

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held in Pensax Village Hall at 8.20pm on Monday 21st May 2018

Present: Cllr Alistair Keron (Chairman), Cllr Weston,
Cllr Abraham, Cllr Hingley, Cllr Sanders, Cllr Gready

In Attendance: Clerk

1. **Election of Chairman** – It was agreed by all that Cllr Keron be elected as Chairman. Declaration of Acceptance of Office signed.
2. **Apologies:** Received and accepted from Cllr Rudd.
3. **Election of Vice Chairman** – It was agreed by all Cllr Rudd be appointed as Vice Chairman. Chairman stated Cllr Rudd had agreed to fill the position prior to the meeting if no one else volunteered.
4. **Declaration of Interest:**
 - a. **Register of Interests** – Cllrs reminded to keep their Registers up to date.
 - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – None.
 - c. **Other Disclosable Interests** – None.
5. **Dispensations** –
 - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) – None requested.
6. **Public Question Time** – No matters raised.
7. **County Cllr Report** – Attended Parish Meeting, summary of report at end of minutes.
District Cllr Report – Attended Parish Meeting, see notes at end of minutes.
8. **Standing Orders** (circulated) – New Standing Orders to be reviewed at next meeting.
9. **Financial Regulations** (circulated) – To be reviewed at next meeting, Clerk suggested Direct Debit payments paragraph to be inserted in the document so payments can be made by this method in future.
10. **Scheme of Delegation** (circulated) – It was agreed no changes needed.
 - a. **To appoint Cllrs to the following**
Staffing Working Party for Clerk and Lengthsman – Cllrs appointed, details in files.
Planning Working Party – All plans to be circulated by email to all Cllrs. Comments from at least 3 Cllrs including Chairman. Meeting to be called on controversial plans.
Clerks Finance Support Group - Bank Reconciliation to be circulated to all by email, Cllr Rudd to sign at meetings. All Cllrs to input on other matters.
11. **To appoint volunteers to the following roles:**
 - a. **Footpath Officer/Tree Warden** – Resident willing to continue in this role.
12. **To consider appointment of representative to outside bodies:**
 - a. **Pensax Village Hall Committee** (1Cllr). No Cllrs on committee at present.
 - b. **Worcestershire CALC Meeting** (2 Cllrs). It was agreed any Cllr can attend meetings.
13. **Minutes** of Parish Council Meeting held on 19th March 2018 were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
14. **Progress reports for information:**
 - a. **BT Box** – Cllr had contacted interested parties but it was felt to be a big job for volunteers. Clerk and Cllr to investigate cost of refurbishment.
 - b. **Community Speedwatch** – The Police stated the Clerk had not asked for the B4202 by Pensax Hall to be monitored. This is incorrect, Clerk to ask for further action to be taken to monitor speed.
 - c. **Broadband** – Menith Wood should have improved service this year. Worles Common is a problem as service comes from Great Witley exchange and that is not in plans for improvement to date.
 - d. **Data Protection Law changes May 2018** – Clerk and a Cllr attending training on 23rd May. One Cllr was concerned that Clerk had not taken action, Clerk stated she would after the training session.
15. **Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors:**
SWDP Review -Briefing for Parish Councils - 20th March – Cllr attended, details circulated.
MHDC Conference - 9th April – Clerk attended.

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

16. Finances –

- a. **Payments made** – Worcestershire CALC (see d) = £199.51, Mr R Whiteman (LM April 2018) = £224.00, Mrs S Burrows (Photocopy for meeting) = £28.50.
- b. **Payments received** – No bank statement received to confirm receipts.
- c. **Bank Reconciliation** (circulated) - Signed for March 2018, balance agreed as £8667.66. April Bank Statement not received due to difficulties at TSB Bank.
- d. **Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils** - It was agreed by all to continue membership at cost of £199.51.
- e. **Internal Auditor Appointment** – Chairman had met with new auditor and felt she was more than capable to do the work required. It was agreed by email for her to audit accounts.
- f. **Internal Audit Review** (circulated) – It was agreed all matters are being adhered to.
- g. **Certificate of Exemption from External Audit (circulated)** – It was agreed the Council qualify to sign this document having income and expenditure below £25000.00 for 2017-18. It was confirmed all other requirements are met.
- h. **Annual Governance Statement** (circulated) – It was agreed Council are adhering to all the requirements.
- i. **Internal Audit report** (circulated) – Clerk reported clerical errors not affecting balances had been found, these had been checked by Chairman. No issues with procedures found.
- j. **Annual Return/End of Year Accounts** (circulated) – It was agreed for Chairman to sign all relevant papers for the End of Year Accounts and Annual Return. A balance agreed as £8667.66 to be carried forward to 2018-19.

21. Planning:

- a. Plans circulated since last meeting – **None**.
- b. Decisions received since last meeting- **None**.
- a. Plans for comment on tonight – **None**
- b. **14/01586/FUL – APP/J1860/W/15/3133352 – Ridding Coppice**, Worles Common, Stockton – Cllr confirmed foundations for yurts being taken out. Caravan still an issue, Clerk to contact Enforcement.

22. Road report

- a. **Lengthsman** – New contract signed with LM and WCC. Penn Hall Lane (opposite old School) cleared of dirt.
- b. **Problems to report** – **None**.

23. Welcome Pack for Residents – to discuss at next meeting.

24. Smart-water initiative from Police – Residents response was small, Cllrs to door knock to gain interest before a final decision is made. Clerk to make further enquiries regarding how the scheme works.

