
**Minutes of the Meeting of Pencombe Group Parish Council
held on**

Tuesday 27th June 2023 at 7.30pm in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall

Councillors present;

Cllr. D Legge Cllr. S. Barrett
Cllr. T. Burge Cllr. J. Lewis A/Chairman

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

Members of the Public: 6 members of the public attended

77/23 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Brazier who was on holiday. Cllr. Hadley was absent and no apologies had been received.

78/23 Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation

Cllr. Legge declared a schedule 2 interest in item 83/23 in that close relative has submitted a planning application which Council will discuss under 83/23. Council agreed that Cllr. Legge be granted a dispensation to speak if required on the application but not to vote should a vote be held.

79/23 The draft minutes of the annual meeting of 23rd May 2023 were approved and the A/Chairman signed the minutes

80/23 **Matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes**

The Clerk reported that he had received a complaint about PG6 where it leaves the village opposite Old Crosses. The path is not visible where it crosses the field and has grass up to 1m high. The landowner was present and clarified that because the field is grass it does not count as a crop and so does not need to be cut or cleared. (Following this discussion the Clerk checked the relevant GOV.UK guidance which states that- "As the owner or occupier of land with a public right of way across it, you must keep the route visible and not obstruct or endanger users." It is clear the route is not visible)

81/23 **An update on the Parish Hall**

Mr Mottram reported that the Hall had invested in an online self-service booking system – Hallmaster.

LinC lunches are continuing although the need for volunteers to help is ever present, but the Trustees hope to continue the community events established before and after lockdown.

Finally, Mr Mottram confirmed that after 15 years as Chair of Trustees he would be leaving the Trustees to be replaced as Chair by Mrs Janet Legge.

Council thanked Mr Mottram for this lengthy spell of service to the community and noted the progress which the Hall had made under his leadership.

82/23 **To receive:** a finance report from Cllr. Stuart Barrett

Bank Balances

Bank balance on 22/06/2023 was as follows-

Unity Trust current account £14494.06

Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	363.55	Clerk's May salary
2	Parish Online	54.00	Mapping services
3	DC Gardening Services	624.00	Grass cutting
4	Cotswold Wildlife Surveys	660.00	For car park as agreed minute 11/23 January 2023
5	Staples	51.98	Colour printer ink (NDP)
6	S. Edwards	600.00	For sandblasting & painting Sparrington kiosk
7	BHIB Insurance	270.08	Council insurance premium
	Total	2623.61	

Income received since last meeting – 30 May 2023 - £300.00 EROB Mr S. Marling

Payments for Authorisation

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	Berrys	??	To be discussed under item 86/23
2	A M Drew	363.55	June 2023 salary
3	Mr Ian Pardoe	50.00	Internal Audit fee 2022-23
4	Viking	24.94+VAT	Laminating pouches. Half of this cost will be paid by HFSP
5	D C Gardening Services	520.00+VAT	Grass cutting
6	D C Gardening Services	80.00+VAT	Grass cutting additional
	Total	1038.49+VAT	

Total for payment -£1038.49+VAT as appropriate.

The above payments were authorised by Council for payment.

The Clerk reported that he had received a request from Cllr. Brazier to order some parts to complete the Sparrington kiosk. He summarised the funding position which was-

- Some £500 had already been pledged to renovate the kiosk from the local community around Sparrington. It is possible that more donations might be obtained.
- £250 of paint had been donated by Crown Decorating of Hereford following a request for support to the Community Heartbeat Trust

At the July 2022 (minute 94/22) meeting Council agreed that if the fundraising was successful then Council would contribute some additional funding.

The parts requested by Cllr. Brazier amounted to £472 + VAT and carriage. He expected that since "bulk" quantities were being bought for economy there might well be sufficient parts left over to complete work on Pencombe kiosk when the time came for that project. Council resolved that the parts to complete the Sparrington kiosk should be ordered.

The Clerk also explained that he had only just received the first quarter PAYE information from Autela and there was a bill for £272.60. Council agreed that this payment should be made.

83/23 *To receive:* a planning report from Cllr. Colin Hadley. In the absence of Cllr. Hadley the Clerk made the report.

New applications

231505 Birches Cottage Little Cowarne HR7 4RH Mr & Mrs Legge

Proposed single and first-floor extensions.

The drawings for the application were displayed and Council noted that there was one single storey extension (lounge) and a second storey extension (study) on top of the current kitchen.

Council commented that there was limited accommodation on the first floor and the proposal would allow the family to live in a reasonable space on both ground and first floor. Given the isolated nature of the dwelling Council resolved to support the application.

The Clerk submitted the following comments- Pencombe Group Parish Council discussed this application at its meeting on 27 June 2023 and agreed to SUPPORT the application. The proposal increased the building footprint by the addition of a single story lounge and also increased the first floor accommodation by building a second storey on top of the existing dining room to form a study. Discussion was much complicated by the drawings being incomplete, in that the proposed ground floor only showed part of the ground floor. Nevertheless after agreement was reached around where the proposed extensions actually were situated it became clear that the proposal was in keeping with the current building, there were no issues such as phosphates etc. since the number of bedrooms was not increasing and clearly the materials chosen were sympathetic to the original building. The dwelling is located in an isolated part of Little Cowarne and there are no near neighbours. Council resolved to SUPPORT the application.

