

# PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Council VIDEO Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held at 7.00pm on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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

**In Attendance:** Clerk, One Member of the Public, County Cllr Ken Pollock, Dist Cllr Paul Cummings

1. **Apologies:** None – For technical reasons the Vice Chairman chaired the meeting.
  2. **Declaration of Interest:**
    - a. **Register of Interests** – Cllrs reminded to keep their registers updated.
    - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – All Cllrs agenda item 12 – Pensax Village Hall, Cllr Sanders agenda item 14.
    - c. **Other Disclosable Interests** – as above.
  3. **Dispensations –**
    - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) –  
**Dispensations requested** – Pensax Village Hall agenda item 12 all Cllrs have been granted a Dispensation until May 2023 at the January 2020 meeting. Menith Wood Community Association agenda item 14 Cllr Sanders was granted a Dispensation until May 2023 at the November 2020 meeting.
  4. **Public Question Time** – See notes at end of minutes.
  5. **County Cllr Report** – Report at end of minutes.  
**District Cllr Report** – See notes at end of minutes.
  6. **Minutes of Parish Council Video Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020** were agreed by all and will be signed by Chairman.
  7. **Progress reports for information:**
    - a. **Broadband Fibre To The Property in Menith Wood** – Now in delivery mode and waiting for work to start.
    - b. **Broadband Fibre To The Property in Worles Common** – The scheme is making good progress; vouchers have been validated and confirmed for 24 premises. Residents looking into schemes for Pensax/Pensax Common and Snead Common area have good support and are optimistic the scheme will be supported.
    - c. **Fitness Walks** – No update from MHDC, to remove from agenda until Covid restrictions lifted.
    - d. **Stockton Road speeding** – WCC not responded to Clerks email regarding speed monitoring.
  8. **Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors:**  
**MHDC Video Planning Training** – Cllr attended – 11<sup>th</sup> January – slides shared with PC
  9. **Finances –**
    - a. **Payments made** – Mrs S Burrows (See item 12) = £256.00.
    - b. **Payments received** – Member of Public £25.00 Donation for War Memorial.
    - c. **Bank Reconciliations** (circulated) – Agreed to be signed for November/December balance agreed as £14256.22.
    - d. **Internal Auditor** – It was agreed by all to appoint DM Payroll Services at a cost of £75.00
    - e. **Information Commissioners Fee** – £35.00 to be paid by DD on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.
    - f. **Precept 2021-2022** (circulated) – The Clerk had drafted a budget showing an increase of £100.00. After much discussion it was agreed by the majority to make no increase in precept. The will precept will remain as £5050.00 for 2021-2022.
- At 7.35pm the meeting closed for five minutes due to technical issues. The meeting resumed at 7.40pm, the Chairman was able to Chair the meeting.**
10. **Planning:**
    - a. Plans circulated since last meeting – **None.**
    - b. Decisions received since last meeting – **None.**
    - c. Plans for comment on tonight – **None.**

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## 11. Road report

- a. **Lengthsman** – For personal reasons, the LM has not been able to commit to the LM work over the last few months, an outstanding timesheet will be submitted this week. It was agreed to offer him the contract for 2021-2022, Cllrs have found no issues with his work in previous years.
- b. **Any problems to report** –B4202 - Lack of grit on icy road, Cllr to give Clerk details to report to WCC. Frozen water forms ice on Worles Common junction, possibly blocked drain, Clerk to report.
- c. **Stockton Road drainage issues** – WCC to update Clerk .
- d. **Worles Common** – Repairs to road undertaken in December, WCC not yet responded to speed monitoring request.
- e. **B4202 Speed issues** – Clerk reported to WCC asking for signs and speed monitoring.

## 12. Pensax Village Hall (circulated) –

- a. **Planning application fee** (circulated) – It was agreed by all to repay Clerk Planning Fee of £256.00.
- b. **Planning Application** (circulated) - Plans submitted to WFDC on 24<sup>th</sup> December, circulated on village email and on PC Facebook Page. Decision to be made by WFDC in February 2021.

## 13. Risk Assessment (circulated) – It was agreed for Chairman to sign, all risks covered.

## 14. Menith Wood Community Association (circulated) – Cllr updated PC on possible Covid grants Old Chapel may be able to access from MHDC. It was agreed to discuss at next meeting if no other grants received.

## 15. Tenbury Community Bus – It was agreed to discuss at next meeting.

## 16. Facebook Page – Clerk is posting items on and it is being viewed.

## 17. Correspondence for information –

COVID 19 updates from CALC, NALC, WCC, MHDC, Police  
South Worcestershire Development Plan information

## 18. Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting – None.

## 19. Councillors' reports and items for the next agenda.

**Agenda items** - Pensax Village Hall, Precept 2021-2022, Tenbury Transport Trust, Old Chapel Menith Wood.  
**Cllrs thanked the residents who did a litter pick in the Parish on News Years Day.**

## 18. Date of next VIDEO meeting: 15<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021 at 7pm.

## 19. Meeting Closed 8.05pm

Signed----- Date 15th March 2021

Chairman

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## Public Question Time –

**Solar Farm, Stockton** – Chairman stated the application has been approved by MHDC subject to Planning Conditions being met by 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 (time extended due to Covid). Access needs to be in place from main road.

