

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held in Old Chapel, Menith Wood at 7.00pm on Monday 20th January 2020

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

In Attendance: Clerk, one Member of the Public, Dist Cllr Paul Cummings, Solicitor Douglas Godwin.

1. **Apologies:** None
2. **Co-option of a Cllr** – No applications received.
3. **Declaration of Interest:**
 - a. **Register of Interests** – Cllrs reminded to keep their registers updated. Cllr Sanders to update her register.
 - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – All Cllrs Item 14 – Pensax Village Hall agenda items.
 - 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 - All Cllrs requested a Dispensation to speak and vote on item 14 – Pensax Village Hall agenda items. It was agreed by all to grant the Dispensation as requested until May 2023.
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 18th November 2019 were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
8. **Progress reports for information:**
 - a. **BT Box** – Work ongoing, it was suggested the Defibrillator be relocated here due to closure of Pensax Hall. Clerk to pass details to Cllr Abraham regarding fitting.
9. **Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors:**

Chairman visited the EnviroSort site where all recycling is processed, slides have been sent to Clerk, to be circulated to residents.
10. **Finances** –
 - a. **Payments made** – TVN PCC St James the Great Pensax (see item 13) = £50.00.
 - b. **Payments received** – WCC (LM August 2019) = £56.00, Donation to War Memorial (cheque) = £30.00.
 - c. **Bank Reconciliations** (circulated) - Signed for November/December 2019, balance agreed as £12793.08.
 - d. **Precept 2020-2021 (circulated)** – Budget was not agreed as drafted. After much discussion the majority agreed to set a precept figure of £5050.00. Cllr Rudd wished it to be noted he did not agree to any increase in precept. Clerk will revise budget for March meeting. (The Clerk would like it noted in minutes that she had advised Cllrs to increase precept by £1000.00 due to costs of closing Pensax Village Hall but it was agreed by all not to agree to Clerks recommendation).
11. **Planning:**
 - a. Plans circulated since last meeting – **See item 18.**
 - b. Decisions received since last meeting –
14/01586/FUL – ENF/18/0005 – Enforcement Notice Appeal - APP/J1860/C/18/320974 – Ridding Coppice, Worles Common, Stockton. The Appeal was allowed for a trial period of three years (expiring on 11/12/2022) with several conditions applied that will need to be adhered to.
 - c. Plans for comment on tonight – **None.**
 - d. **Outstanding Planning issues -**
16/00455/HOU - New House Farm, Stockton – WCC have sent the following to MHDC Enforcement Officer- *‘WCC asked the Road Safety Engineer to visit and see if there were any concerns from a road safety point of view and he reported back that there wasn’t. As the encroachment is so small the team have decided to leave it as it is. The owners have been told where the highways limits are and they have assured us that they have no intention of building up to or beyond it’.* No further action to be taken.

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18/00244/FUL – Fartown, Pensax, Abberley, Worcester WR6 6AE – Dist Cllr reported MHDC have received some information from the applicant and are awaiting the correct forms so the conditions can be formally discharged by MHDC. Dist Cllr to be updated by MHDC. It was reported the building is being used for a lorry repair business. Clerk to report to MHDC for investigation.

12. Road report

- a. **Lengthsman** – Work ongoing.
- b. **Any problems to report** –
Stockton Road – drain by turning to Worles Common blocked, Clerk reported last year.
WCC Grit bins for Worles Common – WCC had agreed to place two bins along the lane for winter 2019-2020 Clerk has asked WCC why they have not yet been delivered.
- c. **Menith Wood** – blocked drains – Jetter had been seen in area, not sure what drains have been attended to.
- d. **Menith Wood** – speeding issues – No further correspondence received. Clerk to contact Lindridge PC.

13. Pensax Church Donation to Christmas Celebrations – to consider donating money to the community event held in December 2019. After much discussion it was proposed and agreed by the majority to donate £150.00 to this event. Cllr Sanders and Cllr Wood wished it to be noted they objected to the PC supporting this event on an annual basis. Clerk advised the donation is for 2019 only and that is what has just been agreed. If this matter is on agenda for 2020 Celebrations it will be up to Cllrs to make a decision at that meeting.

