

PENCOMBE GROUP PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a scheduled meeting of the Parish Council held on
Tuesday 28th October 2025 at 7.30 pm in Pencombe & Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

Present

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

In attendance:

Helen Tinson – HALC – Meeting cover.

Bruce Baker – Ward Councillor.

Seven 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 (Planning 252087) because he had made a comment on Herefordshire Council's website.

3. Consideration of HALC meeting cover @ £275.

It was RESOLVED: to access HALC's meeting cover at a cost of £275 plus VAT.

4. Open Session

4.1 A brief verbal report from Ward Councillor – Bruce Baker, included:

4.1.1 The Public Realm contract is to be awarded next month pending the end of BBLP's term in June 2026.

4.1.2 Paul Walker, Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council, will be retiring in March 2026.

4.1.3 The new garden waste service will be starting in March 2026. Interested residents will need to sign up via the website. Costs will be £60 per year plus £10 one off payment for the bin.

4.1.4 The full council meeting in October determined that Herefordshire should be child friendly. Therefore, all council decisions are required put children at the top of their considerations.

4.1.5 West Mercia Police have confirmed that PCSO's will no longer be working after 8pm in a bid to reduce costs and concentrate resources.

4.1.6 The Parish Summit held on the 7th October was very successful.

- 4.1.7 A pandemic simulation has taken place to predict how councils and government would react to another pandemic (Exercise Pegasus).
- 4.1.8 The investment in Herefordshire roads continues along with footbridge restoration on Herefordshire's Public Rights of Way.
- 4.1.9 Herefordshire Council are once again offering the Local Drainage Fund for 2025/26.
- 4.1.10 The Boundary Commission are currently investigating wards, ward names and the number of members per ward. Herefordshire has 53 wards, all single member, but this could change at the next local elections in 2027.
- 4.1.11 This week has seen Positive Aging Week, an initiative aimed at empowering and supporting aging adults.
- 4.1.12 Parishioners were encouraged to check their digital passwords and ensure they are robust.

The Ward Councillor took questions from Council members and members of the public:

- 4.1.13 Grit bins have been filled but two bins in Little Cowarne have been missed - member advised to contact Locality Steward.
- 4.1.14 The C1117 in Little Cowarne between Pencombe and Ullingswick has been reported for resurfacing multiple times. Cllr Baker undertook an action to follow it up.

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

- 4.2.1 Concerns were raised about hedge cuttings left on the road leading to tyre punctures. It was agreed that this would be included in the forthcoming work with local landowners.

5. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd September.**

It was RESOLVED: to adopt the minutes as a true record. The minutes 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).

Cllr Burge shared a document proposing his submission to the Planning Committee and sought feedback from Council members. Cllr Baker reported that the application will be going to committee on Wednesday 19th November. It was understood that the recommendation of the Planning Officer will be to refuse the application.

It was RESOLVED: to approve the comments proposed for submission at the Planning Committee if required.

7/2025

James Lewis resumed the Chair

Ward Councillor Baker left the meeting (7.55pm)

Cllr Paul Thomas was called away from the meeting on an urgent matter

7. Finance:

- 7.1 The Bank balance was noted as £24,096.85 which includes £1,175.00 held on behalf of the Arkwright Trust. It was reported that the Arkwright Trustees are to set up a new account as soon as possible for these funds to be transferred. Parish Council funds total £22,894.85.

The Finance Working Group have held their first meeting and hope to present a full report to the next meeting. However, it was reported that the application for the Local Drainage Grant has been successful with £22,224.00 awarded from an application totalling £26,278.00. It is hoped that the contractor will start work in January 2026.

- 7.2 Outstanding payments ... It was RESOLVED to pay the following invoices:

7.2.1 PKF Littlejohn, External Audit Fees, £210.00 plus VAT

7.2.2 HALC, Meeting Cover Fees Sept, £275.00 plus VAT

7.2.3 HALC, Meeting Cover Fees Oct, £275.00 plus VAT

7.2.4 Mobes Mows, October cut, £440.00

7.2.5 Mobes Mows, Causeway tidying, £70.00

7.2.6 Sam Walsh, Church Path, £1,570.00 plus VAT

7.2.7 Frank Nicholson, Reimburse expenses for solar lights, £11.05 plus VAT

7.2.8 Members considered the purchase of a poppy wreath noting that a response from the Royal British Legion to an enquiry made is still awaited.

