



PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Pencombe Group Parish Council
held on Tuesday 27th August 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
Four members of the public attended

111/24 To receive: apologies for absence

All Councillors were present

112/24 To receive: Declarations of Interest and written requests for Dispensation

None received

113/24 To receive and approve: the draft minutes of the meetings of 23rd July & 1st August 2024

The draft minutes of the meeting of 23rd July were approved and signed by the Chairman

The draft minutes of the meeting of 1st August were not approved. The Chairman did not think the minute 110/24 properly reflected what Council had agreed. The Clerk would discuss the minute with the Chairman and agree the wording.

114/24 To receive: Matters arising not otherwise covered in the minutes

Cllr. Hadley was concerned about the timing of the agenda publication. He complained that he did not receive his papers until "6.40pm on Saturday evening" and the agenda should be available three clear days before the meeting. The Clerk confirmed that the agenda had been posted on the noticeboards on Thursday 22 August which met the three clear days legal requirement. Cllr. Hadley continued to be unhappy with the timing of the various papers required for the meeting. The Clerk tried to explain the legal position but Cllr. Hadley remained unhappy. The Clerk's competence was then questioned for which Cllr. Hadley later apologised. The Clerk offered his resignation to Council but this was not accepted. He also reminded Council of their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct which all Councillors had undertaken to uphold. The matter had no final resolution and Cllr. Thomas proposed that Council should move on to the next business.

Note added on 23 September following meeting on 22 September. The Clerk accepted that the "three clear days" rule had not been met in this case because there was a Bank Holiday Monday on 26 August. Bank Holidays do not count towards the three clear days and the Clerk apologised to Council and specifically to Cllr. Hadley for this mistake.

115/24 To receive: a verbal update from the Ward Councillor

Cllr. Baker reported that-

- The number of new houses built in Herefordshire over the next Local Plan period (up to 2041) had risen from 16,000 to 27,000 under the proposed changes to national planning rules. The focus would be on affordable housing. There would be a revision of the new draft Local Plan.



- The recent disturbances in parts of Northern England had not occurred in the West Mercia police area, although plans were in place should such disturbances happen in the area.
- The surface dressing plan for C & U class roads is underway. (The Pencombe C1110 has received surface dressing between Risbury and The Pound, Pencombe). The £3.6m available will not cover all the roads in the County.
- All Members had been asked to remind their Parishes about the Code of Conduct.

116/24 To receive: queries or concerns from local residents to Council & Ward Councillor

Cllr. Legge mentioned that the surface dressing could be ineffective due to defects. Cllr. Baker confirmed that patching/pothole repair is undertaken before the surface dressing.

117/24 To receive: a planning report from Cllr. Colin Hadley

Cllr. Hadley reported that-

There are no new applications

The only existing application is-

240561 Land adj. to Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall

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

118/24 To receive: an update on the Parish Hall and Pencombe Show from the Chair of the Hall Trustees

The Chair was not present so the Hall Treasurer provided a brief report on the recent Pencombe Show. The Show had been very successful with over £3000 in cash taken as well as other sources of funding. The Treasurer specifically thanked the numerous businesses which had provided, in total, over £800 of sponsorship. In the end the profit from the day was £2,500. Discussions are underway to decide how the profit would be distributed amongst local organisations and charities.

The Treasurer also reported that Cllr. Hadley had won the Winners' Shield for the second year. She thanked the Council for providing the Shield.

119/24 Finance To receive: a finance report from Cllr. Paul Thomas

Cllr. Thomas reported that-

The bank balance on 22/08/2024-Unity Trust current account £9711.25

Payments made since last meeting.

No.	Name	Ex-VAT £	VAT £	Total £	Details
1	A M Drew	512.92	0.00	512.92	Clerk's July salary incl. arrears on 10% hours increase from 1 April 2024
2	Autela	68.22	13.64	81.86	Payroll April-July 2024
3	A M Drew	36.19	0.00	36.19	Refund for non-slip paint
4	D C Garden Services	520.00	104.00	624.00	June grass cut
5	A M Drew	123.60	0.00	123.60	Microsoft 365 suscription
6	HALC	250.00	50.00	300.00	Internal audit fee



7	Jon Eastham	75.00	0.00	75.00	Bus shelter repair
8	Parish Hall	96.87	19.37	116.24	Pencombe show trophy
9	A M Drew	13.50	2.70	16.20	Flags for Hall
	TOTAL	1696.30	189.72	1886.02	

Income received since last meeting			
No.	Name	Amount £	Details
1	Western Power	13.17	Wayleave payment
	TOTAL	13.17	

Payments for Authorisation					
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
	TOTAL	1683.54	182.40	1865.94	

Payments due are for £1683.54+VAT as appropriate.
Council agreed these payments.

Period 5 (August) Budget monitoring

Following a comprehensive Q1 budget monitoring exercise last month this month only a top level summary will be considered.

Note: the following summary already has all August expenditure included, so represents an accurate month end position.

Summary



Line No.	PENCOMBE GPC BUDGET 2024-25	Outturn 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	Year to date 2024-25	Forecast Outturn 31 March 2025	Variance from Budget	Notes
7	Total Income	30295.29	78864	22526.88	78767.00	-97.00	No change and on budget
19	TOTAL Day to DAY	12592.24	13301.00	8521.63	13313.00	-12.00	No change and on budget
27	TOTAL SPECIAL PROJECTS	17531.91	66900	16029.068	67400	-500	No change and on budget
28	TOTAL EX-VAT EXPENDITURE	30124.15	80201	24550.693	80713	-512	No change and on budget
29	Reclaimable VAT on expenditure	3064	7600	2243.52	7600		Normal 2800; Car pk 3200; L/man 1600
30	Total Expenditure	33188.15	87801	26794.21	88313	-512	
31	Surplus	-2892.86	-8937	-4267.33	-9546.00	-609.00	

Position remains broadly as at end of June (Q1)

- Direct trading loss of ~£9500 (line 31). However, Lengthsman expenditure is high to "earn" grants.
- VAT (re-claimable) is also high due to potential car park expenditure.
- VAT re-claim plus grant receipts will eliminate trading loss but unlikely in-year

CONCLUSION Income and costs budgets are much higher than previously due mostly to potential car park construction. However, no expenditure nor loan commitments have been incurred until costs are known and any further consultation concluded

120/24 Lengthsman Scheme: To receive: a report on Lengthsman work from Cllr. Tony Brazier
Cllr. Brazier reported that-
The Causeway needed some attention including some resurfacing, timber edge renovation, cutting back and tree work. The Clerk confirmed that Council could seek grant assistance for th



work from Herefordshire PROW. The residents along the Causeway had no objection to the work being done.

The Clerk thought that a contractor (or even volunteer labour) other than the Lengthsman could be used for this work but the stipulation is that whoever does the work must be suitably qualified.

The Clerk has approached two bridge kit companies for a price on the bridge on LC5. So far only one has responded and the kit bridge in softwood is around £3500 delivered. It is not stated if this price includes VAT or not. The bridge has then to be assembled and fitted and there will be some other costs. It might be possible to obtain a grant for this work.

The Lengthsman grant scheme for 2024-25 has been published by Herefordshire. Details received as follows-

We are pleased to be writing today to give a further update on the Local Drainage Fund and to confirm that Parish Council's will be invited to apply for funding for the following projects:

1. Ditching Works
2. Drainage Asset Survey
3. Minor Drainage Schemes
4. Gully Clearing and Cleansing

The table below sets out in more detail what is involved in each project, what Herefordshire Council will fund and, where applicable, the criteria that each application will be judged against.

Project	Description
Ditching Works	<p>Parish Councils who wish will be able to apply for funding for ditching works which must be completed by the Lengthsman or a suitably qualified alternative. Interested Parish Councils can apply for funding on a "day rate" basis up to a maximum of £2000.</p> <p>I.e. if your Lengthsman's day rate for ditching work is £250 this would allow you to apply for eight days ditching work.</p> <p>The ditching work must be conducted using a digger and ditching bucket and the Parish Council may, at its discretion, use this funding for ditches which are in private ownership but contribute to flooding or standing water on the highway network.</p> <p>Funding Available: up to £2000</p>



<p>Drainage Survey</p>	<p>A resilient and effective drainage network requires us to have a complete picture of all drainage assets within a parish. Unfortunately as contractors and systems have changed knowledge may have been lost.</p> <p>We are therefore offering each Parish Council the opportunity to apply for funding on a "day rate basis" to allow their Lengthsman or a suitably qualified alternative, to review the existing drainage map of the Parish and log any assets which need adding to our system. You will be provided with the existing drainage asset map to review and update as part of this scheme.</p> <p>Funding Available: up to £1000</p>
<p>Minor Drainage Scheme</p>	<p>This section allows Parish Councils to submit proposals for minor schemes which reduce flooding of the highway network. This could be in the form of additional ditches, culverts, drains, pipes or similar. Parish Councils are requested to supply an outline proposal with estimated costings, photos and what3words locations. Please note that applications under this section will be reviewed and prioritised accordingly.</p> <p>Funding Available: Uncapped</p>
<p>Gully Clearing and Cleansing</p>	<p>This project allows Parish Councils to put forward drains / gullies for clearing and cleansing by Herefordshire Council's contractors using their machinery.</p> <p>To access this option, Parish Council's should use a day rate of £1,800, which will cover machinery, labour and temporary traffic management costs.</p> <p>Parish Council's will need to complete the relevant section of the form, providing a what3words location for each gully / drain which requires work. These will then be passed to a Council contractor for the work to be completed within the days purchased. Unfortunately it is not possible to provide an exact number of drains/gullies that can be cleared per day, as it is dependent on the location and condition of each gully that is put forward for work.</p> <p>Funding Available: Uncapped</p>