14. Pensax Village Hall -

- a. **To report on Public Meeting held by Hall Trustees on 16th January 2020 (circulated)** –
It was agreed the minutes circulated should be published when Trustees have agreed them. The vote to close Pensax Village Hall was agreed by all present at the Public Meeting.
- b. **To agree to fund Pensax Village Hall into the future if new Trustees and a Committee are formed.**
No residents offered to become Trustees so this item was not discussed.
- c. **To agree to the PC becoming Sole Trustees of Pensax Village Hall** –
Present Hall Trustees will be resigning so all agreed for the PC to become Sole Trustees.
- d. **To agree the future of Pensax Village Hall**
It was agreed water supply should be disconnected.
It was agreed electric supply to remain until defib can be removed.
It was agreed Trustee Bank Account be closed, small balance to be transferred to PC Bank Account, to be held as Hall Funds.
It was agreed future of land and building to be discussed at a future date when legal matters are resolved. Ideas discussed in Public Question Time can be looked into and information obtained for the future.
It was agreed Chairman and Cllr Sanders met with Thrift Shop representative to discuss funds held by them.
- e. **To discuss future insurance of Pensax Village Hall**
Clerk has spoken to PC insurers. They will insure hall for PC to hold PC meetings but it cannot be hired out to other users. It was agreed to insure Hall as an 'unoccupied building', this will mean no meetings can be held in Hall. Future PC meetings to be held at Old Chapel Menith Wood.
- f. **To agree to consider engaging a Solicitor to action future legal matters regarding Pensax Village Hall**
It was agreed by all to suspend Standing Order 18 regarding Procurement.
Douglas Godwin (Parkinson Wright Solicitors) has been giving free legal advice to PC and Trustees, he lives locally and has been aware of the Hall issues over a long period of time.
It was agreed by all to engage Douglas Godwin, (Parkinson Wright Solicitors) subject to terms of engagement as discussed being confirmed in writing. The Chairman agreed for Solicitor to speak at this point in the meeting, his advice as follows –
Trustees will need legal advice regarding their resignation and surrender of Lease, indemnity, transfer of money etc. PC will have to pay legal costs. Charity Commission to be informed, they may advise PC on what money from sale of land/building can be used for.

15. Dog fouling in Parish – Chairman had a bridleway crossing his land, dog fouling has occurred regularly over the last few months. MHDC have been out and put up signs and the situation is improving. It was reported dog fouling on Millennium Green Menith Wood, signs are up. Bins were discussed but no solution agreed.

16. Broadband Fibre To The Property (FTTP) in Menith Wood – Cllr reported some properties could now get FTTP but others could not. Menith Wood Community Association are leading a group to meet a representative from the WCC Broadband Team to discuss how to increase cover.

17. Correspondence for information –CALC Updates/Training dates, Community First information.

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust – Natural Networks Workshop – 10th December 2019

Envirosort Recycling visit – dates circulated

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Community First AGM/What does a Healthy Rural Community Look Like – 30th January 2020 – 10.15am – Bishops Frome

WCC Budget Meeting – 29th January – 6.30pm County Hall

Police and Crime Commissioner – Budget Livestreaming on Facebook - 20th January at 7pm

18. Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting –

Plans circulated by email on 7th December 2019 –

19/01786/CU - Land At (Os 7279 6860), Worles Common, Stockton - Change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian use and erection of stable block. It was agreed to support the application with a note regarding the Bridleway which runs along the side of the field not being marked on map.

19/01783/HP - Field House, Worles Common, Stockton, Worcester, WR6 6XQ - Erection of single storey double garage. It was agreed to support the application with comments about no Bridleway being marked on the map.

Chairman declared an interest in both applications due to living close to the properties, he did not make any comments on the applications.

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

Agenda items - Pensax Village Hall, Precept

Heather View – Chairman reported the retaining wall appears to be built larger than the approved plans. Dist Cllr advised Clerk to report to Enforcement for investigation.

Caravan on Stockton Road – This matter is with the MHDC Enforcement Officer.