It was RESOLVED: to approve expenditure of up to £50 plus VAT

7.2.9 Members considered a final grass cut for the year.

It was RESOLVED: to agree one further cut for the year.

- 8. Footpaths Officer ...** The Parish Footpaths Officer asked the Parish Council to distribute the document produced by PROW Team for landowners giving advice on their responsibilities for maintaining public rights of way across their land; and to share the Working Document explaining the role and responsibilities of Parish Footpaths Officers with all members. It was noted that the PFO is an appointment made by the Parish Council rather than Herefordshire Council.

Work has been prioritised as follows:

8.1 Gates/Stile work in Little Cowarne

8.2 Stile work in Pencombe

8.3 Vegetation work

It was reported that Hawkhurst bridge has still not been repaired and is unlikely to be and that the PFO's had been working with the ex-clerk at creating circular walks which may be useful for visitors to the various holiday accommodations in the area. It was agreed that the Parish Footpaths Officers would continue to liaise with Cllr James Lewis for the time being.

9. Village Hall Committee ... Members received a report including:

- 9.1 Regular events are frequent and well supported, but there are not many outside bookings.
- 9.2 All policies and procedures have been updated and appreciation for the extensive amount of work involved was acknowledged.
- 9.3 The dripping urinal has yet to be repaired.
- 9.4 Problems with the new boiler are yet to be repaired.
- 9.5 Pub Nights are going well with an average of 20-30 people attending on a Friday evening. Appreciation was acknowledged to all involved with organising the evenings.
- 9.6 Forthcoming events:
 - 9.6.1 14th November Curry Night alongside Pub Night
 - 9.6.2 28th November Christmas Tree Festival
 - 9.6.3 6th December Christmas Lunch
- 9.7 Next meeting Monday 3rd November.

10. Church Path ... Update and considered action.

Members considered a quote for laying the tarmac plus a quote for work in the cemetery. As both jobs are quite small, the contractor expressed a preference to do both together:

Path: £1,500.00 plus VAT

Cemetery: £1,325.00 plus VAT

A verbal quote of £1,500.00 to fill potholes had been received from another contractor.

It was RESOLVED: to accept the quotation from GM Joyce Surfacing Ltd to complete works to both the path and cemetery at a total cost of £2,835.00 plus VAT (Path: £1,500.00 plus VAT, Cemetery: £1,325.00 plus VAT)

11. Telephone Kiosk ... Update and considered action.

It was RESOLVED: that Cllr James Lewis would continue to try and contact BT to reconnect power to the kiosk.

It was further RESOLVED: to seek costings to use the kiosk as an information point and present for consideration at the next meeting.

12. Causeway ... Update and considered action.

It was reported that ditch work is required, and the path needs to be reinstated (kick boards need to be put back, scalplings and stone has washed away).

It was RESOLVED: to arrange a site meeting (Cllrs James Lewis, Tony Brazier, David Legge, Colin Hadley) to review and prepare a plan for consideration.

13. Parish Council website ... Update and considered action.

It was reported that progress on the new site has come to a halt. The developer has reported an increase in cost due to the delay, from £770 plus VAT to £1000 plus VAT. He has suggested moving to a local developer and would charge £250 plus VAT for work carried out to date if the project was reassigned.

It was RESOLVED: to assign Cllr Tim Burge to manage the project in the interim. Cllr Burge will contact the current developer to gain an understanding of the current position and seek quotations from a local developer in Burley Gate.

14. Employment of Parish Clerk ... Update.

It was reported that one application has been received. Interviews will be carried out during November with a view to appointing a new Parish Clerk early in the New Year.

15. Date of the next scheduled meeting ... Noted as Tuesday 25th November 2025, 7.30pm at Pencombe and Little Cowarne Village Hall.

16. Agenda Items for next meeting ...

- 16.1 Lengthsman Agreement ... to ratify amendment and submission
- 16.2 Telephone Kiosk ... to consider costs to use as an Information Point

Meeting closed 8.45pm

SIGNED DATE