

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

**Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 7.30pm in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

**Councillors Present;**

Cllr. J. Lewis Chairman

Cllr. D. Legge

Cllrs. P. Thomas

Cllr. T. Brazier

Cllr. T. Burge

Cllr C. Hadley

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

**Members of the Public:** 9 members of the public attended.

**29/25 To receive:** apologies for absence

All Councillors attended the meeting.

**30/25 To receive:** Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation

None received

**31/25 To receive and approve:** draft minutes of the meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024

The draft minutes of the meeting on 25 February 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman

**32/25 To receive:** matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes

Mr Prince reported that the Arkwright Trust had agreed to fund the VE Day celebrations with a grant of £125. Council agreed to "match fund" the grant with an additional £125.

Since Little Cowarne Parish was holding its own event a grant of £100 was agreed for that Parish. There would be a Heartstart event on 10 April in the Parish Hall. The Clerk would enquire about the support given by neighbouring Parish Councils to Heartstart.

**33/25 To receive:** a verbal update from the Ward Councillor

Cllr. Baker provided the following information-

- The Government's Devolution Plans continue to be a key issue. Herefordshire believes it is working well as an Authority and will be cautious about combining with other adjacent Local Authorities.
- An addition to the Code of Conduct is in prospect dealing with Civility & Respect. The detail is not yet clear but all principal Authorities will have to adopt the updated Code and in due course this change will also be required of Parish Councils.
- A visit to Balfour Beatty's gritting operation at Rotherwas had been attended by a number of County Councillors. It had been an impressive visit and Councillors were shown the range of machinery used and the very specific and detailed weather forecasts which underpinned the decisions made on when gritting was necessary.
- Herefordshire is keen to establish how many empty homes there are in the County and where they are located. An initiative to purchase suitable such homes and use them in effect as Council houses is underway.
- A Care Quality Commission visit is planned for Adults & Social Care in the near future.



- The County's Minerals & Waste Plan (draft) has been challenged by the NFU in the courts. This challenge has been dismissed
- The new imposed housing target for the County has resulted in having to develop a revised Local Plan. Such a revision has placed NDPs in a difficult place since without a valid Local Plan (and with a housing land supply below 5 years) emerging NDPs have little or no chance of being made.
- The next Parish Councils' summit will be held at Plough Lane on 8 April. It is well worthwhile and will be attended by officers who are key to supporting Parishes.
- Richard Cooper is the new Chief Constable for West Mercia, the first substantive Chief Constable since October 2023.
- The Great Herefordshire Spring Clean 2025, a campaign to tackle litter and improve public spaces, runs from March 21st to April 6th, encouraging residents to participate in litter picks and community cleanups.
- The A417 is scheduled for re-surfacing between Saffrons Garage and the A49 junction from March 31 – 17 April. The road will be closed from 8am-5pm between these dates.

#### **34/25 Queries from residents to Ward Councillor & Council**

Councillor Hadley raised the matter of replacing the footbridge on LC5.. He had raised this matter a number of times in 2024, most recently in November 2024 –

*Cllr. Hadley reported that Herefordshire Council had visited the landowner where the bridge on LC5 is situated. As a result the footpath has been closed along with the bridge and that a replacement bridge would be provided in the Spring.*

He asked Cllr Baker if he would establish what progress had been made in replacing this bridge.

#### **35/25 To receive:** a planning report from Cllr. Colin Hadley

Cllr. Hadley reported that both current outstanding applications had been approved with conditions. There were no new applications.

**250118 Foxholes Pencombe, HR7 4SL.** Proposal to remove an existing conservatory and replace with a 2-storey extension incorporating a garden room. **Approved with Conditions**

#### **Existing applications**

**243068 Pencombe Court, Pencombe, HR7 4SH.** Listed building consent. Proposed replacement of conservatory roof with insulated slate roof **Approved with Conditions**

#### **36/25 To receive:** an update on the Parish Hall.

Mrs Legge reported that-

- The annual check of the fire alarm and emergency lighting had been completed. Three emergency lights required replacement.
- The heating oil smell from the boiler had been rectified.
- The storerooms had been re-organised with infrequently used equipment re-located to the loft space.
- At the Garden Club on 14 April, Simon Wells will speak on bio-dynamics.
- Borderlines Film Festival had been successful with over 80 attending the film, Conclave.
- On VE Day (8 May) there will be a "street party" with flag raising, bell ringing and lunch.



