

**Draft Minutes of a scheduled meeting of the parish council held on Tuesday 27 January,
7.30pm in Pencombe and Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

Present

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

In Attendance

Jane Legge – Parish Clerk
Bruce Baker – Ward Councillor
Eight members of the public

- 1. Apologies for absence** – Colin Hadley
- 2. Declaration of interest and written dispensation requests** – none received.
- 3. To consider a resolution to exclude the public** – It was RESOLVED to exclude the public whilst item four was discussed.
- 4. To consider employment of new Parish Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer** – It was RESOLVED to employ Jane Legge.
- 5. Open Session**
 - 5.1. A brief verbal report from Ward Councillor Bruce Baker included:**
 - 5.1.1. The resurfacing of roads is to continue in 2026. Details can be found on Herefordshire Council website.
 - 5.1.2. The Government have withdrawn funding for an eighty place SEND school that was due to be built in the county.
 - 5.1.3. The Herefordshire Council budget meeting is due to be held on 13 February. It is likely there will be a vote in favour of the proposed 4.9% council tax increase for 2026/27.
 - 5.1.4. Applications will be advertised in April for the Lengthsman Scheme, PROW and drainage grants.
 - 5.1.5. Business rates are set to be increased by 76% for the hospitality industry.
 - 5.1.6. The current Public Realm Services contract will end in June and whilst some of the services will go 'in-house' to be run by the council, the new service provider will be M Group Highways.

- 5.1.7. Ofsted have now rated Children Services as 'Good' with the leadership and staff as 'Outstanding'.
- 5.1.8. From April 2026 you will be able to park for 30 minutes for free in all council run car parks in the county.
- 5.1.9. Bruce will investigate why the planned road repairs in Little Cowarne did not take place as planned.
- 5.1.10. Bruce reminded the public to report any road issues directly to Herefordshire Council.

5.2. To receive views of local residents:

- 5.2.1. It was reported that both of the dog waste bins are broken and need replacing. Action: to look at costs to replace the bins and waste bags provided.
- 5.2.2. Concerns were raised about the damage caused by vehicles parking near to the war memorial. Action: to look at options to protect the grass.

6. Minutes of the previous meeting on 25 November - It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes.

7. Finance

- 7.1. The bank balance was noted as £16,821.
- 7.2. Tim Burge presented the budget for 2026/227 and reported that reserves were aimed at £17,350 which includes £5,000 for the parish hall. A 4.55% increase in the precept was proposed. It was RESOLVED to accept the reserves and increase in precept. The Council gave thanks to Tim for his hard work in preparing the financial information. Action: costs for the Tree Warden and a maintenance contract for the Defib machines will be looked into.
- 7.3. To consider outstanding payments – no payments to be considered.

8. Footpaths Officer – the Footpaths Officer will comply a list of work that needs to be covered by the grant application in April.

9. Village Hall Committee update included:

- 9.1. The new hot water boiler was now installed.
- 9.2. The connection for the generator will take place on 02 February.
- 9.3. A green recycling bin is due to be installed at the village hall.
- 9.4. Thanks were given to Tim Mobey for the maintenance work he has carried out.
- 9.5. The Christmas tree lighting and Christmas tree festival went well, and thanks was given to Paul Thomas for the tree and Emily Barrett for the lights.
- 9.6. The LinC lunches in December and January were well attended, as are the pub nights and thanks were given to all those who participate in running them.

9.7. Preparations for the Pencombe Show 2026 (15 August) have started and the next meeting is on 16 February.

10. Parish Matters

10.1 It was RESOLVED that Tony Brazier will take down the flagpole to inspect it and carry out any maintenance required.

10.2 It was RESOLVED that Tony Brazier will install noticeboards in the telephone kiosk.

10.3 It was noted that work to provide better access to the church was complete, however it was RESOLVED that an anti-slip product should be applied to the steps and the handrails needed painting. Action: A quote to be obtained for the relevant products for this work.

10.4 It was RESOLVED that there would be a two-year contract for mowing with a cost per cut of £540 for 2026/27 and £550 for 2027/28. This would include mowing in Little Cowarne.

11. Parish Council Website - Tim Burge reported that development of the new website was progressing well and the functions within the site would be reviewed in February.

12. Date of next scheduled meeting – Tuesday 24 February, 7.30pm

Meeting Closed: 8.39pm

Signed: _____, Chairman

Date: