



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

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 7.30pm in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

**Councillors Present;**

Cllr. J. Lewis	Cllr. T. Brazier
Cllr. C. Hadley	Cllr. D. Legge
Cllr. T. Burge	Cllr. P. Thomas

**In Attendance:** Ward Cllr. Bruce Baker, Allan Drew Parish Clerk

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

**125/24 To receive:** apologies for absence

All Councillors were present

**126/24 To receive:** Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation

None received

**127/24 To receive and approve:** the draft minutes of the meetings of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024 & 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024

The amended minutes of the meeting of 1 August 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The draft minutes of the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> August were challenged in that the Clerk had omitted to include the August Bank Holiday Monday within the three clear days required. The Clerk apologised to Council for this omission and would correct the minutes.

To help prevent any similar problems arising in future Cllr. Hadley suggested that the agenda be finalised and posted by the Wednesday before the meeting. The Clerk said this would cause no difficulties and Council agreed the proposal.

**128/24 To receive:** Matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes

Council noted that the mobile post office had been re-located to the grounds of Pencombe Court. There was concern about the appearance of the village now that the Wheelwrights Inn was closed. Cllr. Brazier reported that there would be difficulties with insurance if the building was not secured. Council decided that no further action could be taken.

The Clerk reported he had received a quarterly request from West Mercia Police at Bromyard to identify three top community issues. Council agreed that rural theft and vehicles trespassing on farm-land (particularly at night) were the important issues for the community and the Clerk would inform the Police.

The Clerk reported that a note had been received from Adrian Hope, tree surgeon recommending an inspection of the large trees in St John's churchyard. After discussion Council agreed to request a quotation from Mr Hope.

**129/24 To receive:** a verbal update from the Ward Councillor

Cllr. Baker reported that-

- Government is pressing Councils such as Herefordshire to work together with suitable neighbouring Councils to achieve economies of scale. For Herefordshire these neighbouring



Councils are Shropshire and Worcestershire. There will be a consultation and Parish Councils will be included.

- Dr. Jeffrey Kramer, a co-founder of St. Michael's Hospice, has been awarded the British Empire Medal.
- After recent heavy rain the only report of flooding was in Bodenham. A drainage asset map is available to Parish Councils and could be a useful tool in tackling issues of poor drainage. (Note: there is grant money available to update this asset map and the Council has applied for that grant).
- Following intervention by a local resident further repair work has been carried out by the contractor on the drains in the vicinity of the Wheelwrights Inn. The current road closure would be extended until 27 September to enable further drainage repair work.
- The Planning Department is now fully staffed so delays to applications should become a thing of the past. The new Head of Planning has arrived and is Kelly Collins-Thomas previously of Worcestershire Council.

**130/24 To receive:** queries or concerns from local residents to Council & Ward Councillor

Cllr. Hadley asked about repairs to the damaged barrier outside White House farm, Little Cowarne. Cllr. Baker had passed the detail to BB but had heard nothing back. He would progress an update.

Cllr. Legge reported a substantial pothole on the C1115 in the vicinity of the Shortwood entrance. The rain has washed out the edge of the road and hole was now about 25cm deep. The Clerk would report the problem.

**131/24 To receive:** a planning report from Cllr. Colin Hadley

**New applications**

There are no new applications

**Existing applications**

**240561 Land adj. to Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

Proposed car-parking area to serve the village of Pencombe, with access road, pedestrian foot, and landscaping. Revised design of approved permission 231201. **Approved with Conditions**

**132/24 To receive:** an update on the Parish Hall

Mrs Legge reported that-

- The electrical installation report had identified more earthing required to the Hall cooker and this work has now been completed.
- The black timbers above the entrance door are rotten. Mr. Mobey is investigation remedial work.
- A leaking toilet has been repaired.
- The Last Night of the Proms event went very well and similar events are likely in future.
- Cinema club and garden club meetings have re-started.
- The Pub Nights (Fridays) are proving popular and Mrs Legge thanked the volunteer bar staff, Frank Nicolson, Simon Wells, Emily Barrett, Roy Lewis and Tim Mobey.
- The toddler group has re-started.

The next LinC lunch will be on 5 October.

On December there will be the Christmas tree switch on event from 4.30pm

The next Trustees meeting will be on 28 October.



