

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held in Old Chapel, Menith Wood at 7.00pm on Monday 16th March 2020

Present: Cllr Alistair Keron (Chairman), Cllr Weston,
Cllr Sanders, Cllr Abraham, Cllr Wood, Cllr Meese

In Attendance: Clerk, one Member of the Public, Dist Cllr Paul Cummings

1. **Apologies:** Noted from Cllr Rudd.
2. **Co-option of a Cllr** – One application had been received and circulated. It was agreed by all to co-opt Mr Stuart Meese onto the PC. Cllr Meese signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.
3. **Declaration of Interest:**
 - a. **Register of Interests** – Cllrs reminded to keep their registers updated. Cllr Meese completed his form.
 - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – All Cllrs Item 13 – Pensax Village Hall agenda items.
Chairman Item 11c Planning (20/00318/HP) due to living near the property.
 - c. **Other Disclosable Interests** – as above.
4. **Dispensations** –
 - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) –
Dispensations requested – Cllr Meese requested a Dispensation to speak and vote on item 13 – Pensax Village Hall agenda item. It was agreed by all to grant the Dispensation as requested until May 2023. All other Cllrs had been granted a Dispensation until May 2023 at the January 2020 meeting.
5. **Public Question Time** – See notes at end of minutes.
6. **County Cllr Report** – Apologies received, report at end of minutes.
District Cllr Report – See notes at end of minutes.
7. **Minutes** of Parish Council Meeting held on 20th January 2020 and Extraordinary Parish Council Meeting held on 26th February 2020 were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
8. **Progress reports for information:**
 - a. **BT Box** – Work ongoing.
 - b. **Broadband Fibre To The Property in Menith Wood** – Cllr continuing to work on this to obtain improved coverage by BT.
 - c. **Broadband Fibre To The Property in Worles Common** – Chairman to ask residents about forming Community Scheme for this area following email from WCC suggesting improvements may be available.
 - d. **Defibrillator** – It was agreed by all to agree the quote of £60.00 to move the Defib to BT Box Menith Wood.
 - e. **Speeding Menith Wood** – Lindridge PC had forwarded information on speed monitoring recently undertaken in village, speeds not high enough to enable further action to be taken.
9. **Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors:**

Clerk had been to a CALC meeting on computer programmes, too expensive for small PCs. Lengthsman Scheme was on agenda but WCC gave late apologies due to flooding issues.
10. **Finances** –
 - a. **Payments made** – Mr R Whiteman (Lengthsman February 2020) = £322.00, Menith Wood Community Association (rent 16/03/2020) = £16.00.
 - b. **Payments received** – Donation from Thrift Shop (cheque) = £1000.00 (to be held for Pensax Hall expenses).
 - c. **Bank Reconciliations** (circulated) - Signed for January/February 2020, balance agreed as £13020.96.
 - d. **Internal Audit Review** – It was agreed all matters covered.
11. **Planning:**
 - a. Plans circulated since last meeting – **None.**
 - b. Decisions received since last meeting –
19/01783/HP - Field House, Worles Common, Stockton, Worcester, WR6 6XQ - Erection of single storey double garage
 - c. Plans for comment on tonight –
Chairman declared an interest and left the meeting. Cllr Sanders took the Chair.

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20/00318/HP - Field House, Worles Common, Stockton, WR6 6XQ - Erection of single storey double garage. It was agreed to support this application.

Chairman returned to the meeting.

- d. **Outstanding Planning issues –**
 - 18/00244/FUL – Fartown, Pensax, Abberley, Worcester WR6 6AE –** Dist Cllr still awaiting further update from MHDC. Concerns were raised by Cllr regarding the use of the building for non-agricultural purposes, details to be sent to Clerk so Enforcement can be alerted.
- e. **ENF/19/0333 Stockton Road Caravan in field –** Caravan is being used for agricultural purposes. If it appears use of the caravan changes MHDC will be informed.
- f. **ENF/20/0027 - Heather View, Pensax Common –** Enforcement are looking into this matter.
- g. **15/01017/FUL - Land off Stockton Road, Stockton-on-Teme, Worcestershire, WR6 6UT Photo Voltaic solar Energy Farm (5MW) and ancillary equipment –** Approval conditions have been published on MHDC website. Concerns regarding change of access to the site, report to County Cllr.

12. Road report

- a. **Lengthsman –** Work ongoing.
- b. **Any problems to report –** All drains have been reported to WCC for clearing.
- c. **Dangerous trees Pensax Common –** Unknown Landowner, Clerk will report to WCC.
- d. **Penn Hall Lane –** water running onto road, Clerk to contact landowners in the area to discuss.
- e. **Grit bins –** WCC have been asked twice why the yellow bins have not been sited, no reply yet received.

13. Pensax Village Hall -

No urgent matters to be discussed. It was confirmed the insurance for the building to be £50,000.00 as agreed by email and discussed at February 2020 meeting.

14. Code of Conduct (circulated) –

It was agreed by all to adopt the Code as advised by MHDC.

15. Correspondence for information –

CALC Updates/Training dates, Community First information.

