

# PENSAX PARISH COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of Pensax Parish Council held in The OLD CHAPEL, MENITH WOOD at 7.00pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**Present:** Cllr Keron (Chairman), Cllr Rudd (Vice Chairman),  
Cllr Abraham, Cllr Sanders, Cllr Gready

**In Attendance:** Clerk, Three Members of the Public, County Cllr Ken Pollock

1. **Apologies:** Received and accepted from Cllr Weston, Cllr Hingley.
2. **Declaration of Interest:**
  - a. **Register of Interests** – Cllrs are reminded to keep their registers up to date.
  - b. **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests** – None declared.
  - c. **Other Disclosable Interests** – None declared.
3. **Dispensations** –
  - a. To consider written requests from councillors for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) – **None requested.**
4. **Public Question Time** – See notes at end of minutes.
5. **County Cllr Report** – Report at end of minutes.  
**Dist Cllr Report** – Apologies received, no report given.
6. **Minutes** of Parish Council Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2018 were agreed by all and signed by Chairman.
7. **Progress reports for information:**
  - a. **BT Box** – Cllr to approach local person to ask for costs of refurbishment. Clerk to look into costs of placing a Defibrillator in the box, Lindridge PC to be approached to share costs.
  - b. **Community Speedwatch** – still waiting for feedback from Community Speedwatch Team. Concerns from Cllr regarding speeds on rural lane approaching Menith Wood. Clerk to contact Highways to meet Cllr to discuss.
8. **Reports on Meeting attended by Clerk or Councillors** –  
**Clerk/Cllr – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2018** – GDPR training, informative meeting, item on agenda for approval of policies.
9. **Finances** -
  - a. **Payments made** – Worcestershire CALC (Cllr training 23/05/2018) = £10.00, Mrs S Burrows (Printer ink 2017-18) = £35.94, Mrs S Burrows (Mcafee Computer Security 2018-2020) = £69.99, Menith Wood Community Association (rent 16/07/2018) = £16.00.
  - b. **Payments received** – WCC LM (March 2018) = £630.00, MHDC Precept £2375.00.
  - c. **Bank Reconciliation** (circulated) - Signed for April/May/June 2018. Balance agreed as £10397.84 in cash book.
10. **Planning:**
  - a. Plans circulated since last meeting – **None.**
  - b. Decisions received since last meeting – **None.**
  - c. Plans for comment on tonight – **None.**  
**Update - 14/01586/FUL – APP/J1860/W/15/3133352 – Ridding Coppice, Worles Common, Stockton.**  
**MHDC update** – An Enforcement Notice regarding the caravan is being issued.
11. **Road report** -
  - a. **Lengthsman** – LM is in contact with Clerk and is keeping on top of issues that he is aware of.
  - b. **Problems to report** – None.
  - c. **Grit bins for Parish** – Clerk has asked WCC if they can meet Cllr at suggested sites, no response to date.
12. **Standing Orders** (circulated) – It was agreed to adopted as drafted. Policies mentioned in the document to be written by Clerk.
13. **Financial Regulations** (circulated) – It was agreed to add the paragraph to allow payments by Direct Debit.
14. **Data Protection Law changes May 2018** (circulated) – It was agreed by all the Privacy Policies, Privacy No-

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tice and Subject Access Request can be adopted. Residents to be emailed and informed of the policies. Clerk to continue working on further policies.

15. **Smartwater initiative from Police** – Police Commissioner giving a 25% grant to PCs if they bought the kits, he was asking County Cllrs to support the project. After much discussion it was agreed by all not to purchase the kits. Residents interest was minimal, Cllrs could not justify the expense.
16. **Pensax Village Hall** – Clerk and Chairman had met with Trustee and Thrift Shop representative. Thrift Shop to look at giving Hall more financial support. Community First have offered to meet with PC, it was agreed Clerk to arrange a meeting as soon as possible.
17. **SWDP Housing Survey online consultation** (circulated) – Chairman to form responses to be circulated for approval by Cllrs. Clerk to then process.
18. **Correspondence for information** –  
Email correspondence circulated - list in minute's folder.  
Training dates as circulated.
19. **Clerks report on Urgent Decisions since last meeting.**  
**Payments made 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018**  
Internal Auditor 2017-18 = £50.00, LM May 2018 = £322.00.
20. **Councillors' reports and items for the next agenda.**  
**Agenda items** – Pensax Village Hall, BT Box, Risk Assessment, Data Protection.
21. **Date of next meeting - MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018**  
**REPRESENTATIVE FROM ST RICHARDS HOSPICE TO ATTEND**
22. **Meeting closed** – 8.19pm

Signed----- Date 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
Chairman

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### Cllrs comments to County Cllr –

Child Protection Services discussed. More children are being taken into care in Worcestershire, no clear reason for the increase. Adult Social Care funding increased.  
WCC were thanked by Chairman for repairing potholes on B4202, the work was done to a high standard.

