Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish of Pensax at the Old Chapel at Menith Wood.

at 7pm on Tuesday 14th May 2024

1 Welcome & Introduction: (Cllr. Meese)

2. **Pensax Reports**:

2.a.i Millennium Green Trust - Andrew Walford

No report submitted.

2.a.ii Menith Wood Community Association - Sharon Sanders

In the early 1990's, the residents of Menith Wood formed a Community Association to buy the dilapidated Old Chapel Hall, raising sufficient money through extensive fund raising and grants. A contract of sale was signed on 7th December 1993.

The Association went from strength to strength, raising funds to refurbish the hall and build an extension.

It continued to thrive over the years, with events often oversubscribed; unfortunately support for the hall and its events are now dwindling, carparking is an issue and the successful expansion of local village halls has overshadowed our events.

To date, we continue to meet regularly, and organise social events. We have a monthly coffee morning, an annual plant sale and book sale, a very successful evening of Carol singing, supported by our local junior school, and a lively Christmas party to mention but a few.

The hall is available for hire, and used by local parish councils, The Trustees of the Millenium Green, the WI, and is used for private functions.

Following grants made available from MHDC Covid funding, the hall has new heating and lighting, the clock tower has been renovated and a new clock installed. We now have double glazing and a lovely bespoke wooden front door.

Due to retirements, after our AGM in October we will no longer have a chairperson or treasurer, and we are looking for local residents to join the committee to bring new ideas and ensure the Association continues to thrive.

Unfortunately, failure to encourage people to join us will mean that the Association will cease to exist, and the Old Chapel Hall will no longer be managed.

2.a.iii Save The Bell Group - Save The Bell Working Group

A meeting to be called regarding the community benefits that they hold. Pub opens on Friday 17th May 24

2.a.iv WCC paths warden Stuart Meese (Former WCC Footpaths Warden)

The network still has considerable issues restricting access, including recently fallen trees, summer overgrowth and broken stiles and bridges. Recent flooding has destabilised many of the path surfaces.

There are considerable numbers of rotten or missing fingerposts marking trailheads from the highway.

In May the intention is to cover the checking of the south and east of the Parish.

There is no further report from the Path officer as there has been no action.

Requests for Gate

The landowner at PX54(c) has requested a one-way self-close Marlow gate to replace it. Will ensure unobstructed access across the whole of this path.

Centrewire/Secure a Field are a WCC approved supplier of gates that meet the standards.

Item	Ex Vat	Vat
Option 1. Marlow 1230mm Self close 1 Way	331.80	398.16
Option 2. Charwood 1130mm Self Close 1 Way	287.59	345.00
Delivery		50
Installation by Lengthsman		160
Total	1. £541.80 2. £497.59 ex vat	

2.a.v Ward Councillor for MHDC – Cllr. Douglas Godwin

No report received.

2.a.vi Ward Councillor for Worcestershire County Councillor Cllr. David Chambers.

1. Following my previous reports identifying budget overspends within the County Council's budget, large savings have been made due to efficiencies and changes in procedures, which have reduced budget concerns considerably. It should also be noted that the County Council enjoys healthy reserves, which have increased in recent years and which now stand at £100million. This may seem a reasonably large reserve but not when annual expenditure within the Council is approximately £430 million.

2. A few recent Worcestershire statistics which may be of interest:
   a. Worcestershire County Council's Council Tax is in the lowest 25% in the UK.
   b. Worcestershire's economy is £2 billion bigger than in 2015 with 34,000 extra jobs and 17,360 more homes.
   c. Over £100 million has been invested in road and pavement improvements.
   d. Greener Worcestershire with 150,000 new trees planted.
   e. Schools are performing above the national average for results. In July 2023, 84% of Worcestershire Schools were judged good or outstanding. No maintained schools were judged to be inadequate.
   f. Worcestershire has seen its first new train station for over 100 years which is performing ahead of plans.
   g. More homes and businesses are now protected from flooding with more defences being planned – not least in Tenbury!

3. Worcestershire County Council's Environment Improvement Plan is now live and aims to deliver:
   a. A greener future.
   b. Our commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2050.
   c. A resilient transport network.
   d. Reducing our waste.

   There are eight key priorities:

   a. Natural Environment
   b. Energy

c. Resources and Waste
d. Transport
e. Net Zero Council
f. The Green Economy
g. Reducing the impact of climate change (flooding)
h. Communities and Wellbeing

2.a.vii Police Report

No report received.

3. Annual Report of Pensax Parish Council – Cllr Stuart Meese (Outgoing Chair)

Clerk to the Council
The Council continues to retain the service of Carole Hirst as Clerk of the Council and Responsible Financial Officer. She has admirably placed the council back in a strong regulatory and administrative position. Our audit was accepted immediately.

Precept & Finances
The parish council's reserves, after several years of deliberately holding off on precept increases, had hit a critical level, and the precept has now been increased. The impact of this has been lessened by the investment of the capital funds where the interest gained helps support the action of the council

Highways & Flooding
We continue to be pleased with the work done by the Lengthsman.

The Council continues to liaise with Worcestershire CC Highways Dept concerning severe, frequent flooding at the junction of the Pensax to Stockton Road at its junction with Penn Hall Lane. The parish council has also added roundels to mark the 40mph zone where there remains the issue of speeding both on the B4202 and is asking the Police and WCC to do more.

Parish Paths
The Parish has implemented an innovative scheme to support landowners in replacing stiles for gates and providing additional signage.

Funding
The council is now in a position to offer small grants and funds to organisations in Pensax Parish – all those whom we know about we have written to and asked to submit any proposals before November so this could be factored into the parish budget.

War Memorial
A memorial service was held this year for Pensax and Stockton

The Bell PH
During this year, the Save the Bell group has taken amazing social action, which was instrumental in ensuring the Bell continues as a public house even though they were not the final purchasers. The Parish Council is very happy to see this establishment reopen, and we hope that the purchaser will adopt some of the social aspects suggested by the group to encourage more use from the local residents.

Other Matters
Unfortunately, there is a wider problem with people having time to step up to help run community activity; we have had several empty spaces on the council for some time and several projects that have been asked for shelved or unfulfilled; this was reflected in the closure of the Village hall, and now possibly the Old Chapel Hall and loss of the Community Association.
Cllr. Stuart Meese – Outgoing Chair

Meeting closed at 7.05pm