

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

Tuesday 26th March 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: 8 members of the public attended.

28/24 To receive: apologies for absence

All Councillors were present

29/24 To receive: Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation

None received

30/24 To receive and approve: the draft minutes of the meeting of 27th February 2024

Council agreed the minutes of the meeting of 27th February which the Chairman then signed.

31/24 To receive: Matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes

The Chairman had received a revised quotation for work on the Church clock. By removing the work on the chiming mechanism the quotation was reduced from £2600 to £1600. If the work is to go ahead fund raising would be required. Cllr. Hadley commented that since the clock was owned by the Church the Parish Council should have absolutely nothing to do with the clock or any other aspect of the Church. The Clerk updated the meeting that there was new legislation which now allowed Parish Councils to support the Church. Cllr. Hadley further maintained that Little Cowarne received no support at all from the Parish Council, again an impression which the Clerk corrected. Cllr. Thomas asked if there was a warranty for the previous work done. There was a warranty and the work done had got the clock running again, but the poor time keeping was due to a seized adjuster at the bottom of the pendulum. No maintenance had been carried out since 1993 which has contributed to the current problems. Council then decided that the matter should be put to a vote and the motion was that-

This Council resolves not to spend any funds on the Church clock.

There were no votes in support of the motion so the position is that Council can discuss and, if so minded, can financially support the restoration/maintenance of the Church clock subject to the rules of business in force at that time.

The Mr Mottram, the Pencombe Footpath Officer reported that-

Responsibility for PROWs had returned to Herefordshire Council last year and is now starting to organise the work schedule. Herefordshire Council has two footpath officers (covering North & South), one enforcement officer and an office-based administrator. These staff are supported by footpath officers in the Parishes. As PROWs these paths have the same status as any other highway and Herefordshire Council aims to have Parish Footpath officers progress the first stage in any problems with PROWs (e.g. blocked paths, poor signage, stile problems etc.). The Parish Council would attempt to resolve these sort of problems often through discussion with the

landowner. Should resolution not be possible then the Parish will then escalate the issue to the Herefordshire Council team. As volunteers the Parish Footpath Officers will be covered by Herefordshire Council insurance in future. There will be more clarity about what work can and cannot be done by Parishes. Work within the scope of the Parishes includes ditch bridges (3m) and short bridges (4m) and the process for carrying out this work is currently being drawn up. Funding for footpaths in the 2024-25 budget is 250k with £61k of that earmarked for repair of the bridge at Hawshurst. The defect logging system will be streamlined and the Footpath Officers will be auditing the PROWs to establish the numbers and state of stiles, gates etc.

Cllr. Burge gave a headlines report of the survey carried out recently by the working group. The aim was to establish the village views on-

- Use for the (refurbished) Pencombe telephone kiosk. There was a clear preference (62%) to move the defibrillator into the phone box.
- Reducing the Pencombe speed limit from 30mph to 20mph. Again about 60% of respondents supported this reduction.
- Drainage, road condition and the need for repairs to the Causeway were also raised.

32/24 To receive: a verbal update from the Ward Councillor

Cllr. Baker reported that-

- The PROW scheme mentioned earlier would provide for maintenance to be done by "suitably qualified" individuals. Application for a share of available funding requires an expression of interest.
- The Lengthsman scheme for 2024-25 has received increased funding up to £120/km of C & U roads.
- A new drainage grant will be available.
- S106 will likely be replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy which will apply to all developments irrespective of scale.
- Herefordshire Council is not keen on blanket 20mph speed limits and prefers a more targeted approach in the vicinity of schools, care homes etc.
- He would like to receive the information about the lorry which damaged the safety barrier in Little Cowarne. Cllr. Hadley undertook to send him the information.

33/24 To receive: queries or concerns from local residents to the Ward Councillor

Cllr. Hadley raised the state of the road around Little Cowarne church where the surface had washed away. Cllr. Baker would visit the location.

