

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held in The Old Chapel, Menith Wood 7.00pm on Monday 30th September 2019

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

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

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.
 - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – Cllr Sanders item 13 due to being on Committee.
 - c. **Other Disclosable Interests** – See above.
4. **Dispensations** –
 - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) – Cllr Sanders requested a Dispensation to speak and vote on item 13 Grant Application from Menith Wood Millennium Green Trust. 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 15th July 2019 were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
8. **Progress reports for information:**
 - a. **BT Box** – Cllr Abraham to look at shelving, Chairman to clean inside. Paintwork needs further work.
 - b. **Pensax Village Hall** – Clerk has offered to help Trustees organise a Public Meeting, still awaiting a reply. Cllr Abraham to speak to Trustees and give Clerk update.
9. **Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors:**
24th September CALC Training – Computerised VAT and Cybersecurity – Clerk gave a brief report on the meeting and will obtain further details to discuss at a future meeting.
10. **Finances** –
 - a. **Payments made** – Mrs S Burrows (Photocopying May Elections/APM) = £18.30, Mrs S Burrows (see item 10e) = £163.83, Mrs S Burrows (Microsoft renewal) = £59.99, Mr R Whiteman (LM August 2019) = £56.00, Came & Company (see item 10d) = £218.00.
 - b. **Payments received** – WCC LM April 2019 = £126.00, WCC LM May 2019 = £154.00.
 - c. **Bank Reconciliations** (circulated) - Signed for July/August 2019, balance agreed as £11730.33.
 - d. **Insurance Renewal 26th October 2019** (circulated) – It was agreed by all to renew with Came & Company at a total cost of £218.00.
 - e. **Clerk Expenses 2018-19** – It was agreed by all to pay £163.83 as circulated.
11. **Planning:**
 - a. Plans circulated since last meeting – **None**.
 - b. Decisions received since last meeting-
19/00283/HP – Holly Cottage, Menith Wood, Worcester WR6 6UB – Proposed single storey rear extension plus detached garage with storage and study over. Approved by MHDC.
 - c. Plans for comment on tonight – **None**.
 - d. **16/00455/HOU - New House Farm, Stockton** – Concerns regarding building being built too close to highway. Cllrs reported open windows are intruding into Highway. Dist Cllr advised PC to inform WCC and County Cllr.
 - e. **18/00244/FUL – Fartown, Pensax, Abberley, Worcester WR6 6AE** – Dist Cllr confirmed the applicant will arrange for required survey to be done in October, this is a condition of planning approval.
12. **Road report**
 - a. **Lengthsman** – Progress report.
 - b. **Problems to report** – Menith Wood reports of blocked drains, Clerk to ask Lengthsman to inspect.

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- c. **Menith Wood** – Penn Hall Lane blocked drains – Due to dry weather Clerk unable to take photograph of problem to pass to WCC.
13. **Menithwood Millennium Green Trust** – Grant of £250.00 requested. Chairman had spoken to organisers as requested at last meeting to ask why Lindridge PC were not being asked to support this event. Lindridge PC had granted money in the past for other events on the Green. Clerk advised Cllrs the total costs for the event are not known. After much discussion it was agreed to grant £250.00 for 20th anniversary celebrations on 25th July 2020. Payment to be made after 1st April 2020, Clerk to inform organiser.
14. **Pensax Church Grant for Harvest Supper** – Grant of £300.00 requested. Clerk had obtained costs for the event as requested at last meeting. Cllrs felt actual costs after the event are required before any grant can be agreed. After further discussion it was agreed by all to defer making a decision on this application until the November PC meeting. Clerk to obtain actual costs of event.
15. **Service at War Memorial 10th November 2019** – Clerk advised all is in hand. Traffic control has been arranged by Church.
16. **Correspondence for information** –CALC Updates/Training dates, Community First information.
WCC Conference 17th October Market Place 5pm to 6pm, Conference 6pm – Clerk to attend
MHDC Conference - 21st October 5.30pm – Clerk to attend
WCC - Snow Contractors wanted for Winter 2019
WCC - Superfast Broadband Engagement Event - 26th September 4-6pm
SWDP Review - Briefing for Town/Parish Councils – 6th November 2pm to 4pm or 6pm to 8pm – Guild Hall, Worcester – Cllr has booked in for this event
MHDC ‘Ticket to Ride’ event - Transport for the Community – 11th October 10am to 1pm at Malvern.
Worcestershire Passenger Transport Strategy Consultation – comments by 13th September
MHDC ‘Have your Say’ Consultation – comments by 6th October – circulated to residents
WCC Minerals Local Plan Consultation – comments by 30th September
MHDC Neighbourhood Watch Together Event – 25th September 5pm to 8pm
MHDC Pollinator Sites – information
Diversion of Footpath PX-568 (part), formerly Footpath 27 in the Parish of Pensax
Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan Review Consultation – comments by 14th October
17. **Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting.**
Payments made 7th August –
Tenbury Town Council – Cllrs training 18th July = £40.00, **MHDC** - Election fees May 2019 = £36.00.
Footpath - A concern has been passed to Parish Path Warden who has notified WCC of the issue.
18. **Councillors’ reports and items for the next agenda.**
Agenda items - Pensax Village Hall, Clerks Review.
19. **Date of next meeting: 18th NOVEMBER 2019 at PENSAX VILLAGE HALL**
20. **Cllrs agreed to close meeting to the Public due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.**
21. **Clerks Review** (circulated) – Chairman and Cllr Weston undertook review on 12th August, no issues of concern.
22. **Meeting Closed 8.24pm**