# Pencombe Group Parish Council

## Approved Minutes

Pencombe Group  
Parish Council

- Pub night remains successful and bar stools and cushions have been purchased.

**To receive:** any update to fit solar PV to the Hall roof.

Mr Nicholson reported that there was no grant available at present but perhaps the community could look at self-funding the PV installation. There are sources of funding available and the Hall had some resources of its own. He would progress further.

The issue of the generator hook-up quotation was raised and Mr Nicholson said he had no interest shown by his regular contractor to carry out the work. He would seek an alternative supplier.

### 37/25 Finance **To receive:** a finance report from Cllr. Paul Thomas

Bank balance on 20/03/2025-Unity Trust current account £12,193.13 (Arkwright £1650.00)  
Net Council= £10,543.13)

#### Payments

The following payments were made as authorised at the February 2025 meeting (minute 23/25)

#### Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Total £	VAT £	Ex-VAT £	Details
1	A M Drew	428.61	0.00	428.61	Clerk's Feb 2025 salary
2	HMRC	107.20	0.00	107.20	PAYE for February 2025
3	A M Drew	15.59	2.60	12.99	Refund for mpurchase of domain name pandlc.org.uk
4	HALC	630.97	105.16	525.81	Annual subscription
5	A M Drew	1101.41	183.57	917.84	Refund to Clerk for Hereford Times adverts
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2283.78</b>	<b>291.33</b>	<b>1992.45</b>	

#### Income received since last meeting –

No.	Name	Amount £			Details
		NIL			

#### Payments for Authorisation

No.	Name	Total £	VAT £	Ex-VAT £	Details
1	A M Drew	428.81	0.00	428.81	Clerk's March 2025 salary
2	Autela	102.33	20.47	85.28	Payroll Dec 24-March 25
3	HMRC	107.00	0.00	107.00	PAYE March 2025
4	A M Drew	216.50	11.67	204.83	Section 73 planning application for removal of EV condition
			0.00	0.00	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>854.64</b>	<b>32.14</b>	<b>825.92</b>	

The RFO reported that he had just received an invoice from the Lengthsman for work completed on PG2 to restore the Causeway. He asked that Council add this invoice for £1400+VAT to the payments for authorisation. This was agreed and Council then authorised the total payment of £2254.64+VAT as appropriate



**End of financial year 2024-25**

The RFO also reported that with the end of year now only a few days away there is pretty much complete certainty about the financial outcome for 2024-25. In summary the results are –

2024-25	Budget	Actual
Income	38864	36659
Ex-VAT expenditure	42921	33690
VAT	3800	3145
Surplus	-7857	-176

**38/25 Neighbourhood Development Plan. To receive:** update on NDP from Cllr. Tim Burge  
Considerable uncertainty still surrounds NDPs with the changes to the National Planning Policies. Herefordshire has gone back to the start on their revised Local Plan when it was found that Councils which continued to develop Local Plans already in progress when the National changes arrived have had these plans refused on inspection. A key requirement is that NDPs must conform with the Local Plan so without a Local Plan all NDPs are in limbo at present.

A most successful NDP is in place at the Clerk's other Parish (Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior) but last month new housing was approved by Herefordshire Planning which was expressly against the NDP. HFSP Council believe their NDP is now completely without weight in the planning process. Given the speed with which it was disposed with there is no appetite for updating the NDP.

The Clerk attended an online session with Herefordshire NDP unit on Monday 24 March to try and achieve clarity and guidance on next steps with NDPs. The notes from that meeting follow-

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL NDP BRIEFING – 24 MARCH 2025**

I attended the online briefing from Herefordshire Council Strategic Planning team. The purpose of the briefing was to explain to Parishes the effect the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would have on Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs). Nearly 70 representatives from Parish Councils attended. The event was run by Siobhan Riddle from the Strategic Planning team. The main point is that the revised NPPF, in particular the increased mandatory housing targets, changes nearly everything.

