

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held in The Old Chapel, Menith Wood at 7.00pm on Tuesday 19th January 2016

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

In Attendance: Clerk, County Cllr Ken Pollock, District Cllr Paul Cumming.

1. **Apologies:** None.
2. **Co-option of new Cllr** – No applications received.
3. **Declaration of Interest:**
 - a. **Register of Interests** – Cllrs to keep updated.
 - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – None declared.
 - c. **Other Disclosable Interests** – None declared.
4. **Dispensations** –
 - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) –
 - **Dispensations granted** – None requested.
5. **Public Question Time** – No public in attendance.
6. **Minutes** of Parish Council Meeting held on 22nd September 2015 were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
7. **District Cllrs report** – See end of minutes.
County Cllrs report – See end of minutes.
8. **Progress reports for information:**
 - a. **Pensax Village Hall** – Chairman of PC in contact with Hall Trustees. Trustees have received grant to fund improvements. More Committee Members needed to move project forward. It was agreed to hold joint meeting with Cllrs and Trustees, date to be circulated. Cllr Wise to send out email asking for residents help.
 - b. **Improved Broadband** – Cllr Wise in contact with BT and they are looking into possible options for Pensax area. Cllr to circulate information to residents when details are confirmed and costs known.
 - c. **Speed Checks B4202** – In September the speed was monitored showing speeds in excess of 40mph, the PC will ask for further monitoring to be undertaken. The Vehicle Activated Sign has been up during December this is funded by Pensax PC and will be used again this year.
9. **Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors:**

Clerk attended- MHDC Conference 5th October, CALC - Transparency Code 12th October, AGM 25th November. Clerk and Cllr Weston attended - CALC Area Meeting 1st December. Two Cllrs attended - CALC Area Meeting 13th October. Details of all meetings circulated. Cllr Weston attended training 9th November.
10. **Finances:**
 - a. **Payments made** – WCALC (Cllr training 9th November) = £30.00, Pensax PCC (mowing Pensax Church Yard see d) = £200.00, Mr R Whiteman (LM November/December 2015) = £833.00, Menith Wood Community Association (rent January 2016 meeting) = £16.00.
 - b. **To report receipts since last meeting** – MHDC Precept £2000.00, WCC LM April to July 2015 = £490.00.
 - c. **Bank Reconciliation** – September/October/November/December 2015 was agreed and signed. Balance agreed as £6773.61.
 - d. **Pensax Church Mowing Grant 2015-16** – Grant of £100.00 for 2014-15 was not paid last year. It was agreed by all to pay £200.00 to cover period 2014-2016.
 - e. **Precept 2016-17**– Budget to December 2015 circulated with draft budget 2016-17. After much discussion it was agreed to keep precept at £4000.00 to build up reserves and fund parish improvements.
11. **Planning:**
 - a. **Plans circulated since last meeting** – See item 17.

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

- b. **Decisions received since last meeting –**
15/00942/FUL – Heather View, Pensax Common, WR6 6XL – Replacement Dwelling and
15/01551/HOU - Heather View, Pensax Common WR6 6XL – New Detached garage for dwelling.
MHDC have Approved both of these applications.
- c. **Plans for comment on tonight –**
APPEAL – 14/01586/FUL – APP/J1860/W/15/3133352 – Ridding Coppice, Worles Common, Stockton –
Change of use of land to site 2 yurts for residential use associated with the long term management of Ridding Coppice.
Dist Cllr informed Cllrs this was not a temporary application but a permanent application. After much discussion it was agreed to send in comments as follows – ‘No objections so long as this is linked to individual, if he leaves the site or the management plan finishes or at 10 years it ceases’.
- d. **Complaint regarding created track way at Spring Meadow, Pensax –** Dist Cllr update – Landowner will be putting in a retrospective planning application for the track.
- e. **Subsidence at The Dell, Pensax Common –** Concerns raised by resident of further slippage at this site. Dist Cllr has informed Planning Officer and is awaiting update.

12. Road report

- a. **Lengthsman –** Work ongoing, thanks to be passed to LM for work undertaken this winter.
- b. **Any problems to report –** None.

13. **Conference Calls –** CALC advised it would need to be delegated to Clerk. Chairman to look into matter.

14. **External Audit from 2017 –** It was agreed by all not to opt out of the External Audit arrangements that are being put into place from 2017 by National Association of Local Councils and other bodies.

15. **Clerks Review –** Chairman and Cllr Rudd to do review. Details to be circulated to all Cllrs for input. Date of review to be fixed for February.

16. Correspondence for information –

Items available at the meeting.

MHDC Neighbourhood Planning presentations 25th January 2-4pm or 28th January 6-8pm. Cllr Weston and WCC attending on 25th January, Clerk attending 28th January.

WCC Conference – 24th February – 6.30pm

‘Clean for the Queen’ January-March 2016 – Cllr Wise to send out email to inform residents.

Queens 90th Birthday 12th June 2016 – details to be circulated, event could be held in village hall.

17. Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting

Payments - July 2015 – LM Payment April/May/June to 13th July = £490.00, **September 2015 –** Vehicle Activated Sign repairs (this was paid for by a grant from County Cllr) = £420.00.