34/24 To receive: a planning report from Cllr. Colin Hadley

New applications

There are no new applications

Existing applications

There are no outstanding applications in the Parishes



35/24 To receive: an update on the Parish Hall
Mrs. Legge, Chair of Trustees reported that-

- The recent highlight was the afternoon tea event held on Saturday 23 March. Mrs. Legge recorded her thanks to those that attended but observed that some residents who had said they would attend did not show up. As a result the event was rather over catered and consequently did not raise the funds as expected.
- The LinC lunch continues to be well supported and the July lunch will be a celebration of the 25 years since the current Hall was opened.
- Cinema Club was busy with Borderlines during March when three films were screened.
- The Trustees thanked Messrs. Voney and Prince for their work on the drains around the Hall.
- The boiler is slightly leaking heating oil, and the replacement remains urgent. Mr Nicholson circulated a report on options for boiler replacement that he was preparing. Mrs Legge recorded her thanks to Mr Nicholson for all the work he had done.

The Clerk suggested that the boiler replacement should be placed on the next agenda for discussion and agreement around how the project would be funded.

To consider: creating a combined Parish Council and Parish Hall website

The Hall Trustees had suggested that a combined Council /Hall website would be a worthwhile development to streamline access to all village/Parish information and provide some cost savings. It was agreed that a small group should meet to discuss a way forward. Cllr. Burge and the Clerk agreed to join the group and the Hall would also nominate representative(s).

36/24 Finance

The RFO reported that-

Bank balance on 22/03/2024 -Unity Trust current account £9880.64

Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	363.35	Clerk's February 2024 salary
2	Viking	162.22+VAT	NDP noticeboards and note books
3	Zoom video conferencing	129.90+VAT	For NDP Refund to Clerk
4	HALC	230.98+VAT	Cllr. training 13 Feb 2024
5	Post Office	420.00	NDP workshop printing. Refund to Clerk
6	D C Garden Services	1220.00+VAT	Ditch works Dec. 2023 -Jan 2024
7	Jane Legge	183.75	NDP delivery work
8	Royal British Legion	50.00	Donation for wreath
	Total	2760.20+VAT	



Income received since last meeting –

26/2/2024	Emma Bouston	£100.00	Ashes of Ms Doris FISHER
21/3/2024	R D Chesters Ltd	£50.00	Kiosk donation
21/3/2024	CCD & SB Thomas	£100.00	Kiosk donation
22/3/2024	David Stanton-Humphreys	£50.00	Kiosk donation
TOTAL		£300.00	

Payments for Authorisation

No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	A M Drew	363.55	Clerk's March salary
2	HMRC PAYE	272.60	Q4 PAYE (pay in April 2024)
3	Jane Legge	225.00	NDP work (AECOM sites report errors)
4	Seton	60.94+VAT	Rubber paint for hall car park kerb Refund to Clerk
5	D C Gardening Services	250.00+VAT	Cut back vegetation at roadside railings opposite Pencombe Cemetery
6	Cemetery non-domestic rates	329.34	Payable April 2024
7	A M Drew	450.00	30 extra NDP hours @ £15/hour
	Turnwater	980+VAT	Drain cleaning & jetting
	TOTAL	2931.43+VAT	

Total for payment £2931.43+VAT as appropriate.

Council agreed these payments.

The Clerk mentioned that the non-domestic rates bill for the cemetery had arrived and having read the legislation he was considering a challenge.



Draft Budget for 2024-25

Line No.	PENCOMBE GPC BUDGET 2024-25	Outturn 2022-23	Outturn 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	
	Income				
1	Precept	13,875.00	18,300.00	18,300.00	Precept held
2	Cemetery	0.00	700.00	700.00	Estimate
3	Grants	9,275.00	12,767.00	12,000.00	£2000 base, £2000 Nomin task, £4000 drainage, £4000 NDP
4	Loans	0.00	0.00	40,000.00	Car park
5	Other Income	142.00	650.00	800.00	Sparrington kiosk (£300) Pencombe kiosk (£500)
6	VAT Reclaim	1,701.00	3,334.00	3,022.00	From 2023-24 outturn
7	Total Income	24,993.00	35,751.00	74,822.00	
8	Clerk	4,361.00	4,355.00	4,600.00	Salary award + arrears
9	Bank Charges	80.00	72.00	72.00	
10	Administration	2,467.00	750.00	750.00	Pay roll, stationery, mapping
11	Insurance, audit, professional	686.00	1,012.00	1,000.00	HALC, Insurance premium, external + internal audit fees.
12	IT	430.00	100.00	750.00	Win 10 out of support 2025. New PC required
13	Cemetery Rates	329.00	329.00	329.00	
14	Training and development	0.00	231.00	0.00	
15	Equipment	432.00	0.00	0.00	
16	Maintenance	4,193.00	4,200.00	4,200.00	Grass cutting
17	HMRC	1,234.00	1,430.00	1,400.00	
18	Other Exp.	2,074.00	670.00	100.00	
19	TOTAL Day to Day	16,286.00	13,149.00	13,201.00	
	Special Projects				
20	NDP	4,364.00	6,873.00	8,500.00	£6356 to be returned from 23-24 grant
21	Lengthsman	2,486.00	6,994.00	10,000.00	£2000 Council + grants
22	Sparrington kiosk	0.00	1,116.00	0.00	
23	Pencombe kiosk	0.00	0.00	500.00	Paint, glass already purchased. Sand blast charge.
24	Website rebuild (Council + Hall)	0.00	0.00	750.00	
25	Village Car Park	4,286.00	2,618.00	41,000.00	Includes 5% contingency + first year repayments
26	TOTAL SPECIAL PROJECTS	11,136.00	17,601.00	60,750.00	
27	Total Expenditure	27,422.00	30,750.00	73,951.00	
28	Surplus	-2,429.00	5,001.00	871.00	
		N.B. Negative variances are adverse			