19. Date of next meeting: 16th MARCH 2020 at OLD CHAPEL MENITH WOOD

20. Meeting Closed 8.55pm

Signed----- Date 16th March 2020

Chairman

Public Question Time –

Planning application at Worles Common – A Bridleway is on the field in question. The PC comments did refer to the Bridleway and asked the Planning Officer to address this issue.

Pensax Village Hall – Resident had attended the Trustees Public Meeting held on 16th January 2020.

Building - Acton Scott/Avoncroft, may relocate building, better than demolishing.

Future use of Land – PC submit Planning application then land sold to obtain best price.

Affordable housing to be built if support from Housing Association (HA) can be obtained, South Shropshire HA was suggested. Land could be sold to HA.

Commercial use for land such as industrial units.

Land is in WFDC area, could explore planning possibilities with them.

The legal details on closure of Hall to be finalised before discussion on future of building and land can be agreed.

Some investigations on the above ideas will be made.

Money from sale of land – It was suggested funding for Youth Club. The money may only be used for capital projects from advise obtained by Clerk.

Photographs – Chairman of PC has old pictures from Hall; it was suggested they are copied and originals given to Records Office at Worcester. Bell Pub and Old Chapel, Menith Wood may be interested in copies.

District Councillors Report

A report was given regarding planning issues as noted in minutes. No further matters to report.

County Councillors Report

The New Year - A lot has happened since I last reported to your Parish Council back in November. The General election result should mean a stable government for around five years, during which time we will leave the European Union, and institute a new relationship with them, covering a variety of matters that affect us all.

We are expecting a new Budget from the Chancellor, Sajid Javid, the MP for Bromsgrove, in March and the signs are that there will be more money for a variety of causes. We hope to see Adult Social Care properly financed, rather than on an *ad hoc* basis year by year. We would like to think rural authorities would receive a better settlement, relative to our urban/metropolitan cousins, to ease funding pressures for County Councils that are reflected in council tax settlements.

Agriculture will be watching closely to see how it might be supported when the CAP is no longer relevant. I hope the farmers' representatives will do a good job in ensuring the sort of support that has effectively funded our

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cheap food policy since WWII. While this may move to an environmentally beneficial system, it will need to be feasible, capable of repetition year on year, and to command general support.

We know that the government has pledged to bring forward ultrafast broadband coverage, especially in rural areas, with a view to helping social workers monitor their charges remotely, as well as helping farmers and school children use the internet for their needs.

Needless to say, we will be monitoring these matters closely at County Hall, and we are very keen to hear of any concerns by other councils that might reflect problems that are being overlooked or ignored.

So with that cautious assessment of where we are at present, may I wish you all a very Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Local matters - I am aware of the financial problems concerning the parish hall. Although I was not able to attend the special meeting on the subject last week, I hope that some sort of resolution is possible, as a facility like this is invaluable in the community.

Your clerk is well aware of the many possible grants that might be available but any such project involves a lot of voluntary work, and I fully appreciate the problems of mustering sufficient effort to achieve a satisfactory result.

County Matters - The first full council of the New Year was held last Thursday, 16th January. A number of decisions already made were reported on by the leader, Simon Geraghty, including the Passenger Transport Strategy, the Kepax Bridge, various aspects of the education system and childcare, as well as preparation for Brexit. In addition, the leader summarised the year in his annual report, covering all aspects of the Council's work.

Of particular relevance to your parish council was a Notice of Motion drawing attention to the significance of roadside hedges, especially where they may overhang footways and obstruct progress by walkers and those using mobility scooters and buggies.

Often the hedges are owned by the adjacent landowner and they can sometimes be slow or reluctant to trim back the hedges. Procedures for county officers to affect such trimming and receive reimbursement are slow and can be ineffective. The motion called for a better scheme, maybe involving parish councils, to ensure the footways are kept open properly to the benefit of all.

You may be aware that the new Worcestershire Parkway station did not open in December, as originally planned. We anticipate that it will open later this month, once approved by the Office of Road and Rail, and will then prove a useful access point to the rail network, particularly for residents in rural Worcestershire, who would prefer not to have to drive into the city to catch a train.

Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 2BZ