

**Approved minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 28 April 2026, 7.30pm,
Pencombe and Little Cowarne Parish Hall**

Present

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

In Attendance

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

- 1. Apologies for absence** – none received.
- 2. Declaration of interest and written dispensation requests** – none received.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 March 2026** - it was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes.
- 4. Open Session**
 - 4.1. To receive an update and consider action from the Chair on current matters**
 - 4.1.1. The replacement defibrillator for Little Cowarne is due to delivered on 29 April.
 - 4.1.2. The Chair has met with contractors to develop quotes for this year's proposed ditching work. The quotes will be sent to Herefordshire Council as part of the drainage grant bid. It has been identified that the work at Wakefield could use a considerable proportion of the budget.
 - 4.1.3. The Chair has been advised that laying stone would be the most effective option to create a parking area on the Pound and has asked for costs to be submitted to him.
 - 4.1.4. Thanks were given to Ritchie Thomas for agreeing to cut back the hedge to widen the road on the Pound.
 - 4.2. A verbal report from Ward Councillor Bruce Baker included:**
 - 4.2.1. A scheme has started to help vulnerable residents with the cost of their utility bills. Bruce encourages those that need help, to contact the Council.

- 4.2.2. Herefordshire Council have received a 'gold award' in recognition for their Defence Employer Scheme which shows their commitment to provide jobs for ex-service personnel.
- 4.2.3. The Council were not successful in winning the 'City of Culture 2027' award, so are now looking to apply for 'Town of Culture 2027' instead.
- 4.2.4. Bruce advised that Gloucestershire do not want to join the proposed 'Three Counties Group' as part of the Strategic Authorities.
- 4.2.5. The Back the Bypass consultation has launched and information is on the Herefordshire Council website.
- 4.2.6. The new garden waste scheme launched on the 01 April. Bruce reminded residents that the scheme costs £60 per year with initial extra £10 for the bin.
- 4.2.7. Bruce reported that each Ward Councillor has been granted £1000 to spend in their parishes. For Bruce that equates to £166 per parish. Bruce asked the Parish Council to submit a request for the donation.
- 4.2.8. The appointment of the new Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council is due to be approved at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council on 01 May.
- 4.2.9. The new 'Pop and Shop' scheme started on the 01 April, so now you can park for 30 minutes for free in any council owned carpark/street parking in the county.
- 4.2.10. The consultation on ward boundaries is now open, and the Clerk will send out the information to the Councillors.
- 4.2.11. Bruce asked if the repairs had been carried out on the Little Cowarne road. He was advised that temporary repairs have taken place but are of inadequate quality. He reminded everyone to continue reporting any defaults.
- 4.2.12. Councillor Hadley complained to Bruce that the grass verges have been cut early at the loss of the wildflowers. Bruce advised reporting any complaints to the relevant department at the Council.

4.3. To receive views of residents

- 4.3.1. PCSO Toby Stephenson from Bromyard Police advised that the anti-social behaviour reported in Pencombe recently had been dealt with and Police visibility would be increased to support this. He confirmed that the recent issues in Bromyard have improved.
- 4.3.2. It was reported that Bromyard Police are taking appropriate action to deal with intruders in empty properties.
- 4.3.3. Toby asked the Parish Council to submit their policing priorities to him.

5. Finance

- 5.1. The bank balance was noted as £26,902.01.
- 5.2. Councillor Tim Burge presented the latest financial report which included the end of year accounts, and it was RESOLVED to approve them.
- 5.3. It was RESOLVED to approve outstanding payments.
- 5.4. It was RESOLVED to appoint HALC as the internal auditor for year ending 31 March 2026.
- 5.5. It was resolved to contribute £5000 towards the cost of the of purchasing solar panels for the Parish Hall with the remaining contributions from the Parish Hall and the Clive Richards Foundation (total cost of £8000).

6. Parish Council Policies

- 6.1. It was RESOLVED to adopt the updated Standing Orders
- 6.2. It was RESOLVED to adopt the updated Financial Regulations
- 6.3. It was RESOLVED to adopt the Reserves Policy
- 6.4. Adoption of the IT Policy will be held over until the next meeting.

7. Lengthsman & PROW

7.1 To receive and an update on Lengthsman & Footpaths Officer activities

- 7.1.1. Extra way markers will be ordered for the Footpath Officer to install.
- 7.1.2. A stile at Durstone needs repairing, so options on how to repair it are being considered.
- 7.1.3. Herefordshire Council have been clearing out gullies and drains around Marsh Court.

7.2 To consider any additional work required

- 7.1.4. To consider options to improve the grip on the churchyard steps
- 7.1.5. To consider using the Lengthsman to help keep the footpaths accessible.

7.3 To consider and approve locations for PROW maps – it was RESOLVED to add a PROW map to the bus stop and kiosk in Pencombe and one for both Pencombe and Little Cowarne in the Parish Hall.

8. Parish Hall update included:

- 8.1.1. Regular bookings are going well.
- 8.1.2. Attendance at the LINC lunches is about 40-50 people attending. The next one is 01 May 2026.
- 8.1.3. The pub nights are still going very well thanks to Frank and the volunteers.
- 8.1.4. Two new undercounter drinks fridges have been installed in the bar and a new tap fitted in the kitchen. One-way film is being sourced to cover the glass door in the bar.

8.1.5. The Committee are looking into purchasing a BBQ for the use of the village hall.

8.1.6. The Parish Hall part of the new website is up and running.

8.1.7. The Parish Hall Committee are seeking a new treasurer to start as soon as possible.

8.1.8. The next Trustees meeting will take place in July 2026.

9. To consider agenda items for the next meeting

9.1. To discuss the use of the of the Herefordshire Council donation.

11. Date of next scheduled meeting – Tuesday 26 May, 7pm, Pencombe and Little Cowarne Parish Hall

Meeting Closed: 21:15