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### COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT

**Road Developments** - Last Monday at a Midlands Connect meeting in Birmingham, I heard of various plans for coordinated improvements to the transport infrastructure for the Midlands Region. The Transport Minister, who effectively decides on the allocation of funds to our road and rail systems, was scheduled to speak but did not appear, due to the political situation. Highways England should be removing the throttle at Junction 4A in the autumn, which should relieve the congestion at that point and the dispersal of through traffic to local roads in the vicinity. They are also planning on improving the A46 trunk road, which will relieve some of the pressure on the Birmingham motorway box. During the smart motorway road works, Bromsgrove has suffered from displaced traffic on to the A38.

At Cabinet last Thursday, I presented an interim report on the planned developments along that section of the A38 through Bromsgrove. This is partially funded from various nationally determined sources, and is intended to relieve the long term congestion through the town.

We have rejected the idea, popular with some local District Councillors, to plan for a western distributor route, running through the housing developments between the town and the M5, partly on cost grounds and also as it might be used as an alternative to the M5 at busy times.

Some of you will have noticed that the works to raise New Road past the cricket ground in Worcester are now complete. We all appreciate that funds are tight and there may need to be reduction in services like school crossing patrols. I would like to make clear that these two projects have different sources of funding, the New Road work being paid for by central government through the Environment Agency. As such it is not using money that could be used for school crossing patrols and other such services that we may need to review

**Rail Developments** - One of the important matters we have taken to Midlands Connect is the Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy, which seeks to improve rail services in the county. The priorities are the dualling of the

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Cotswold Line to London, so that we can carry two trains per hour on that line. One of those should take no more than two hours, bringing London a lot closer for business people.

A second important development is the Worcestershire Parkway station now under construction at Norton. Last Tuesday we held a press conference there, to highlight the rapid progress the station is making. Trains should be stopping there within 12 months. The station will not only allow passengers wanting to go to London to bypass the city and park next to the station, but also there will be trains stopping on the cross country line between Birmingham and Bristol. This will mean that people wishing to travel by train to the north east and the south west will not have to leave the county to catch the right train. On a more parochial level, work on a new station at Kidderminster will start later this year. This station is already the second busiest in the county, and the new buildings will reflect its importance for travel to Birmingham and London.

**The Financial Position** - We cannot disguise the fact that the county's finances are very tight and we will be under pressure to make savings for some years. This is never a popular matter with residents but I hope we all appreciate that we need to balance the books. Our finances are not helped by the increasing demands for Children's Services and Adult Social Care. These are areas where we have statutory obligations and the demand for our services is increasing. At Cabinet last Thursday we brought forward plans for a wholly owned company to run our children's services, which are improving swiftly, but still under an Ofsted judgement of being inadequate. Given that some 70% of our income is devoted to meeting these two needs affecting only 12,000 people, you can appreciate why we may be short of money for crossing patrols, repairing potholes and the like. We certainly do not want to be cutting road side verges unnecessarily – and cutting down valuable wild flowers before they have had a chance to seed.

**Economic developments** - Meanwhile, we are keen to support local industry and get more new companies started or relocated to this county. Worcester 6, the business park next to Junction 6 of the M5, has seen new tenants being established, with Kimal, the medical supplies company building their large depot there just now. There will be announcements about other new tenants in the near future. We need to produce as much sand, gravel and crushed rock locally as possible. At Cabinet last Thursday, I presented the results of work to improve the number of appropriate sites for aggregate extraction in the county. In addition we will be bringing forward the latest waste strategy to ensure maximum recycling of waste where possible and incineration of other materials at the plant at Hartlebury. There is scope for increasing the throughput at that plant, which should bring in extra income for the county.

You will know of the developments in 5G in Worcestershire. While we are acutely aware that not all residents get a good service at present, there was a celebration last Friday at Upton Warren of the superfast broadband that has been installed in an area that has been unable to get good speeds for some time. Our new Home Secretary, the MP for Bromsgrove, Sajid Javid, has been active in this, but was not able to be present.

Meanwhile, we are all concerned about the future security of energy supplies, and I have been to a couple of local conferences recently examining the alternatives available, several of which are local developments of new ideas in this area. Western Power Developments held a workshop last Friday, and the Worcestershire Energy Strategy held another meeting today on how we can improve our situation locally.

**Local issues** - While this report has concentrated on county wide issues, I am aware of the local problems and needs in Pensax. I know the road outside the hall has been examined, and some repairs put in train. We have tried to find ways of improving the speeding situation on the B4202 and the 443 without great impact. I will be pleased to hear of any other problems that need attention.

Last Wednesday, I was able to spend some time at Tenbury High Ormiston Academy discussing the importance of local politics with some of the pupils. I hope I was able to convince them of the importance of the sort of dedication shown by people like yourselves at local level, as well as those who serve at District and County level, not to mention our Members of Parliament. There is a tendency to believe that anyone who gets involved in this sort of activity is only interested in furthering their own careers and status. I am sure you will agree with me that this is far from the truth in most, if not all, cases.

**Cllr Ken Pollock, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL50 2BZ**