

**Approved minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 26 May
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
Six members of the public

- 1. To elect a Chair of the Parish Council and to receive the Chair's signature on Declaration of Acceptance of Office** – it was RESOLVED that Cllr James Lewis would be Chair for the coming year. He SIGNED the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.
- 2. To elect a Vice Chair of the Parish Council** – it was RESOLVED that Cllr Tim Burge would be Vice-Chair for the coming year.
- 3. Apologies for absence** – none received.
- 4. Declaration of interest and written dispensation requests** – none received.
- 5. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 April 2026** - it was RESOLVED to approve the minutes and duly signed by the Chair.
- 6. Open Session**
 - 6.1. A verbal report from Ward Councillor Bruce Baker included:**
 - 6.1.1. A new waste contract was signed earlier this year which included using electric waste lorries within Hereford City.
 - 6.1.2. Small electrical items can now be collected from your home. They need to be put in a separate bag and put on top of the wheelie bin due to be emptied. Also, foil and other items can now be included in home recycling. See Herefordshire Council website for more details (rubbish and recycling collections section). It was suggested to Bruce that stickers should be put on home recycling bins to show what can now be included. Bruce confirmed that he would report that back.

- 6.1.3. Bruce reported that in Herefordshire, only one percent of waste goes to landfill.
- 6.1.4. Following the Boundary Commission review, it was confirmed that the boundary for Hampton Ward (of which Pencombe and Little Cowarne are part of) will not be changed.
- 6.1.5. Paul Satoor was appointed as the new Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council on the 01 May 2026.
- 6.1.6. Bruce reminded the Parish Council there is an empty property grant scheme available to renovate empty properties to reoccupy them.
- 6.1.7. Tamsin Clive has been appointed as the new High Sheriff of Herefordshire.
- 6.1.8. The food waste scheme that was due to start earlier this year is still delayed due to funding.
- 6.1.9. It was reported that former Herefordshire Council Leader Tony Johnson had sadly passed away.
- 6.1.10. Elected County Councillors were previously part of the Local Government Pension Scheme until it was cancelled, but this has now been reintroduced.
- 6.1.11. There are consultations for a Parking Strategy and a Town Centre School Safety Strategy available on the Herefordshire Council website if anyone wishes to take part them.
- 6.1.12. Bruce reminded the Parish Council 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.
- 6.1.13. The Balfour Beatty contract ends at midnight on 31 May, and M Group Highways start as the new Public Realm contractors on the 01 June 2026. As part of the new contract, Herefordshire Council will take back managerial control.

6.2. A verbal report from the Arkwright Trust included:

- 6.2.1. Report from the Arkwright Trust was read out by the Clerk on their behalf – annex two.
- 6.2.2. Following the report, it was discussed how to repurpose the toys (bought by the Arkwright Trust), that are currently stored at the parish hall. It was noted that the toys must either stay in the village or sold with any money raised returning to the Trust. It was suggested that the toys could be put out for children to use at Pencombe Show and offer them for sale as well. Cllr Tony Brazier will take the suggestion back to the other trustees for consideration.

6.3. To receive views of residents on Parish matters – none received

7. Council Updates

7.1. To receive updates from Councillors on current matters

- 7.1.1. Cllr James Lewis reported that the new defib machine has been installed and is now working at the Three Horseshoes, Little Cowarne. The others have been checked and are operational.
- 7.1.2. Cllr James Lewis has applied for the 2026/27 drainage grant from Herefordshire Council. The areas of work include Little Cowarne and Wakefield, Pencombe.
- 7.1.3. The Lengthsman contract has been signed and returned to Herefordshire Council.
- 7.1.4. Cllr James Lewis asked for agreement on what the £166 could be used for. Suggestions are planters to on the Church steps to stop people using them and refurbishing the Little Cowarne notice board. It was RESOLVED to contact Pencombe Church to propose blocking access to the steps with planters.
- 7.1.5. The Clerk requested the Parish Council consider an option to build a newsletter facility on the website. Nextnorth (website providers) had quoted approximately £60.00 extra a year for the facility. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk could take this forward. Will be added to agenda in July to approve exact costs.
- 7.1.6. Cllr Tim Burge reported that he has received requests from various groups who advertise on the website to include more information. He is concerned this could lead to increased expenditure and proposed that any requests are managed and approved by the Parish Council.

8. To approve dates of Ordinary Parish Council meetings for 2026/27 – it was RESOLVED to approve the dates below:

23 June 2026	24 November 2026
28 July 2026	26 January 2027
22 September 2026	23 February 2027
27 October 2026	23 March 2027

9. Parish Council Policies – it was RESOLVED to adopt the IT Policy.

10. Finance

- 10.1.** The bank balance was noted as £25,477.67. It was RESOLVED to approve the monthly financial report - annex two.
- 10.2.** To consider and approve quote for hard standing on the Pound, Pencombe – Cllr James Lewis provided a quote of £1661 + VAT. It was RESOLVED to agree the quote but check on permissions with Herefordshire Council first.

10.3. Covered in point 7.1.4.

10.4. To consider options and approve renewal of Local Council Insurance policy – The Clerk advised that the cost to renew the Employers Liability and Public Liability insurance for 2026/27 was £453.93. The Clerk had not been able to get any quotes from other insurers. It was discussed that there might be duplications with the Parish Hall insurance. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would continue to try and obtain alternative quotes and check with the Parish Hall insurance about duplications.

11. Lengthsman & PROW

11.1 To consider and approve verge cutting options – Cllr James Lewis advised that the Parish Council has the option to opt out of the first verge cut of the year (apart from areas that need cutting back for safety). The decision does not have to be finalised with Herefordshire Council until February 2027. It was RESOLVED to review early 2027.

11.2 To consider any additional works required in the Parish:

11.2.1 Cllr James Lewis advised that he is going to put an application together to make improvements to the footpath in the Cossie under the PROW grant.

11.2.2 Cllr David Legge reminded the Parish Council had previously agreed to pay towards the cost of mowing Little Cowarne churchyard as not currently covered by the Lengthsman. It was advised that the cost would be the equivalent of 2hrs of the Lengthsman's hourly rate. The Clerk advised that an invoice would need to be sent to the Parish Council before a payment could be made.

11.2.3 Cllr Tony Brazier asked about the possibility of paying for a brown waste bin in the cemetery. The Clerk will approach Herefordshire Council to see if it possible.

12. To consider agenda items for the next meeting

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

13. Date of next scheduled meeting – Tuesday 23 June 2026, 7.30pm, Pencombe and Little Cowarne Parish Hall

Meeting Closed: 21:15

Signed:

Date:

James Lewis – Chairman