Plans circulated for comments –

23rd September 2015 – Re-consultation on 15/01017/FUL – Land off Stockton Road, Stockton-on-Teme, WR6 6UT – Photo Voltaic Solar Energy Farm (5MW) and ancillary equipment. Original consultation was commented on at meeting held on 22nd September. This consultation was circulated by email and it was agreed by majority the changes did not affect any matters that had already been discussed and a letter of objection would be sent. Dist Cllr has confirmed the application will be going to MHDC Planning Committee.

18. Councillors’ reports and items for the next agenda -

Agenda items – Village Hall, Broadband, Clerks Review, Queens 90th Birthday, LM Contract 2016-17.

19. **Date of next meeting: – TBC 7pm PENSAX VILLAGE HALL**

20. **Meeting Closed – 8.57pm.**

Signed----- Date 2016
Chairman

District Cllr Report – Council Tax will increase due to Government cuts in funding to District Councils. MHDC are forming close links with other District Councils to share work and cut costs. Dist Cllr also gave update on planning issues as noted in minutes.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

1. **Happy New Year -** I would like to wish all parish councillors, and your hardworking clerk, a very Happy and Prosperous New Year. Sadly, you will also have heard of the resignation of the council leader, Adrian Hardman, after he failed a breath test just before Christmas. He was banned from driving for 16 months. I would also like to pay tribute to Adrian for his exemplary leadership over the last five years, and in particular his careful management of the County Council’s finances, a job

PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

for which he was responsible before the additional burden of the leadership. Simon Geraghty, the former deputy was elected as the new leader. Anthony Blagg, the Cabinet Member responsible for the Environment was elected as Deputy Leader. Simon Geraghty has decided to take on the finance role that Adrian occupied, and as a result asked me to take on his Cabinet role in charge of the economy, skills and infrastructure. This is a huge area of responsibility and I relish the chance to continue the excellent work that Simon has done over the last 8 years.

2. Review of the WCC budget - The local government financial settlement came in late in December and has been factored in to the Council Tax assessment for 2016/17. You will know that the Chancellor has given Counties the responsibility for increasing the budget for Adult Social Care by allowing a 2% increase in addition to any other tax increase the County might be contemplating. This allows for local fund raising to reflect local need, rather than a blanket demand from all areas. In our case, the full 2% will be raised, given the increasing percentage of our population over the age of 75, coupled with a 3.7% drop in the percentage in the under 25 age group. This will be added to the 1.94% increase in Council Tax, to cover all the other needs of the budget, in particular increasing numbers of children being taken into care and the commitment to maintain and improve the condition of our roads. Despite this increase, Worcestershire will remain in the bottom quartile of counties, in terms of its council tax. You will also remember that the County is third in the country in terms of productivity growth behind Oxford and London. We aim to see that this situation is maintained or improved by the economic policies adopted by the County and the LEP.

3. Flooding - In the recent period of heavy rain, we have been fortunate not to have suffered any serious flooding. You may have been aware of two places locally where flooding of roads extended over at least half the carriageway, on the A443 in Eardiston and between Little and Great Witley. The former was caused by a blocked gully, while the latter is familiar to us locals. It seems to have been caused by a gully being tarmacked over. I have requested a serious search and the instatement of a gully, should the old one remain lost! You will also have noted that the extra drain and gully in the dip just to the west of the turn to Structon's Heath has resulted in no serious flooding there. Should any of you know of such repeated flooding events, please report them on the WCC website and, if you can, let me know as well, so I can add a second line of pressure to seek resolution. Some of you may be persuaded by certain sections of the media to believe the current weather extremes are related to concern about climate change. The Met Office are guilty of playing along with the current belief that matters are getting worse. They are fond of quoting UK records that only go back to 1910, while they also have records for England and Wales that go back to 1766 and they show the wettest December was 1876. That could not be reasonably attributed to recent industrialisation and the use of fossil fuels.*

You may be interested in taking part in the consultation currently in progress on the latest Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, 2015 - 2021. This is undertaken by the County Council as the Local Lead Flood Authority. That means the County has a responsibility to see that adequate precautions are taken across the County. The strategy can be read on the WCC website. The consultation period ends on the 29th February and I would urge those who have a particular interest of concern about flooding to read and comment on the plans.

4. Potholes - One of the regrettable results of the recent excessive rainfall is the proliferation of potholes. These can cause a lot of damage and distress, and I would request all councillors and others to report them as soon as practicable. The WCC online reporting system is now pretty easy to use, and will result in the most rapid response. Having said that, I am very happy to hear of any such problems and will do my best to see that action is taken quickly and effectively.

5. Malvern Hills District Council by-election - By now you will know that Teme Valley has elected a new Conservative Cllr, Caroline Palethorpe. She has been a very active citizen in Tenbury Wells for years and has greatly assisted Tenbury Primary School, where she was chair of governors, and Tenbury High School with their extension programme and now with mentoring. I am sure she will make a very positive contribution to the ward and to the whole District Council.

Cllr Ken Pollock, Martley, Worcester, WR6 6QA

*: For those interested in reading more on this, I can recommend the blog written by Paul Homewood under the title "Not a Lot of People Know That". He publicises Met Office records that otherwise seem beyond the reach of journalists and the Met Office itself!