Parish Councils should be aware that if they are successful in their requests for funding for Ditching Works and Drainage Surveys then this will be distributed through the Lengthsman Scheme. Under this scheme, a total funding cap exists of £25k, which applies to the entirety of funding across the Lengthsman Scheme, Public Rights of Way and Local Drainage Fund.

Please note for those projects where the funding is uncapped, Herefordshire Council may not be able to provide funding for all projects and will assess each application on its merits before prioritising accordingly.



At this stage only Parish Councils who are part of the Lengthsman Scheme will be eligible to apply for funding under this programme. Any Parish Council who is not part of the Lengthsman Scheme will still benefit from investment in their local drainage network however they will need to contact the Highways Team via Lengthsman@herefordshire.gov.uk to discuss their requirements separately to this scheme.

All completed submissions or queries should be sent to Lengthsman@herefordshire.gov.uk before the 27th September. If your Parish Council will not have time to meet and discuss this before then please do let us know.

Cllr. Brazier mentioned that the road from The Pound to Gasbage would be closed from 10 September for 11 days to carry out drainage work. He was sceptical about the benefits given the problems of the pipework in that area.

Another problem area was the drain opposite Poppybank which had been damaged by the water board. That problem could have been resolved if Herefordshire had held the water board to account but that had not happened. That apart, resolution of this problem would solve a main flooding cause in the village centre.

In summary Council agreed that it should apply for grants related to-

- Mapping
- Causeway restoration
- Ditching
- Minor drainage

The first step is to arrange a site visit with the Lengthsman to obtain quotations for the Causeway and drainage work.

Discussion about the Pencombe village signs was raised again and the Clerk confirmed that Council would have to pay for such signs. He would bring a quotation to the next meeting for Council to consider further.

Salt boxes were also discussed and the Clerk stated that a salt box costs about £100. It was agreed that Council would order two boxes.

121/24 Neighbourhood Development Plan *To receive:* update on NDP from Cllr. Tim Burge
A discussion with Jane Legge has produced positive results. Although Jane has taken a full time job she still wishes to be involved with the NDP and she is re-engaging with the project.

A grant application for 2024-25 has been made.

An early task is to organise a Design Codes workshop so residents get an opportunity to review and comment on the report.

It was agreed that Monday 23 September would be a suitable date subject to the availability of Jane Legge and Louise Kirkup.



Design guides and codes provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. Their geographic coverage, level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances and scale of change in each place and should allow a suitable degree of variety. (National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF, Dec. 2023) A design code is a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements that are visual and numerical wherever possible to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area. (National Model Design Codes - NMDC, 2021)

122/24 Provision of a village car park. To receive: update on the car park from Cllr. Tony Brazier
The Clerk has contacted the planning officer responsible for determining this application and been told that Council can expect the decision by mid-September.

Several contractors have been approached and discussion with these contractors is underway so that realistic prices can be obtained.

The steering group of Councillors has come together as Cllrs. Thomas & Brazier with the Clerk if required. Other Councillors are welcome to join if they wish.

Cllr. Hadley mentioned that a barrier to prevent entry of large vehicles etc. would be desirable and that will be added to the list of requirements.

123/24 Single website for Group Parishes.

The Clerk reported that-

Working group is Tim Burge, Karen Hodges and Allan Drew.

BARK was used to find website developers. The system is supposed to deliver up to five suppliers interested in carrying out the work. Instead about 20 developers responded and to get to an optimal decision they all had to be considered.

A fairly quick assessment showed that six of the developers had a promising approach, with two of that six having already produced for other communities exactly what Pencombe Group Parishes require. (hadstock.org.uk) and (halesworthtowncouncil.org.uk). The Clerk showed the Hadstock site which appeared to offer almost all that is required.

Other developers had not provided examples of their work but, depending on the working group decision, they might be requested to do so. Alternatively the shortlisted six will be further assessed for a decision.

Council authorised the working group to progress the project to the next stage of supplier selection and pricing.

124/24 To consider: Matters for discussion at the next meeting

The Clerk offered to ask Councillors via a text/email to submit any items for inclusion on the next agenda.

Date of next meeting Tuesday 24th September 2024

Signed.....Chairman Date.....22/10/24.....