2023				
Asset	Purchase cost	Est. life yrs.	Est. Current Value	Further information
• Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall (Custodian Trustee only)	£0.00		£0.00	
• St John's Churchyard, Pencombe (closed churchyard)	£0.00		£0.00	
• War memorial	£0.00		£0.00	
• Notice board - Little Cowarne (purchased 2006/07)	£25.00	25	£16.00	
• Bus shelter (purchased 2014/15)	£2,392.37	50	£1,913.00	Donation from Tony Davies of £2400
• Notice board - Pencombe (purchased 2020)	£1,452.00	20	£1,240.00	Replacement notice board
• Computer (purchased 2015/16)	£390.00	8	£25.00	
• Brother MFC L2500DW Printer	£261.00	5	£240.00	Replaced 2022
• Defibrillator - Pencombe (donated 2016/17)	£0.00		£0.00	
• Defibrillator - Sparrington installed 2019	£1,875.00	10	£1,125.00	
• Defibrillator - Little Cowarne installed 2020	£1,312.00	10	£918.00	
• Parish map (purchased 2016/17)	£146.00	10	£58.00	
• 2 footpath/PROW maps map (purchased 2022)	£100.00	10	£100.00	
• 1 small footpath/PROW map for LC kiosk (purchased 2022)	£50.00	10	£50.00	
• Footpath Officer high visibility waistcoat (purchased 2017/18)	£4.99		£4.99	
• Telephone kiosk no.6 - L. Cowarne	£1.00	50	£6,000.00	Purchased 2018/19. Restored 2021
• Telephone kiosk no.6 - Pencombe (purchased 2022)	£1.00		£1.00	
• Bench - The Pound, Pencombe	Unknown		Unknown	
• Bench 1 - St John's Churchyard, Pencombe supplied 2022	£125.00	20	£125.00	
• Bench 2 - St John's Churchyard, Pencombe supplied 2022	£125.00	20	£125.00	
• Bench 3 - St John's Churchyard, Pencombe	£540.00	25	£370.00	
• Bench - Post Office, Pencombe	Unknown		Unknown	
• Bench - Causeway, Pencombe	Unknown		Unknown	
• Bench - Causeway, Pencombe	Unknown		Unknown	
• Bench - Cemetery, Pencombe	Unknown		Unknown	
Total asset values	£8,800.36		£12,310.99	
As at May 2023 the insurance cover provided by Aviva is sufficient to cover these asset valuations				

Assets purchased in 2022-23 are shown in bold italic.

The RFO explained that he was now depreciating the asset value over various lifetimes and estimating their current value.

- (b) *To receive and consider:* the RFO's report and recommendations on Insurance.
The RFO confirmed that the Aviva policy covered all the Council assets.

69/23 Dates of meetings for 2022-23

To agree: the following dates for meetings:

Tuesday 27 June 2023, Tuesday 25 July 2023, Tuesday 22 August 2023, Tuesday 26 September 2023, Tuesday 24 October 2023, Tuesday 21 November 2023, Tuesday 23 January 2024, Tuesday 27 February 2024, Tuesday 26 March 2024, Tuesday 23 April 2024, Tuesday 21 May 2024 all at 7.30pm.
Council agreed these dates which are aligned with the normal Council format (4th Tuesday of the month except December)

All meetings will be held in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall unless otherwise advised.

Ordinary business

70/23 District Councillor

To receive: a report from Cllr. Baker.

Cllr. Baker reported that following the May elections the Conservatives were now the largest single party with 21 seats followed by the Liberal Democrats with 12 seats. "7 seats are required to form a majority administration. Attempts to form a coalition with the Liberal Democrats have failed and the decision was to form a minority administration and seek support from other Cllrs. on an issue-by-issue basis.

Early indications are that roads have been largely neglected by the previous administration and needed significant investment. The A49 by-pass which had been cancelled would be resurrected as the western route of the A49.

Additionally the junction of the A49 and A417 at Dinmore is under discussion for improvement.

Cllr. Baker is appointed to the planning committee and cabinet roles have been filled. Training for these roles is currently underway.

The Council Chairman was elected at the Annual Meeting and is Cllr. Roger Phillips. The Council Leader is Cllr. Jonathon Lester.

The Chief Executive is currently meeting all Councillors.

The Wheelwrights Pub has made a license application to which Cllr. Baker has no objection.

The Chairman mentioned to Cllr. Baker the plan to pipe the ditch above New House farm and the perplexing decision of BB to turn down the application. Cllr. Baker asked that this topic should be added to the email on the bridge on PG4

71/23 Lengthsman & Grass cutting

To consider: renewal of Lengthsman and grass cutting contract for 2023-24 with D C Gardening Services

The Lengthsman has confirmed that he is happy to continue his contract for 2023-24 on the current terms.
Council agreed to continue the contract

To consider: BB report on drainage project and other possible alternatives.

The proposed project to pipe the ditch above New House farm has been discussed with BB and they have declined to approve the project.

On the 1st May the Chairman & Clerk met with BB drainage engineers to discuss the proposed piping project on C1114 between New House Farm and Gasbage. The BB engineers looked at the project and it was made sure that they understood the problems of the tightness of the verge where the ditch runs, made worse by the telephone poles also installed in the verge. All of these issues coupled with the wide vehicles filling the ditch with pushed over soil make the drainage in this area unacceptably poor. Additionally, this unsatisfactory ditch meets existing pipes at either end and it seems obvious that the piping run should be completed and so eliminate the ditch. However, BB eventually concluded otherwise. Here is their note of 2 May-23-

Following my visit to Pencombe this morning, I have discussed the issue with my senior colleagues. If you were to submit an Ordinary Watercourse Consent Application to culvert an approx. 90-100m of roadside ditch, it would unlikely to be approved for the reasons outlined below.

Whilst we acknowledge that the existing roadside ditch gets filled in, by vehicles mounting the verge at narrow sections of the lane, culverting this stretch of ditch would not be the most effective long term solution. An open ditch has a greater capacity so can convey more surface water and surface water running down the highway, can be directed into the ditch through simple grips in the verge. A pipe has smaller capacity and creates an increased maintenance liability as it can silt up and the inlets can block more easily with debris. Highway water then requires gullies to be conveyed into the pipe, further increasing the maintenance liability.

Instead, we would suggest that the landowner reinstates the ditch and uses verge marker posts at the narrow sections considered, to prevent traffic mounting the verge in the narrow section and compromising the reinstated ditch.

Please let us know if you would like to discuss this further.

Kind regards,

Jenny

Cllr. Baker asked to be copied in to the correspondence.

72/23 Planning Committee and Planning updates

- (a) *To consider:* The following planning applications which will be determined by Herefordshire Council
231201 - Pencombe and Little Cowarne Parish Hall, Pencombe, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4SH
Proposed car-parking area to serve the village of Pencombe, with access road, pedestrian footpath and landscaping.

Comments were submitted to Herefordshire as follows-

Pencombe Group Parish Council wish to SUPPORT the above application for a car park in the village of Pencombe as follows-

"The necessity for this car park in the village has been obvious for many years. The village hall can hold up to two hundred people but the hall has no dedicated parking and users of the hall have to park around the village as best they can. Such lack of parking limits the use of the hall and can cause congestion especially if the timing coincides with school opening/closing times when there is a considerable volume of traffic again parked haphazardly around the village. It is hoped this new facility will be used by parents for parking during these times.

The car park project was first discussed at a village meeting on 25th October 2021 and was attended by about 100 residents. The project was presented to residents by the Parish Council and a vote taken to establish the level of support. The vote was unanimous in favour of proceeding and the Council started the process which has led to this application. Herefordshire Planning department provided pre-application advice which has been rigorously adhered to and Council wishes to strongly SUPPORT its own application"

(b) *To note:* further updates on planning applications

230645	LC	Erection of wooden shed	Undecided
230672	LC	Proposed new kitchen, WC/utility etc	Undecided
230625	LC	Agri. dry manure store	Approved with Conditions
224305	LC	Land at Upper House	Undecided
221751	LC	CoL for land adj. 3 Horseshoes	Pending appeal Undecided

73/23 General Financial Matters

Report from the Responsible Finance Officer May 2023

Bank Balances

Bank balances on 19/5/2023 were: Unity Trust current account £16817.67

Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	Berrys	902.70+VAT	Final payment for planning application preparation
2	A M Drew	363.55	April 2023 salary
3	Autela	59.65+VAT	Payroll & EoY invoice
4	Adrian Hope tree services	585.00+VAT	Work carried out in Pencombe churchyard
5	Herefordshire Council	329.34	Cemetery business rates
6	Groundworks	4842.86	Unused NDP grant monies to be returned
7	A M Drew	114.00	Refund to Clerk for additional planning fee due to incorrect calculation by planning portal
8	Mrs J. Legge	167.00	Contribution to Coronation event
9	P&LC Parish Hall	333.00	Contribution to Coronation event
	TOTAL	7697.10+VAT	

Income received since last meeting – 16 May 2023 VAT re-fund £3334.66

Payments for Authorisation

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	363.55	Clerk's May salary
2	Parish Online	45.00+VAT	Mapping services
3	DC Gardening Services	520.00+VAT	Grass cutting
4	Cotswold Wildlife Surveys	550.00+VAT	For car park as agreed minute 11/23 January 2023
5	Staples	43.32+VAT	Colour printer ink (NDP)
	TOTAL	1521.87+VAT	

Council resolved that these payments should be made.

74/23 To continue to exercise the General Power of Competence by Resolution

Council met the requirements for exercising the General Power and it was resolved that the power should continue to be exercised.

75/23 Public participation

Mrs Barrett asked if the working group could deal with the cleaning of the bus shelter and the Clerk asked which Councillor would take on the role of liaising with the group now that Mrs Walsh had retired from this role. Cllr. Burge agreed to take on the responsibility.

Mrs Barret also confirmed that she had cleaned the graffiti from the bus shelter and Council thanked her for her work on this public asset.

76/23 Matters for information and future business

None were raised

The chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

Signed



Chairman.

Date 27 June 2023