133/24 Finance *To receive*: a finance report from Cllr. Paul Thomas

Cllr. Thomas reported that-

The Bank balance on 21/09/2024-Unity Trust current account £16995.31

**Payments made since last meeting.**

No.	Name	Ex VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	514.54	0.00	514.54	Clerk's August salary incl. final arrears on salary award from 1 April 2023
2	D C Garden Services	520.00	104.00	624.00	SI-1961 August grass cut
3	D C Garden Services	392.00	78.40	470.40	SI-1962 Clearing road signs, strimming around salt boxes
4	HMRC	128.20	0.00	128.20	July 2024 PAYE
5	HMRC	128.80	0.00	128.80	August 2024 PAYE
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1683.54</b>	<b>182.40</b>	<b>1865.94</b>	

**Income received since last meeting –**

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	Herefordshire Council	9150.00	Precept part 2

**Payments for Authorisation**

No.	Name	Ex VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	428.61	0.00	428.61	Clerk's Sept. salary
2	A M Drew	193.90	38.78	232.68	Refund for purchase of 2 salt boxes
3	HMRC PAYE	107.20	0.00	107.20	September 2024 PAYE
4	DC Garden Services	520.00	104.00	624.00	SI 1988 August grass cut
5	DC Garden Services	80.00	16.00	96.00	SI 1989 Little Cowarne grass cut
6	PKF Littlejohn	210.00	42.00	252.00	External auditor fee for 2023-24
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1539.71</b>	<b>200.78</b>	<b>1740.49</b>	

Total for payment £1539.71+VAT as appropriate.

Council agreed these payments should be made.



## External Auditor's report and conclusion of Limited Assurance Review for 2023-24

### Section 3 – External Auditor's Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of [REDACTED]

#### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a limited assurance review is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is not a full statutory audit, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it does not provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with Proper Practices which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

#### 2 External auditor's limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance Assertion in Section 1, Box 5, and it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. This is consistent with the internal auditor's response to internal control objective C.

In the completion of the Annual Internal Audit Report, and their detailed report, the internal auditor has drawn attention to weaknesses in relation to budget setting and monitoring and petty cash. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

#### 3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

External Auditor Name

[REDACTED]

External Auditor Signature

Date

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3  
Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities

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The Clerk will post the External Auditor's certificate of completion on the notice board



**134/24 Lengthsman Scheme: To receive:** a report on Lengthsman work from Cllr. Tony Brazier  
**To discuss:** possible solutions for replacing and funding the bridge on LC5.  
**To discuss:** possible solutions for replacing and funding the bridge on LC5. Item requested by Cllr. Hadley. Cllr. Hadley suggested that he ask a local timber supplier for a quotation to supply appropriate timber for the bridge to be constructed using local labour. It was agreed that Cllr. Hadley should progress the quotation.  
Once the quotation has been received Herefordshire PROW would be asked for grant support to enable the purchase.

**To discuss:** creating a funding line for other PROW work (stiles, gates etc.). Item requested by Cllr. Hadley.  
The Clerk reported that stiles and gates are fairly readily available from Herefordshire. Some stiles had already been allocated through the footpath officers' requests and it was agreed that these would be fitted using local labour.

**To agree:** provision of additional salt boxes. The Clerk reported that the two salt boxes had arrived. Cllr. Hadley volunteered to collect them and arrange fitting (which is now completed).

**To consider:** any other work required in the Group Parishes.  
The Lengthsman contract for 2024-25 has arrived. It has been signed and submitted to Herefordshire.

The Lengthsman had surveyed the work required to restore the Causeway following flood damage. He would provide a quotation shortly and then grant support from Herefordshire will be requested.

Council considered an extra grass cut for October and agreed that this cut should be carried out. The Clerk will arrange with the Lengthsman.

The Clerk explained the structure of this year's grant funding from Herefordshire which was rather more complicated than last year. Essentially the grant can consist of up to three elements-

- Annual maintenance grant based on road lengths. This year is worth £2576
- Nominated task grant 50% match funded and also based on road lengths and again worth £2576 including match funding (i.e. £1288 for each for Council and Herefordshire).
- Drainage grant which is a new scheme. There are four categories of activities and an estimate of possible works and costs follows-



