

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held in Pensax Village Hall at 8.25pm on Tuesday 19th May 2015

Present: Cllr Rob Greedy (Chairman), Cllr Rudd, Cllr Wise, Cllr Keron

In Attendance: Clerk, Richard Whiteman (Lengthsman).

Cllrs signed Declaration of Acceptance of Office before start of this meeting.

1. **Election of Chairman** - It was agreed by all that Cllr Greedy be elected as Chairman. Declaration of Acceptance of Office signed.
2. **Apologies:** None.
3. **Co-option of new Cllrs** – no electors had stood for co-option, three vacancies remain, notices on boards/website.
4. **Election of Vice Chairman** – It was agreed by all not to elect a Vice Chairman for this year.
5. **Declaration of Interest:**
 - a. **Register of Interests** – All Cllrs were given form to complete and return to Clerk.
 - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – None declared.
 - c. **Other Disclosable Interests** – None declared.
6. **Dispensations** –
 - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) – **None requested.**
7. **Public Question Time** – No matters raised.
8. **Code of Conduct 2012 edition** – Code was adopted as drafted, all Cllrs have email copy.
9. **Scheme of Delegation** – It was agreed to adopt as drafted (copy in files). Members agreed to the following:
 - a. **Staffing Working Party for Clerk** – Chairman plus one other Cllr as available.
Lengthsman Co ordinator - Cllr Keron – Clerk Line Manager
 - b. **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.
 - c. **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.
Bank signatories - All Cllrs to be on mandate. New mandate completed.
10. **Councils Risk Assessment** (circulated) – It was agreed to sign as drafted and review in September.
11. **To appoint volunteers to the following roles:**
 - a. **Footpath Officer** – no officer in place at present. It was noted some paths need strimming. Cllr Keron be advised of popular paths and to review the state of those paths. Clerk to ask WCC about help/advice regarding strimming on private land. Maps to be published on website/noticeboards. Objective to encourage residents to use paths more.
 - b. **Tree Warden** – Cllr Rudd agreed to take on role.
12. **To consider appointment of representative to outside bodies:**
 - a. Pensax Village Hall Committee (1Cllr). Chairman agreed to continue in this role. All agreed.
 - b. Worcestershire CALC Meeting (2 Cllrs). It was agreed any Cllr can attend meetings.
13. **Minutes of Parish Council Meeting held on 21st April 2015** were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
14. **Progress reports for information:**
 - a. **Pensax Village Hall** – Trustees to be asked for progress report. New lease document cannot be drawn up by Parish Council until Hall have updated their documents. Clerk to email trustees.
 - b. **Superfast Broadband** – Cllr Wise to attend meeting at WCC 4th June. He has been in contact with BT and gave Parish Meeting details of options available.
 - c. **Road Safety issues** – Road Safety Partnership have agreed to monitor traffic by installing a laser device.

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Stickers for wheelie bins to be ordered by Clerk for residents.

15. Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors:

WCALC Training - Elections - 16th April, Audit - 29th April, both sessions attended by Clerk to obtain up to date practices.

16. Finances –

- a. **Payments made** – Mr G Rudd (spare key for Pensax Hall) = £4.95.
- b. **Payments received** – MHDC Precept £2000.00 (including Council Tax subsidy £50.64).
- c. **Bank Reconciliation** – Signed for April 2015. Balance agreed as £5432.99.

17. Planning:

- a. Plans circulated since last meeting - **None**
- b. Decisions received since last meeting- **None**
- c. Plans for comment on tonight – **None**
- d. **Complaints regarding created track way at Spring Meadow, Pensax** - Enforcement Team are still looking into this matter.

18. Road report

- a. **Lengthsman** – Training has now been undertaken, strimming and clearing of drains/grips ongoing. Worles Common - ditches need clearing. Visibility splays to be kept clear.
- b. **Problems to report** – None.

19. **Policies agreed to date** – list of policies to be kept in minute's folder and updated as required.

20. Correspondence for information –

Email correspondence circulated - list in minute's folder.

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

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

Clerks Contract – Signed by Clerk and Chairman at this meeting. Grievance and Disciplinary Policy and Equal Opportunity Policy to be drafted for next meeting.

Agenda items - Footpaths, Broadband, Pensax Village Hall, Co-option of new Cllrs, email correspondence.

23. **Date of next meeting: TUESDAY 15th SEPTEMBER 2015 7.30pm**
At MENTH WOOD OLD CHAPEL HALL

24. **Meeting Closed 9.45pm.**

Signed-----

Date 15th September 2015

Chairman

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

1. **WCC finances and budget** - Pensax residents do not need reminding that we have been through a period of budgetary cuts that have resulted in the County Council becoming a much more efficient unit, with fewer employees but nevertheless fulfilling our statutory obligations across the county. The County contribution to council tax had been kept unchanged for several years but this year has increased by just 1.94% equivalent to £20 a year for a Band D property. This is in a budget of about £330 million pounds. As a way of responding to budget constraints, we have been examining the best ways of fulfilling our responsibilities with a comprehensive review of all services and the way they are delivered. Some have been commissioned to outside bodies, on occasions made up of staff that used to work for the County. This has been part of a drive to offer services online where possible, with the aim of reaching 85% of such contacts online, while always making phone or face to face facilities available to those who wish to use them. People in several local villages suffer from a poor internet service and these people will always have a phone or face to face alternative to going online to interact with WCC.

