

**PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of a scheduled meeting of the parish council held on  
Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 at 7.30 pm in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

**Present**

Councillors: James Lewis (Chairman), Tony Brazier, Tim Burge (Vice Chair), Colin Hadley, David Legge and Paul Thomas.

**In attendance:**

Lynda Wilcox – HALC – Meeting cover.  
Bruce Baker – Ward Councillor.  
Eleven members of the public.

1. **Apologies for absence:** There were none.
2. **Declarations of interest and written dispensation requests.**
  - 2.1 James Lewis declared an interest in agenda item 6.1 because he had made a comment on Herefordshire Council's website.
3. **Resignation of the clerk and consideration of HALC meeting cover @ £275.**
  - 3.1 The resignation of Allan Drew was noted, and thanks were given for all his hard work over the last few years.
  - 3.2 It was RESOLVED to access HALC's meeting cover at a cost of £275.
4. **Open Session**
  - 4.1 **A brief verbal report from Ward Councillor – Bruce Baker, included:**
    - 4.1.1 Whilst the cost of services for children with special educational needs had increased, government funding to Herefordshire Council had been cut by £27m but officers were continuing to lobby for more. Rural counties don't receive as much as urban ones.
    - 4.1.2 There had been an increase in complaints to the Monitoring Officer, and it was being suggested that parish councils should initially try to resolve problems internally and if this was not possible, to then refer the matter on to the Monitoring Officer.
    - 4.1.3 A recent Peer Group Inspection had concluded that Herefordshire Council was run as well as it could be.

- 4.1.4 A presentation on children services was being given on 22nd October at Marden School.
- 4.1.5 Road resurfacing was continuing, and repairs were now of good quality.
- 4.1.6 Hereford fire station is the only full time manned one in the county and was being demolished to enable a new station to be built.
- 4.1.7 The bypass was on track and funding was available for the stretch from the A49 to A465 Abergavenny Road.
- 4.1.8 The railings and ditch at Little Cowarne would be fixed in January 2026.
- 4.1.9 Councillor Baker commented that he would be retiring at the next election.

#### **4.2 Views of local residents on parish matters included:**

- 4.2.1 Footpaths Officers: Funds from the Public Rights of Way grant would be used to repair minor items which had been logged in the app. The funds would need to be spent by March 2026. Major items, such as the two big bridges would be dealt with by Herefordshire Council. A stile had been replaced in Little Cowarne. Some free kit was being offered to Footpaths Officers by Herefordshire Council. It would be really helpful if the Public Rights of Way team at Herefordshire Council were to issue some design guidelines.

#### **5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June.**

It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes as a true record, and they were signed by the Chair.

#### **6. Planning - Comment on an application for determination by Herefordshire Council:**

*Vice Chair, Tim Burge took the Chair, due to the interest declared by James Lewis at 2.1 above.*

- 6.1 Application P252087/F: The Wheelwrights, Pencombe. Proposed change of use from a public house (Sui Generis) to a dwellinghouse (Class C3).

It was RESOLVED to oppose the application and submit a response by the target determination date of 29<sup>th</sup> September.

It was further RESOLVED that Tim Burge would speak on behalf of the parish council if the application were to be considered by Herefordshire Council's Planning Committee.

*James Lewis resumed the Chair*

#### **7. Finance:**

- 7.1 The Bank balance was noted as £23,037.58, which includes both precept payments.
- 7.2 Appointment of a temporary RFO ... It was RESOLVED to appoint Tim Burge.
- 7.3 Setting up a Finance Working Group to consider the 2026/27 budget ... It was RESOLVED that the Chair and Vice Chair would serve on the new Working Group, together with a local resident.

- 7.4 Outstanding payments ... The Chair had been liaising with HALC on setting up admin arrangements with Unity Trust (since the Clerk's resignation) to enable two parish council signatories to then submit their passwords for authorisation. It was RESOLVED that HALC would act as administrator to set up payments for authorisation until a new clerk was employed.  
It was further RESOLVED to pay all outstanding invoices.

## **8. Village Hall Committee:**

- 8.1 Receipt of update and appointment of a parish council representative:

- 8.1.1 The update from the Chair of the Village Hall included:

- i) There were some teething problems with the new boiler.
- ii) The old floor cleaner had started to fail but it had been serviced and was going well now.
- iii) Parts were awaited to repair the windows in the gents' toilets.
- iv) Pencombe Village Show was hosted at the hall and some of the profit made would be kept for next year's show, with the rest being divided between village organisations. Thanks were given to Garry, Frank, Tim and Simon.
- v) Forty people had attended a recent lunch.
- vi) A showing of Last Night of the Proms had to be cancelled due to insufficient people.
- vii) It was sad that the car park didn't go ahead but they would get used to the idea and find other ways around it.
- viii) There had been problems with the projector, but Frank had organised someone to hopefully fix it.
- ix) The next meeting of the Village Hall Committee would be on 3<sup>rd</sup> November.

- 8.1.2 ... It was RESOLVED to appoint Paul Thomas as the parish council's representative on the Village Hall Committee.

## **9. Parish Council website ... Update and considered action.**

It was noted that Allan Drew (outgoing clerk) had volunteered to continue progressing the new website for the village, which was nearing completion. There was discussion on the current advice for parish councils to have stand-alone dot gov websites with dot gov email addresses for councillors. It was noted that, if required, there could be a separate parish council dot gov website at some stage in the future.

## **10. Date of the next scheduled meeting ... Noted as 28<sup>th</sup> October**

## **11. Resolution to exclude the public from the following item.**

It was RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the following confidential employment matter.

**12. Employment of new clerk/RFO (Responsible Financial Officer).**

12.1 Terms of employment and recruitment process ... It was RESOLVED to advertise the position at 7 hours per week. It was further RESOLVED that the Chair and Vice Chair would interview potential candidates.

SIGNED ..... DATE .....

DRAFT