**Herefordshire Local Plan**

- The current plan is valid from 2011-2031. Revision of this plan started some years ago with the aim of creating a new plan for 2021-2041. Within this plan Herefordshire Council expected to build 16,100 new houses over the Plan period. Herefordshire Council maintain that the new Plan was almost completed.
- The revised NPPF has raised the Herefordshire target for new houses to 27,260 (~70% increase). With such an increase the new Local Plan is no longer fit for purpose and Herefordshire Council have notified Government that they will start a new Plan from scratch. This Plan will not be ready for submission until January 2028.
- With the new housing target the current housing land supply is about 3 years.

**NDPs in course of preparation**

There are "transitional arrangements" for NDPs currently being prepared. To qualify for these arrangements the draft NDP must have reached Regulation 15 – submitted to the Local Authority. Only two NDPs qualify in Herefordshire – Dormington & Mordiford and Woolhope. From 12 March 2025 the new NPPF will apply to all other NDPs in course of preparation. This means there will be



new housing targets for many (though not all) Parishes so, rather like the Local Plan, some re-work will be necessary for many NDPs in preparation.

NDPs already “made” (valid and in use).

- For NDPs five or fewer years old there is protection against speculative development even though the current housing land supply is under five years.
- For NDPs older than five years they have no weight in planning decisions. These plans require updating but that updating must align with the Local Plan which will not be in place until 2028 at the earliest. So Parishes with NDPs older than five years there appears to be no protection from speculative development.
- However, the current Local Plan is still in force until replaced. So policies in the Plan relating to development, especially in open countryside will continue to apply.

Other points

- Within the new NPPF development still has to be “sustainable”. So infrastructure considerations will still apply to planning applications. This will tend to protect villages and favour development in Hereford City and the market towns.
- Parishes can request an estimate of their likely share of the County housing target by contacting the Neighbourhood Planning team.
- Although the housing target has increased by about 11,000 it seems likely that the proposed by-pass will absorb a considerable amount of this increase. (Infill between the by-pass and Hereford City). However, plans are not sufficiently advanced to yet know how many houses might be built as a result of the by-pass.
- Previous over achievement in new housing numbers will not count towards the revised target.

The Clerk said he had sent these notes to Louise Kirkup, Council’s NDP Planning Consultant for her view on the best way forward given the above situation.

**39/25 Provision of a village car park. To receive:** report on the car park from Cllr. Tony Brazier Following guidance from the planner Mr Jack Dyer and his manager Mr Andrew Banks the Clerk has submitted a Section 73 planning application to have the EV charging condition lifted from the consent granted for the village car park. As part of this application EV charging points have been offered at the small car park below the village Hall. Resolution of this matter should then clear the way for a final decision on the car park.

Following Cllr. Hadley’s suggestion at the last meeting the Clerk has contacted Owen Pell Ltd to obtain another (third) quotation for car park construction.

Council’s view is sought for in deciding other uses for the remaining space in the car park. These other uses may well be eligible for grant funding from Herefordshire. Possible uses raised so far are a community garden and a play area. Council could consider asking the working group to-

- Research local opinion on options
- Establish possible layouts and costs for preferred options

After some discussion it was agreed that the Council’s working group would consider options for the way forward on the remainder of the car park space.

The Clerk expected that when the S73 application and additional uses are resolved it would then be possible to present clear and costed options to residents for a final decision on the car park.



**40/25 Single website for Group Parishes.**

Nextnorth, the contractor building the new combined website, has sent through some branding suggestions for the combined site. The website working group thinks the current logo used by the Parish Council would make an attractive "umbrella" logo for the site as well as providing some continuity. Other organisations can use their own logos on their pages if wished but the umbrella logo would likely feature on most pages and would help tie the site together into a unified whole.

Council agreed that the current Parish Council was attractive and could be used as the prime logo for the Group Parish. The Clerk would attend the next Hall Trustees meeting and establish their views so that a final decision on branding can be taken

The Clerk has also contacted Nextnorth to obtain a further email address [showentries@pandlc.org.uk](mailto:showentries@pandlc.org.uk)

**The public meeting ended at this point and for matters of commercial confidentiality the next item was discussed in a closed meeting.**

**Date of next meeting Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025**

Signed .....Chairman

Date 22/4/25 .....