2. **Road conditions** - One area that always attracts attention is the state of our roads and footpaths (technically footways, where they are pavements alongside a road). Worcestershire has a proud record in this regard and can claim to be better than our near neighbours. That does not mean we do not have a lot of repairs to do and we gained a multi-million pound allocation from central government to attend to potholes this winter. We are operating an online system of reporting such problems, including defective street lights, flooding, overgrown shrubbery and the like. This is giving more rapid and better responses to problems and should be seen as the first line of reporting, even before resorting to badgering your county councillor. The new system is much easier to operate, with interactive maps for locating problems easily and then reports back on what is to be done.

3. **Tenbury Public Realm** - You will be aware that Tenbury has been disrupted this winter with work on the Public Realm between Crow Corner and the Market. This is the first phase of a programme which will take the improvements as far as the Teme Bridge, in conjunction with the building of the new Tesco supermarket. While there have been difficulties for traders and shoppers during this period, the end result is a great improvement. The design was approved by members of the steering group throughout and the intention has always been to make Tenbury a more attractive place for residents and visitors alike. The raised tables and future 20mph speed limit are intended to slow traffic and make it less intimidating for pedestrians. It is also hoped that through traffic that can use alternative routes will do so, relieving

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the centre of the town of some of the congestion.

4. Adult Social Care - Some people have questioned the spending of money on such projects as the Public Realm at a time of budgetary restraint. This is understandable, but the money was allocated some time ago and, as with highway work, such efforts should not be set aside just because of needs elsewhere.

The social care costs of our ageing population have placed a strain on our budget, but, in line with the results of our Viewpoint surveys into the priorities of the residents, this budget has been increased by several million pounds. We are also keen to help people live at home and use assistive technology to make that safe and comfortable.

5. Children's Services - Another area where budgets have increased is children's care. For obvious reasons, many children need to be taken into care and the figure for Worcestershire now stands at nearly 700, costing about £26 million a year. This has meant an increase in allocation of £2.5 million this year.

It is not a situation we wish to see continue, as it would obviously be better if children were cared for at home and our social workers are intent on achieving that wherever possible. We would also like to have a longer list of foster carers, so that children could be cared for with a family rather than in a care home. Anyone interested in volunteering for such a role, or knowing someone who might be able to help, is urged to come forward to offer their homes and hospitality. You can get in touch via a website cleverly called **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** <http://www.isfostering4me.co.uk/> or call 0800 028 2158.

6. Broadband coverage - Worcestershire has been determined to improve broadband coverage throughout the county and in particular in those areas that are not commercially viable, i.e. beyond about 70% of premises. Our initial aspiration was to cover 90% of all residences and businesses and this should be achieved by the middle of 2016. The next phase will then start, to push this penetration to 95%. In addition, Abberley and the nine parishes in North West Malvern consortium have benefited from the wireless Airband system.

More information can be found on the Superfast Worcestershire website. While this investment is partially funded by central government via BDUK and by BT, the County has invested in the region of £10 million so far, and is unusual in insisting that businesses should be treated in the same way as residences.

7. Tenbury High Ormiston Academy - This last year has seen Tenbury High School pass out of local authority control and re-emerge as part of the Ormiston Academy family. The Ofsted inspection that resulted in special measures was always something of a misjudgement, and I am very pleased to note that new admissions are very healthy, as parents have made their own decisions on whether it is a good school or not.

8. Divisional Fund - Each of the 57 Worcestershire County Councillors is allocated £10,000 each year to distribute to worthy causes as they think fit. While the councillors have control over the money's use, they should never forget that the money comes from Council Tax payers, and it is just being given back to them for the general good of the community.

All of my grants are detailed on the WCC website, as for all councillors, and you may care to have a look sometime. I am anxious to see that as many causes as possible should benefit from this funding, and would encourage anyone who knows of a need that might be helped by a small amount of money to please get.

9. Green Deal Insulation - Grants are available from central government for solid wall insulation of homes under the Green Deal. The aim of this £7.2m project is to install solid wall insulation for up to 750 households across the county. The works are funded by DECC, the procured delivery partner, Eon, and the home owners themselves. Worcestershire County Council is leading the project, which is being delivered in partnership with Worcestershire District councils and local energy efficiency charity, Act on Energy.

To date 128 households have signed up for solid wall insulation through the scheme. Installation works on the first 20+ homes are either complete or underway.

In consultation with district councils, the opportunity to take part in the programme is shortly to be widened to include further communities in each district, including Worcester City. The opportunity for any eligible household in the county to take advantage of the offer will also be made available.

The project is now due to finish December 2015, with the last date for signing up in September 2015.

Anyone interested in benefiting from the scheme should contact the County Council via the website.

This initiative is part of the renewable energy programme being pursued by the Council, aiming to reduce energy usage as well as encouraging the use of renewable sources of energy.

Clr Ken Pollock
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19.05.15