**County Cllr** confirmed there will be no access off Stockton Road for construction traffic.

**Dist Cllr** stated if construction traffic uses the Stockton Road evidence will be needed of this happening so residents are asked to take photos with dates/times. Vehicles using the Stockton Road access now are carrying out investigation work to comply with conditions, this is permitted.

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## District Councillors Report

**Laptops** - Chantry School are loaning laptops out to households if required.

**Business assistance grants** – latest grants will be processed in due course.

**Census 2021 - 26<sup>th</sup> March** – Most will be completed online but can be done on paper if preferred.

**Enforcement** – Concerns regarding lack of action.

Dist Cllr was thanked for his grant towards cost of Defibrillator signs.

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## Cllrs queries for County Cllr -

**Q - Covid help for home schooling** – are children being provided with computers if needed.

**A** - Households are being loaned one laptop if required, unwanted laptops can be handed in to schools and they will be cleaned and loaned out.

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## County Councillors Report

**Corona Virus effects** - No doubt like everyone else, you are seeking to adjust to the third lockdown. The new variant of the coronavirus has clearly caused revision of most of the plans across the country as to how to react to the infection, and this latest lockdown needs to be taken very seriously. The watchword is to stay at home, if at all possible. Some people will need to work away from home, and we are grateful for all their efforts to bring us services, food, newspapers and all sorts of deliveries for goods bought online. You will all realise that for every one person you see in those contexts there are as many as 20 to 100 others working behind the scenes, seeking to keep our lives as stable as possible. We are aware that the distribution of vaccines and these will go to the most vulnerable first. While this is being organised by the NHS and not local councils, we recognise that there are anomalies in the ordering of vulnerable people. It would appear that the local surgeries will be administering the vaccines and in consequence some will seem to be doing better than their neighbours. In all these considerations, it is crucial to follow the national guidance and recognise the rapidly changing situation, which means that government advice and orders appear to change without reason or much notice. It would be foolish to imagine this is happening through incompetence or carelessness.

**County matters** - At last month's Cabinet meeting, Marcus Hart presented the details of the schools funding settlement. It is important to note that he refuted the requests by three members of the public who asked that the County should ensure there was teaching about climate change in the county's schools. We only pass on the Dedicated Schools Gants, the DSG, and do not intervene in deciding how schools should spend their allocation. It would be inappropriate for the county to seek to dictate to schools on matters of curriculum of this nature. Naturally this applies as much to the current situation with all schools closed as it does in normal times. You may have seen the comments from Cllr Peter McDonald, claiming that more laptops should be made available to disadvantaged children. My colleague, Cllr Marcus Hart, has challenged this strongly, giving details of the variety of provision for such children to assist in home schooling.

The recently published results of the viewpoint survey show that traffic congestion is still one of the most important problems for residents and we need to re-emphasise that we are spending a lot of capital sums in seeking to improve our road system. You will not need reminding that the coronavirus situation has played havoc with the state's finances, nationally and locally. We will aim to keep our council tax as low as possible but recognise the need to respond to the changed needs and priorities at this difficult time.

The budget for 2021/22 was discussed at the Cabinet meeting 10 days ago. The 56 pages of the agenda can be read on-line and you can listen to the webcast. We hope to be able to balance the budget, despite the difficult financial situation we are in, bearing in mind some £9.5 million being made available in special one-off grants from the government. The Cabinet are proposing a 1.5% increase in basic Council Tax, plus a 1% surcharge for Adult Social Services. This is below the maximum we are permitted to raise but is in anticipation of continuing financial constraints in the coming years. There was a full council meeting last Thursday, where there was a full discussion of the performance of the Council in annual reports from the Leader, Simon Geraghty, and the Chief executive, Paul Robinson. This included reference to the budgetary situation as well as all the activities of the council over the last year. It did not include as much attention to the current concern about the climate, as desired by the nine public participants at the meeting, who all felt that more should be said about the climate change situation and its implications. None acknowledged all the work being done by the Council in this area. We are grateful for the Chancellor's help in getting money to our business community, in order to keep these businesses afloat during this difficult period and also to help those who may want to start or expand their enterprises. The County's Here2Help Business programme is the channel for some of this assistance, with the help of the district councils as well.

**Local Matters** - There is natural concern about the revision of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) as under consideration at present. I represent the County Council on the Joint Advisory Panel, which is chaired by my colleague Lucy Hodgson, in her role as a Worcester City councillor. This may affect other villages near Pensax and it is worth looking at the MHDC website to see what is being suggested. There are major plans for new settlements, the most prominent being around the new Worcestershire Parkway rail station, but it is important to recognise that the time scale of this revised plan takes us to 2041. Please take the chance to look at the Environment Agency website, to see what is planned to protect Tenbury from flooding. You may take part in the consultation this month, to seek to ensure the best possible solutions are found to the problems the town faces. If you have any local concerns, please let Hannah Davies know in the first instance, but let me know if the response seems inadequate. Apart from all of the above, much of which is rather negative, I would like to wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. Better times lie ahead. **County Cllr Ken Pollock**