The Clerk noted that the Hall boiler is an emerging project and as yet nothing has been included in this budget statement. As the implications of the project become clear the budget will be updated accordingly.

Mrs Drew raised the absence of a specific line in the document for maintenance costs for the Parish Hall. On further checking the RFO established that such costs as incurred for the Parish Hall were classified as "Other Expenditure". For clarity the Council cash book now includes a category "Parish Hall" and the expenditure of £569.74 during 2023-24 has been removed from Other and placed in the new category.

Council found the proposed budget satisfactory and agreed its adoption for 2024-25.

37/24 Lengthsman Scheme/Grass cutting:

Cllr. Brazier reported that the grant assisted work program for the year was largely completed, the only outstanding work being some unforeseen ditching work at Little Cowarne, in the vicinity of the Church. This work would be completed by the Lengthsman on 27 March. (Clerk's note the invoice-SI-1811- for this work was received on 28 March and was for £870+VAT. For completeness this invoice has been added to the table below). A summary of the grant assisted work is-

Task	Invoice No.	Invoice Value £	Value to Parish Council £	Value to Herefordshire Council £
Annual Maintenance Plan	Si-1780	1220.00	0.00	1220.00
	SI-1783	250.00	0.00	250.00
	1109 (Part)	980.00	0.00	980.00
	SI-1811	870.00	744.00	126.00
Annual Maintenance Plan Total		3320.00	744.00	2576.00
Nominated Task	INV-0095	4900.00	2450.00	2450.00
Nominated task Total		4900.00	2450.00	2450.00
GRAND TOTAL		8220.00	3194.00	5026.00

An invoice for £5026 has been submitted to Herefordshire Council and a repayment is awaited.

To consider: project to re-instate the Causeway following flood damage
The Chairman has surveyed the Causeway and found that the last flooding had washed away some supporting timbers. Replacement timbers and some stone were needed. Discussion with Mr Mottram suggested that the work might be suitable for the PROW grant.



Scope of Lengthsman (drainage) work for 2024-25

Assuming the drainage grant arrives as expected there are some known black spots to be tackled in 2024-25-

- Drain from Springfield to the corner of the Pound.
- Drains from the vicinity of New House Farm down to the village centre.
- Cross road drain at Poppybank. This last drain was damaged by a water board contractor installing a new water main in 2017.

Mrs Wilcox asked that proper provision for work in Little Cowarne is included in this program. Cllr. Hadley reported that there were some drainage issues below the Three Horseshoes.

Mr Prince reported that he was continuing to work on the drains around the Parish Hall.

38/24 Neighbourhood Development Plan

Cllr. Legge reported that-

The Design Code work will start before end of March.

Residents who attended the 19 February workshop will be contacted to obtain their views on the accuracy of the AECOM site assessment report.

39/24 Provision of a village car park.

Cllr. Brazier reported that-

The revised planning application submitted to Herefordshire in February is progressing but is not yet out for consultation.

40/24 *To consider:* Matters for discussion at the next meeting

Replacement of Hall boiler

Combined website

Repairs to the Causeway

Overhaul of St John's Church clock

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

Date of next meeting Tuesday 23rd April 2024

Signed.....Chairman

Date.....

23 - 04 - 2024