WCC Spring Conference – 18th March – Market Place 5.30pm, Conference 6.30pm

MHDC Partner Workshop in March – Planning for the Future, a Carbon Neutral Malvern Hills District

MHDC Community Business Bright Ideas Webinar 3rd March

South Worcestershire Development Plan – Briefing for Town/Parish Councils - 31st March – 3.15- 6.15pm

South Worcestershire Development Plan – Renewable/Low Carbon Energy Call for Sites – comments 27th March

Worcestershire Pollinator Strategy Consultation – comments by 31st March

#MORSE – new project from WCC

Worcestershire Dementia Meeting Centres Information Meeting 10 February 2020 – 10.30am

16. Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting –

6th February 2020 - Complaint regarding hedge Menith Wood – landowner very willing to help resolve concerns about road safety.

17. Councillors' reports and items for the next agenda.

Agenda items - Pensax Village Hall

18. Date of next meeting: **All meetings cancelled for the foreseeable future due to corona virus**

19. Cllrs agreed to close meeting to the Public due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

20. Lengthsman –

It was agreed by all to renew contract with present Lengthsman Mr R Whiteman, he has confirmed he would be willing to renew the contract at hourly rate of £14.00 as last year.

21. Mowing of War Memorial –

It was agreed to renew contract with present contractor Mr D Nunn at cost of £15.00 per cut, maximum of 12 cuts per year to be written into contract. Contract to be signed when insurance details are produced by contractor.

22. Meeting Closed 8.47pm

Signed-----

Date

2020

Chairman

Public Question Time – Penn Hall Lane marked for extensive repairs. Drains need cleaning out all areas

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District Councillors Report

Heritage Assets – MHDC forming register, PCs will be consulted. New CEO appointed this week, takes up post in summer. Enforcement Team to provide updates on reported cases more regularly.

County Councillors Report

Flooding - Over the last month, Tenbury has been at the centre of a lot of national news coverage of the flooding. Tenbury suffered worse flooding than in 2007 and a number of the flood defenders supplied by MHDC after that event proved ineffective. This seems to have been because the rubber or plastic seals have deteriorated over time or that the water overflowed the barriers. During a number of visits to Tenbury, I have been impressed by the fortitude and resilience shown by residents and retailers alike. There has been an admirable community spirit among the townspeople, despite high financial losses and huge inconvenience. Tenbury Town Council itself has experienced flooding of the Pump Rooms and needed to meet in the High School last week. The High School should be praised for running an evacuation centre at the height of the flooding, with generous support from Tesco's and the Coop that I know of. That is not, I am sure, an exhaustive list. WCC set up a flooding hub in Tenbury library for residents and businesses to register, in order to receive money from central government, the District Council and the County Council. At County, we have allocated £250,000 for flood alleviation, to be directed at those who have suffered loss. In addition, the Rev Sian Harris of St Michael's Church, Tenbury, set up the Tenbury Church Out Reach Fund for people to make donations to assist in the flood relief. It has so far accumulated some £12,000 and is still open to receive funds from those who might wish to help. You may recall that the Environment Agency plan to protect Tenbury town would then have cost about £5 million and was judged not to be cost effective. It may be that new calculations in the light of the recent events will see that decision revised. Your local MP, Harriett Baldwin, has been very vocal on the matter. Since 2007, around six different schemes for flood protection have been implemented with her active support. Only Severn Stoke and Tenbury remain untouched. In the former case there are local problems, but for Tenbury, the difficulty is devising an effective scheme at a sensible cost. I would be pleased to hear of any local experiences that may help us avoid further problems in the future.

Local Matters - A number of people have contacted me with regard to broadband coverage in Menith Wood. This has been regarded as unsatisfactory and unfair, inasmuch as half the village has been connected to fibre to the premises, while the other half struggles on with speeds well below "Superfast". As with all such infrastructure matters, there will be boundaries on maps that may seem to have no justification. BT Openreach have a huge job on to complete "Ultrafast" connections by the deadline of 2025, brought forward from 2033, and some will obviously be helped before others. Our officers are working hard to achieve a fair result and I am confident these problems will be overcome soon. In the meantime, I hope a degree of patience and understanding can be exhibited by all those who are not getting the service they expected.

County Matters - You will all have heard that the new Worcestershire Parkway station was opened on Sunday, the 23rd of February. This is the first such station to open in the county for 100 years and has been generally welcomed. There are 500 car parking spaces, and there already seemed to be about 250 cars there when I visited just after it opened. Note there are also secure cycle racks, spaces for EVs to charge and plenty of disabled spaces. The infrequent X50 bus service calls at the station, and we are negotiating for more bus services as well. Note you can now catch trains running between Nottingham and Cardiff, as well as the London services. We are working hard to improve the speed and frequency of the London service, which will require further dualling of the line, in particular between Pershore and Evesham. You may expect that there will be continued congestion along the Southern Link Road, leading to Carrington Bridge. In case you have heard to the contrary, the work on dualling that section between the Ketch and Powick roundabouts has not exacerbated the flooding that always occurs in that area where the Teme meets the Severn. Just over two weeks ago, we welcomed Matt Warman, MP, Minister of State in DCMS, to Worcester for him to confirm the allocation of £3.3 million to Worcestershire to run a two year experiment with Shropshire on the efficacy of 5G to improve connectivity in rural areas. This will be based in Tenbury, given its rural nature and the topographical features in the area.

The intention is to see how much mobile coverage can be improved and also remote monitoring of those in need of care from social services. The idea of assistive technology is that the social workers can monitor activity remotely, without the use of cameras, to check that those in need of assistance are behaving normally. This may mean that routine visits can be scheduled more efficiently, prioritising those most obviously in need of help, rather than completing a round of visits where many may prove unnecessary.

Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 2BZ