Signed----- Date **18th November 2019**
Chairman

Residents’ concerns

Inconsiderate driving on county lanes in Parish – Resident has concerns regarding speed of traffic creating a danger to other road users but especially horse riders. Resident to monitor situation and report back to Clerk.

District Councillors Report

Climate Change - plans are being discussed at MHDC, information will be circulated to PCs.

South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) - meeting in Worcester on 6th November. Dist Cllr explained if developers put money into services they will then want to cut back on affordable houses in the scheme to ensure they make a profit. Central Government responsible for hospitals, schools etc.

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Cllr questioned why MHDC refused to give funding to Worcester Hospital – Dist Cllr stated the funds were requested too late by the Trust so MHDC could not agree to any funding for them. Pensax Cllrs have concerns regarding the increase in houses in Worcestershire and lack of funding from anyone for improvements to hospitals, schools etc. Dist Cllr is aware of the concerns and will forward comments on.

County Councillors Report

Council Affairs - At Council just over two weeks ago, we considered two matters of countywide importance. The first established how Worcestershire Children First (WCF) will be brought into being tomorrow, October 1st. This is the wholly owned company of the county council that will look after all our children's services and education matters that are determined by the council. Full details can be found on the council's website but suffice to say at this stage that our most recent Ofsted inspection has demonstrated that our children's safeguarding activities have continued to improve. So they are not rated "requires improvement to be good". While WCF will continue in existence for probably 5 years, we anticipate that the service may come out of intervention in the near future. The company will have a budget in excess of £110 million a year and will carry out vital work with the 800 or so children taken into council care. It will remain under the supervision and scrutiny of the WCC Officers and Cabinet

The other matter that was adopted was an organisational redesign of the top three tiers of management of the County. These will consist of the Chief Executive at tier 1, four strategic directors at tier 2, and thirteen assistant directors at tier 3. This will mean a saving of two posts and should make the policy forming area of the county council structure more effective and efficient. There will then be further reorganisation at the lower tiers of management and activity, resulting in further savings and greater effectiveness.

In these circumstances, I would be very pleased to hear of any experiences of residents who have dealings with the council, so that I can know of both good and bad outcomes. The intention would be to seek ways of improving the good and eliminating the bad. Your cooperation would be welcomed.

Local matters - I am acutely aware of the poor broadband speeds suffered by some members in our rural areas. Our officers are working hard with BT Openreach to ensure good coverage for the whole county and progress is being made. I am sure we all realise that there are competing claims across the country for the limited resources available to install the necessary infrastructure. Nevertheless, I think that our performance so far has been among the best in the country. The Prime Minister's announcement of an accelerated timetable for the provision of fibre to the premises is welcome but will require much greater resources being made available. In these circumstances, I am very keen that Worcestershire should be near the front of the queue for the extra effort, to satisfy, especially, people like some residents who have been "neglected" so far. You might want to bear in mind that the Prime Minister expressing dissatisfaction with the 2033 deadline for everyone in the country to receive fibre to their premises, and bringing that forward to 2023, would mean a huge amount of work between now and then, but once achieved, it would mean the much easier deployment of assistive technology with remote monitoring for Adult Social Care. We have to hope he will achieve his stated intention.

Rural Services Network conference - I was able to attend some of the above conference in Cheltenham earlier this month. There was attention given to the need for a rural strategy that makes appropriate provision for the problems of sparsity in rural areas. This means seeking to ensure a balanced population of people in rural villages, to keep village schools open and appropriate services for local people. It should be recognised that in my Tenbury division, there are 17 parish councils, as well as Tenbury Town Council. In those 17, there are only three that have shops - Great Witley, Abberley and Clifton Upon Teme. This means that many people will need to use some form of transport to get to the sort of facilities that we all regard as essential. In consequence, I was dismayed at the conclusions of the Select Committee of the House of Commons for Science and Technology. They recently decided, for all sorts of reasons, connected with climate change and advanced technology, that personal transport would have to be banned or restricted. I wrote to the Conservative members of the committee to indicate that this would be impractical for many of those living in the 14 villages without a shop like Pensax, not to mention their needs to get to towns and railways stations and the like. I have not had a single reply. Indeed, Sam Gyimah has now decided to become a Liberal Democrat!

I am very keen to see that rural areas are helped to thrive by sensible expansion of housing and support for rural schools and services. I hope that policy will be endorsed by our national government and recognised in the future funding proposals by the Chancellor.

Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 2BZ