Existing applications

Council noted that three applications had now been approved (with conditions)

231201	P	Village car park	Undecided
230645	LC	Erection of wooden shed	Approved with conditions
230672	LC	Proposed new kitchen, WC/utility etc	Approved with conditions
230625	LC	Agri. dry manure store	Approved with conditions
221751	LC	CoL for land adj. 3 Horseshoes	Pending appeal
224305	LC	Proposed conversion of existing barns	Undecided

84/23 Lengthsman Scheme/Grass cutting:

In the absence of Cllr. Brazier the Clerk reported that-

The proposal to pipe a ditch uphill from New House farm had not received support from Balfour Beatty but it was not clear to Council why the project could not proceed. Cllr. Baker has become involved and visited the site but because the verges are currently so overgrown, nothing could be seen. Cllr. Baker reported that he had told the BB officer that the matter was not yet decided and he would continue to hold the case until conditions allowed a proper examination and decision to be made.

The grass in the village had just been cut and as usual was a job well done by David Campbell the Parish Lengthsman.

85/23 Neighbourhood Development Plan

An update on NDP from Cllr. David Legge

Members may remember that some months ago Council asked for photographs of the Pencombe area to include in the NDP. Take-up was not high but Michael Mable of Springfield is a keen photographer and a few weeks ago he contributed nearly 90 photographs of high technical quality and pleasing composition for use in the NDP. Typically NDPs use about 20 photographs so the steering group will have plenty of choice for the ones they would like to see included in the draft NDP.

Site assessments are underway and should be completed during July. An update has been received from the lead consultant at AECOM, Una McGaughrin as follows-

"We have completed the initial desktop assessment of the sites and my colleague Simon will be coming to Pencombe the week after next (3rd or 4th July) to do the site surveys. Simon can do these independently and does not need access to the sites as he will view these from the public highway.

We will have a better idea of a date for the draft report after this but will be aiming for mid-July.

The Clerk reported that he expected to re-apply for the NDP grant shortly.

86/23 Provision of a village car park.

On behalf of Cllr. Brazier the Clerk reported that-

Members will recall that once the planning application is submitted any further work by Berrys is charged at their hourly rate. Two invoices have now been received from Berrys-



Invoice 1: £331.92 for work done to satisfy Herefordshire planning to make the application valid. This has been challenged since the scope of works showed a fixed price to submit a planning application. The Clerk has taken the view that this application needs to be valid and part of the fixed price. However, he has asked Berrys to supply details of the work done to make a final decision. No details have yet been received.

Invoice 2: £240.00 Berrys check progress of current applications on a weekly basis and provide updates. Although the Clerk has made it clear that any work done has to be cleared with Council in advance it seemed reasonable that Berrys are paid a minimal sum to carry out this check, which they cost at 1 hour/week. Their minimum rate (2021) is £60/hour and over 1 month this looks like the £240 invoice. As a result of this time an email has arrived stating that there are three objections to the application and would Council wish Berrys to write responses? Of course, Council already knew there are three objections but the question remains whether Berrys should write responses for which of course there will be further charges.

Council was keen to know exactly what Berrys were checking and what exactly had been done to justify the invoice. The Chairman asked if checking on a less frequent basis was feasible and further suggested that Berrys should only be involved when planning identified an issue which required attention. After some discussion also involving residents it was resolved that the Clerk would discuss the matter with Berrys and reach agreement on the way forward in line with this resolution.

87/23 The Wheelwrights

Cllr. James Lewis reported on the potential purchase of The Wheelwrights. Some weeks ago a price of £250,000 had been agreed but that had now been increased to £300,000. Cllr. Lewis thought the price was now too high and the community group was waiting developments. A resident queried the survey which had been prepared and Cllr. Lewis explained that the survey had been distributed to a few residents but then had been halted due to the price increase.

It was noted that the Three Horseshoes was now for sale at a price which showed how relatively expensive the Wheelwrights is.

88/23 Update from the Ward Councillor.

Cllr. Baker requested that his item be moved to further up the agenda so that if there were no issues he would be able leave. However, he was keen to hear about planning applications and a possible solution was to move the Ward Councillor item to just before the Parish Hall update and then follow it immediately with the planning report. Cllr. Baker suggested that Council would wish to discuss this proposal and let him know the outcome.

On matters to report-

County Councillors are currently spending considerable time on training. ZOOM is being used extensively and one example was a very useful presentation by The Rural Services Network (RSN). In view of the information provided and the scope for receiving grants Cllr. Baker suggested that the Parish might consider becoming a member of the RSN. He noted that the Chairman of RSN is Cllr. Roger Philips who is also Chairperson of Herefordshire Council.

Following the death of Cllr. Peter Jinman OBE (Independent, Golden Valley) there will be a by-election in the near future.

He mentioned that the Council Chief Executive was currently engaged with the debate on Personal Preferred Pronouns and it is possible that Council documents may be worded differently in the future.

There will be another inspection of Childrens' Services and officers and members are more confident that the inspection will go fairly well, especially given the focus over the past few years.

The Maylords Centre is proposed as a site for a new library but not all options have been considered. A review will be started to check which site would be best suited for the library.

Asylum seekers are likely to be housed in The Talbot Hotel in Leominster.

The question of verge cutting was raised and the standard is twice per year with the first cut in June. Cllr. Baker enlarged on the issue of residents cutting verges outside their houses which seems is breaking a number of "rules". This might develop into an issue.

89/23 Queries or concerns by local residents on parish matters

None raised

90/23 Matters for discussion at the next meeting

None raised.

Date of next meeting Tuesday 25th July 2023

Signed .....Chairman Date 25/07/2023