Category	Detailed work	Parish	Estimated days of work	Contractor	Price	Start date	Anticipated end date	Notes
1. Ditching Works	Around Little Pencombe church	LC	0.25	DC Garden Services	175	Dec-24	Jan-25	
	In the region around Abel's farm	LC	0.25	DC Garden Services	175	Dec-24	Jan-25	
	In the area of Poppybank	P	0.25	DC Garden Services	175	Dec-24	Jan-25	
	On C1110 from Pencombe to Parish boundary	P	0.5	DC Garden Services	350	Dec-24	Jan-25	
	On C1114 New House to Gasbage	P	0.25	DC Garden Services	175	Dec-24	Jan-25	
	<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>1050</b>		
2. Drainage Asset Survey	Map drainage assets in the Group Parish	P, LC	4	David Bell	1000	Nov-24	Dec-24	
3. Minor Drainage Schemes	Resolve blocked/crushed drain near Poppybank	P	1	TBA	750	Oct-24	Nov-24	instructs.evolution.sounding
	Repair broken drain on C1110 near Pencombe cemetery	P	0.5	TBA	375	Oct-24	Nov-24	planists.triangle.scooter
	Resolve blocked/crushed drain on C1114 near Wheelwrights Inn	P	0.5	TBA	375	Oct-24	Nov-24	elects.spindles.beep
	<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>1500</b>			
4. Gully Clearing and Cleansing	Drains around Little Cowme kiosk/church	LC	0.25	Herefordshire	450	Jan-25	Jan-25	quail.frame.fluid
	Drains around the Pound	P	0.25	Herefordshire	450	Jan-25	Jan-25	dinosaur.plunge.piled
	Drains around The Nash on C1110	P	0.25	Herefordshire	450	Jan-25	Jan-25	defected.sector.points
	<b>Total</b>				<b>1350</b>			
	<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>4900</b>			

It was agreed that this draft schedule (with appropriate rounding of work to whole days) should be submitted to Herefordshire as the Council's bid for drainage grant funding in 2024-25

**135/24 Neighbourhood Development Plan To receive:** update on NDP from Cllr. Tim Burge

Cllr. Burge reported that

The NDP grant of £4964.00 has been approved and should be in the bank account within the next five days.

The village presentation on Design Codes has been re-scheduled to 16 October. It will now be run as a "drop in" session rather than workshop style.

The Clerk confirmed that the event would advertised on-line and by flyers around the villages.



**136/24 Provision of a village car park. To receive:** report on the car park from Cllr. Tony Brazier  
The revised planning application (240561) has been approved. As before there are conditions attached-

(This is a summary of the conditions. For full details refer to the determination notice at <https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents?id=8fbd4e8d-6f71-11ef-9081-005056ab3a27> )

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 2 The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans
- 3 With the exception of the creation of visibility splays, no further development shall take place until a detailed Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) should be supplied for written approval by the local planning authority.
- 4 Development shall not commence until details of the works and provision for and location of disabled and electric vehicle charging spaces for the school, church and village hall has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The development shall not be brought into use until the scheme has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.
- 5 Before any other works hereby approved are commenced, visibility splays, and any associated set back splays at 45 degree angles shall be provided Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6 The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural method statement, as detailed in the Arboricultural report by Salopian Consultancy, dated 01/02/2023.
- 7 Prior to completion or first use of the development whichever is sooner, a full specification of all proposed tree planting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority..
- 8 Prior to the first use of the car park hereby permitted full details of a scheme for the provision of covered and secure cycle parking facilities shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for their written approval.
- 9 No artificial lighting features, including but not limited to floodlighting and other luminaires associated shall be installed or operated in respect of the approved development without the prior written approval of the local planning authority.



Clearly some of these conditions will add additional costs although for some requirements there may be grants available. These additional costs will be estimated to supplement the construction costs so providing the total estimated cost to construct the car park.

The Chairman was concerned about the costs of providing EV of charging points. Cllr. Brazier hoped that there might be grants available but this would be checked.

### **Contractors' estimates of construction costs.**

Three contractors have been asked to price the car park construction work. So far only one has responded but the others are expected to produce quotations shortly. To preserve commercial confidentiality the received quotation was not discussed.

Cllr. Hadley asked about legal costs and the Clerk would check with Lanyon Bowdler to have the quotation updated.

### **137/24 Single website for Group Parishes. To receive:** from the Clerk, update on combined Hall/Council/village website

The working group has identified six suppliers to carry out the work and the Clerk has written to these six suppliers asking them to provide further information on how they would carry out the project brief and the estimate of pricing.

### **138/24 To consider:** Matters for discussion at the next meeting

No matters were raised but it was agreed that the Clerk would circulate a request for items before the next meeting. He would also update the website asking residents to raise any potential items with their local Parish Councillor.

**Date of next meeting Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024**

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....

22/10/24