25. Pensax Village Hall – Report from Hall Trustees given to Parish Meeting showing little income to pay bills this year. Residents at the Parish Meeting wished PC to support Hall. It was agreed to meet with Hall and Thrift Shop representatives to discuss the future. After much discussion it was agreed by all to grant up to £250.00 to Hall if needed before next PC meeting.

26. Annual Parish Meeting –

SWDP – Concerns were raised regarding new houses in Worcestershire and the impact on services such as hospital/schools etc. Density of houses built in rural areas a concern. Comments to be sent in if consultation still open.

27. Correspondence for information –

Email correspondence circulated - list in minute's folder.

28. Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting. **None**.

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

Agenda items - Pensax Village Hall.

27. Date of next meeting: **16th July 2018 – 7pm - OLD CHAPEL HALL, MENITH WOOD – talk by St Richards Hospice representative.**

28. Meeting Closed 10.15pm.

Signed----- Date **16th July 2018**
Chairman

District Councillors Report

MHDC continuing to make savings, staff now all in one building. Council Chambers now listed by English Heritage so needs to be kept in good order. Planning combined with Wychavon, 2 Area Planning Committees to continue

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

at present, refuse changes working well, recycling of waste is increasing. A review of MHDC by outside bodies has suggested further improvements can be made which are being looked.

South Worcestershire Development Plan – Cllrs have concerns regarding the density of houses. Dist Cllr stated it is taken into consideration. Applications that are refused by MHDC but allowed on appeal mean MHDC have little control over what can be built. County and Dist Cllr are concerned.

County Councillors Report

County Council Affairs - Personnel - We now have a new team running the County Council, led by the Chief Executive, Paul Robinson.

County Council Affairs – Council Tax - In the middle of February, the full council approved a county council tax rise of 4.94%, comprising 1.94% for the main council tax and a 3% rise in funds for Adult Social Care, as prescribed by central government.

Council County Affairs – expenditure - The County Council's budget runs to about £330 million pounds. The greater proportion is spent on Adult/Children's Services, a small number of individuals attract most of the cost. We have about 750 children in care, and, through past failings, are going to be required to set up a separate company to run the services needed by such children and various ancillary needs. This will result in an extra £10 million being spent on children's service in the coming year. Adult services are for the elderly and vulnerable adults, again a total amounting to about 7,000 people. This from a population in the County of 560,000. All other services are paid for out of the balance, including all money spent on roads/pavements/libraries/education services/regulatory services/waste disposal and the like. Our roads are generally in good condition compared with our neighbours and we are in process of spending an extra £12 million on bringing them up to the top quartile of roads in the country. We have a number of major infrastructure projects in progress or planned. The new Battenhall rail bridge will be installed starting at the end of this week, allowing dualling of the Southern Link Road from the M5 to the Ketch roundabout. Then the new project to dual the Carrington Bridge and the causeway to Powick has been approved and will be starting soon. The new railway station, Worcestershire Parkway at Norton, is under construction and will be open by this time next year. In addition there are plans for a new station at Kidderminster and improvements to the A38 through Bromsgrove.

SWDP revisions - Following its publication in 2016, the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) has been the basis for deciding the pattern of house building across south Worcestershire. Recently, the three councils involved have been considering revising the plan in the light of the recent publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). While this concerns the County Council more from the infrastructure viewpoint, I have been keen to take part in the discussions. My impression is that while organic small scale growth of communities is desirable, it could be that larger new settlements may be necessary. Should one or two "new towns" of around 5,000 dwellings be required, the location of such developments is crucial. Any strong feelings on such plans would be welcomed by your local district councillors and the planning departments. Under our newly revised Local Transport Plan, (LTP4), we would seek to encourage developments in places where there is excess capacity on our road and rail network. We also recognise the importance of facilities for walking and cycling, as part of our active travel strategy. In addition, we need to make provision for public transport, where possible and appropriate.

Recently Tenbury has seen a successful application to build around 70 houses opposite the High School. It is to be hoped that many of those buying such houses will have children that can then go to the local primary and secondary schools. In addition, it is unrealistic to suppose that homes should only be allowed close to where there is an unmet need for employees. Minimising travel distance to work is desirable, but often unrealistic, and could be seen as a reason for allowing rural areas to become depopulated. In general, I suggest we should be prepared for organic growth of our villages and hamlets, as well as a growth in jobs in rural areas. Another aspect is the need for better broadband and I have to report steady, if slow, progress at reaching the last 5% or so of premises not yet served by Superfast Broadband. This becomes increasingly important as more people work from home and the internet is used for a greater amount of our social and educational needs.

In that regard, it is worth noting that Worcestershire has been chosen as a testbed for 5G, the next generation of mobile phone coverage that promises much higher speed and capacity. This is in conjunction with the LEP, Malvern Hills Science Park, QinetiQ, the Heart of Worcestershire College and two large employers in the county, Mazak and Worcester Bosch. We are one of six such testbeds and the only one that comprises a single county.

Public Realm work - Suffice to say that virtually all of the work to be conducted by the County council is now complete. There has been general approval for the new paving slabs on the footways, and the 20-mph limit on the central shopping area. What remains is some work that was to be paid for by Tesco's under a section 278 agreement. That is the reason for the raised table outside their entrance not having been completed yet, and also for the absence of a couple of items of street furniture in their section. I can only hope that trade will pick up over the coming months, particularly attracting holiday visitors to what is now even more a very attractive rural town, with great retailers, services and public spaces.

Divisional Fund - It is a privilege to be able to allocate some £10,000 of council taxpayers' money to good causes across the division, in particular in Clifton and Pensax. I am always keen to hear of new good destinations for this small amount of money that can nevertheless make a big difference. It is your money and it can be spent for the benefit of the community as a whole. **Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire**