

PEMBRIDGE ANNUAL PARISH REPORT - 2006

Parish Council Chairman's Report – Cllr. Mrs. D. Furber

This has been another successful year for Pembridge Parish Council. We have attained Quality Status, being the first parish in Herefordshire to do so, something we can be proud of in our community.

We are working hard towards creating more affordable housing in Pembridge, as this is something which is very much needed, as was proven whilst carrying out the Parish Plan in 2002.

Unfortunately we received the resignations of 3 councillors during the year, but are now just about back to the full complement of 13 councillors, all of who are working extremely hard in looking after the community.

I would like to pass on my thanks to all the Councillors for your hard work and support, and to Heather Harding our efficient Clerk.

Many thanks also to Cllr. Glyn Whiting for the superb job he has done with the On-Line magazine; it is agreed that the coloured version is a great improvement, and will be maintained in future. Its new format is very professional and a credit to both him and the village.

Two stalwarts of the village recently retired from their posts – Mrs. Mary Lloyd and Mr. Rodney Jackson – both of whom worked tirelessly to keep the village looking spick and span, our thanks go to them for all their efforts.

Finally, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest councillors and I sincerely hope that you will enjoy your role, and that you will find serving Pembridge parish and its parishioners most rewarding.

Parish Warden's Report – Chris Buchan (Sherriff)

Again I am pleased to report that the crime rate in the Parish of Pembridge continues to remain low, as per the West Mercia Constabulary's 'Newsbeat' circular, which I receive a copy of every month.

The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is fully functional and is registered with the West Mercia Constabulary, under the co-ordination of myself (Mr. Chris Buchan) and Mr. Ian Price (2nd in command), also Mr. Alan Stokes who is the treasurer.

Mr. Stan Parrett, the previous co-ordinator, informed me that we have £100.00 funds from the previously run NW Scheme, which we now have. We have had good support from the West Mercia Police, i.e. Sgt. Colin Smith and CSO Lorna Bishop, who have attended most of our meetings. Meetings are held approximately every 3 months at the New Inn – the next being on Tuesday 1st August 2006 at 7.30 pm – anyone is most welcome to attend.

We also have representatives (approx 20) from various parts of the parish.

The revised new flyer advertising the Scheme was sent out with the last copy of The Messenger and I have given a copy to Glyn Whiting to put in the next edition of 'Pembridge on Line' for information.

I am in the process of purchasing another Neighbourhood Watch sign/bracket to position by the bridge, over the river Arrow, which will be visible to incoming traffic from that direction (all other routes in have signs accounted for).

Mr. Ian Price is dealing with the list of volunteer personnel and the areas which they will cover.

Now that we have the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme up and running, I believe that you can get a reduction on your household insurance, so feel free to contact your respective insurance companies.

YES!! I am still fully employed as a Range Warden at Pontrilas Army Training Area (PATA/Special Forces) and with the present terrorist threat in this country and throughout the world I am extremely busy.

Amenity Trust Report – Cllr. G. Evans – Chairman of the Trustees

Once again, the year has been a busy and eventful one for the Trust and I would like to begin by thanking all of those who have supported it during the year. In particular, I would like to thank Philip Partridge who is honorary treasurer of the Trust and Mrs Jen Myers who is honorary secretary.

There have been two changes in Trustees during the year and following completion of the local history project, we are delighted welcome Mr Duncan James as a Trustee. Unfortunately, we also lost a Trustee during the year when Stan Latozinski moved away from the area. We record our thanks to Stan for his contribution during his time as a Trustee. The Trust still carries a heavy workload and I would like to thank all of the Trustees for their support and hard work. We currently have a vacancy for a Trustee and anyone who is interested should contact either the Parish Clerk or myself.

This year has been dominated by one major project, the restoration of the Market Hall.

Market Hall

Since my last report, the project for the restoration of the market hall has been completed – the scheduled date for submitting final paperwork to the Heritage Lottery Fund is the 31st May. This date was extended to ensure that costs associated with construction of interpretation boards would qualify for grant aid.

The project was managed throughout by Hereford firm “Trevor Hewitt Architects”, and project led by Sarah Butler, who provided the Trustees with a very professional service. Local firm Capps & Capps undertook the restoration work and although completion was delayed very slightly, they are to be complimented on the efficient manner in which the work was undertaken. The final cost of the scheme is going to be less than £150,000, which is well within the original budgeted figures.

Following completion of the restoration work, a ceremony was held at which the building received a blessing from the Rector, before it was formally declared open by local resident Mrs Kath Aston. The Trustees are very pleased with the standard of the restoration work and the feedback that we receive indicates that the vast majority of people agree. Concerns that some residents had concerning the lighting scheme have been shown to be unfounded and it is generally accepted that the illumination of the building was a positive move.

The restoration work has also been appreciated on a wider scale. On behalf of the trustees, Jen Myers submitted a summary of the scheme to “The Green Apple Awards 2006 for The Built Environment and Our Architectural Heritage”. This is a prestigious national award scheme, which recognises organisations that make a positive contribution to our built environment, and I am delighted to report that the Market Hall project has won a national award. Unfortunately, we do not know what the award is until it has been presented.

The presentation takes place in London later this month and Jen Myers has agreed to attend, at her own expense, on behalf of the Trustees.

Ancillary to the restoration work has been the provision of printed leaflets and the provision of interpretation boards for the benefit of the public. The erection of the interpretation boards has recently been completed, with one being located in the public car park and the other in the market square. Curiously, the interpretation boards require an “advertising licence” from Herefordshire Council and this has to be re-applied for every five years. The current cost of an application is £75.

The printed leaflets will be available for at least 10 years and are provided free of charge. A record of the restoration is also available on DVD and this can be found in local libraries or can be bought locally. Profits from the sale of the DVD will be used for the upkeep of the Market Hall.

Now that the restoration work has been completed, there will be ongoing obligations on the Trust. A ten-year management and maintenance plan has been prepared and a professional report on the condition of the Market Hall must be commissioned after 5 and then 10 years.

Car Park & Toilets

The lease of the car park and toilets from Herefordshire Council is scheduled to run for another 19 years, with an expiry date of the 15th March, 2025. One of the terms of the lease is that Herefordshire Council fund and undertake some maintenance work on the toilets. This led to the toilets being closed during the winter months but the work has now been completed and the toilets re-opened on the 1st of April this year.

The running costs of the car park and toilets are underwritten by the Parish Council but by holding the lease in the name of the Trust, business rates that would be payable are avoided.

Millennium Meadow

The development the Meadow for the benefit of the whole of the community has been delegated to a group, currently chaired by Mrs Mifflin. Mrs Mifflin will give an update on the current position a little later. Any development on the Meadow must, however, receive the formal approval of the Trustees.

Bell Tower

The bell tower has required little attention during the last year with the main item of expenditure relating to the annual service of the clock. The trustees are aware that the bell tower is a valuable yet underused asset and in the next year we will be looking at ways in which it can be sympathetically developed for the benefit of all.

Pembridge Village Hall Report - Cllr. G. Evans – Chairman of Management Trustees

The Parish Hall management trustees are pleased to report another busy year for the hall. As with all aspects of modern living, we are becoming more and more weighed down by legislation and the introduction of the new liquor licensing laws have provided a challenge for everyone. This poorly drafted piece of legislation, which treats a village hall as if it is a city centre night club, has caused difficulties for everyone and at the moment, we are still finding our feet.

The hall continues to be booked regularly by a wide range of groups, including the auctions, the Caravan Club, Pembridge Young Farmers and the table tennis club. There is continuing daytime usage by Mums and Tots, Pembridge Pre-School Group and Echo. A number of groups and societies use the hall for meetings and these include the Parish Council, the Horticultural Society, the Women's Institute, the Hardy Plants Society and the Parochial Church Council. Of course, there are also occasional parties, weddings and similar events.

Income from hiring of the Hall has fallen compared to the previous year's record figure and was just over £9,800. The Trustees, through various functions, have raised a further £3,100 for Hall funds and, as always, our thanks go to Mr Ted Vaughan who continues to organise weekly whist drives and occasional bingo sessions. Thanks are also due to Mrs Julie Mifflin who takes responsibility for organising the car boot sales.

The trustees have continued the program of expenditure to ensure that facilities at the Hall are well maintained. As always, the major expenditure has been on the regular upkeep of the wooden floor. The floor in the large hall suffers from almost continual use and has to be resealed twice a year to keep it in top condition.

There has been some capital expenditure during the year. The kitchen has been completely refurbished at a cost of almost £4,500 and this ensures that we are fully compliant with current Health & Safety regulations. We are slowly replacing the old plastic chairs with newer more comfortable seating and a further £940 was spent to bring the total comfortable chairs to more than 60.

On a much more sombre note, we were all saddened by the death, last autumn of Mrs Dot Dyer. Dot had been caretaker for more than 30 years and throughout, she was a loyal supporter and servant of the Parish Hall. We are all very grateful for the effort that she put in over such a long time.

Mrs Mifflin continues to act as the caretaker and is ably assisted by Mr Mervyn Powell. Between them they have managed to maintain the high standards that were set by Dot and the hall continues to be kept in sparkling condition.

Mrs Mifflin continues to take bookings for the hall on a purely voluntary basis and we are grateful to her for doing so. Often there are a number of bookings on any one day and it is a tribute to Mrs Mifflin that the overwhelming majority take place without any problems.

Recruitment of trustees continues to be a problem and although the constitution allows for each regular user of the hall to be represented it is difficult to persuade them to take on the responsibility. I am therefore very grateful to the existing trustees for the tremendous amount of hard work that they have all put in during the year, for without them it is difficult to see how the Hall could survive. As always, I would particularly like to mention Mrs Joyce Price and Mrs Carol Jackson who are respectively honorary treasurer and honorary secretary.

Finally, my annual plea for anyone who would like to become involved in the management of the Hall or who knows anyone who might like to become involved. If you fall into either of these categories, would you please contact either myself, Carol Jackson or Joyce Price?

Millennium Meadow Report – Cllr. Mrs. J. Mifflin

When work first began with developing the Millennium Meadow things moved reasonably quickly, and a grant was obtained to plant a 'fruit and nut' hedge along one boundary.

Lots of trees were planted there for the Millennium. The children's play area was built, and then things appeared to come to a standstill.

Years of negotiations with Central Networks electricity providers then followed, in an attempt to get agreement for the electricity cable that runs overhead across the meadow to be moved underground, as it was considered to present a possible hazard for children playing ball games or flying kites. The sum of approximately **£14,000** was required for this work to be done, but this could not be afforded, nor were the group successful in obtaining a grant for this work – the work did not seem to meet the strict criteria of any funding group.

Last autumn, Roger Phillips our Ward Councillor wrote to Bill Wiggin MP explaining about the overhead cable dilemma, and Mr. Wiggin took up the case with Central Networks. To our delight, we have heard that as a result of this intervention by Roger Phillips and our MP, that Central Networks have agreed to move the cable underground this year, free of charge. We sincerely thank Cllr. Roger Phillips and Bill Wiggin MP for their help.

In the meantime Penny Lloyd has been looking for grants and designs for a youth shelter, but this has been put on hold until the electrical work to the meadow has been completed.

On-Line Report – Cllr. Ms. D. Furber

As the magazine editor is away on holiday and not able to present a report the Chairman mentioned that the magazine seems to be going from strength to strength and is of great value to the parish. Now that it is being partially produced in colour it is thought that this will increase its appeal and circulation. The magazine is produced every 2 months, and articles of interest should be sent in to Glyn Whiting the editor: glynwhiting@supanet.com

600 copies will generally be produced at each print run; of these 500 will be delivered to households and the remaining 100 will be split and available at 2 village outlets – the PO/Shop and Sally's Pantry.

Contributions in the collection tins at these outlets would continue to be much appreciated to help offset **printing costs**. There are no charges made for time spent by the editor in the preparation of the magazine, the editor undertakes this completely voluntarily.

Pembridge Charities Report – Cllr. D. Owens – 1st January 2005 to 31st December 2005

Carpenter's Charity + Carpenter Bengough Charity

Financial

Total Income = £13,215.61 Total Expenditure = £5,670.68 Nett Total: £7,544.93

Trustees

Mrs. L. Jones Mrs. A.M. Reid Mrs. B. Norman Rev. J. Read
Mr. R.S. Gwilliam Dr. D. Griffiths Mr. R. Smith Mr. D.T. Owens (Chairman)
Clerk: Mr. M.J. Coleburn

Mr. Frank Smith has recently retired after 60 years service. We are very thankful for his long and loyal service.

At the start of 2005 there were 3 vacant Almshouses, 2 single and 1 double, on all of which the Charity was responsible for meeting Council Tax payments amounting to £262 per month. During August 2005 we were approached by a younger couple in need of a home in Pembridge. With the agreement of the Charity Commission we were able to accommodate them in the vacant 2 bedroomed almshouse as non beneficiaries of the charity under an arrangement known a “turning to account”.

The almshouse charges were reviewed at the October trustees meeting, it was decided to increase the weekly maintenance charges from January 2006, by 50p per week for single bedroom dwellings and £1 per week for two bedroomed dwellings.

At the year end, two single bed roomed almshouses remained vacant.

Parish Footpath Officer’s Report – Mr. K. Myers

This report has been compiled from information provided by volunteer footpath walkers in the parish and the Area Warden of Herefordshire Council.

Prior to the year 2005/06 11 complaints were recorded by the Area Warden, categorised as follows:-

Repairs /replacements to structures required	2
Paths overgrown/blocked by crops	5
Barriers/diversions to paths	4

The 4 barriers/diversion complaints are disputes that are currently unresolved, no information is available on the other complaints.

In 2005/06 there were 15 recorded complaints:

Repairs/replacements to structures required	8
Paths overgrown/blocked by crops	7

It is understood that work is planned by the Area Warden to respond to some of the structure matters in May 2006. A summary of the work carried out will be requested by the Warden.

The Parish Council advised the Rights of Way Development Officer of Herefordshire Council that no new rights of way were required in the parish, there being sufficient already. It was not known what research was carried out by the Council to reach this conclusion.

Farmers Markets Report – Ms. Y. Strube

After a lot of debating it has been decided that the last market will be held in June 2006.

This decision has been taken following the distribution of many advertising flyers, kindly produced by Bob Anderson, many people have helped to distribute these, but there was still a distinct lack of support for the Market to continue.

The number of stallholders attending has been dwindling because of the lack of attendance by people will to buy their wares.

It has been suggested that perhaps just two markets will be held each year in future – in the Autumn and at Christmas maybe, which will be determined nearer the time.

This decision is obviously disappointing as it took a lot of hard work to get the market up and running. If anyone has any ideas to save the market please ring Yasmin Strube on : 01544 388842.

Ward Councillor's Report – Cllr. Roger Phillips

Herefordshire Council has set a Revenue Budget for 2006/07 of 300 million pounds (196 million pounds are non schools) with three areas of growth; Education and Children's Services, Adult Care (including adults with learning disabilities, and Mental Health) and ICT investment.

A Capital Budget of £36 million will include new primary schools at Hunderton and Sutton St. Nicholas, a new Sports Hall at Weobley High School and the opening of the new 900 pupil high school at Whitecross, the first new build in the county for over 40 years. The Library at Kington is being refurbished at a cost of £500,000 to have a single contact services building in the town. The Council is continuing its upgrade of Hereford City, last year work was completed in Eign Gate and the High Street, and this year High Town and the setting of the Old House will be done. During the year the Council opened the new Swimming Pool in Leominster with the support of the local community and continues to grant Halo one million pounds for the running of most of our leisure Centres. The Roman Road was opened this year, and the Council is lobbying hard for a new access road for the County's largest employment site at Rotherwas.

The Government settlement of an increase of 2.4% (4.4% for schools) was against a background of National Pay Agreement of 2.95% increase and extra rising costs of energy and transport in delivering services in a rural area. The Council was inspected by the Audit Commission this year and was praised for its good use of resources and value for money. The Council made over 3 million pounds worth of savings during 2005/06 and has identified a further £1.6 million for this year. Although 2005/06 brought forward an overall underspend it masks overspends in Social Care of over £1.5 million. This is part of a national problem, but in the future the maturing profile of our population will increase the strains on the Council's budget to try and maintain the level of expenditure.

I have ensured that the issue of traffic through the village still remains a high priority for the County Council. A traffic monitoring post has been installed on the western side of the village which, with the information from the one sited at Golden Cross, and the annual rubber tubing inspections, will provide the evidence for future expenditure.

During the year more resurfacing was undertaken on the A44, and safety measures at Golden Cross. Kingspan were recently granted planning permission for their latest planning application, during which process they were asked to contribute £25,000 to the Council, some of which will be spent on better signage for the factory at Milton Cross and Mortimers Cross junctions, and the Rhyse Lane.

The biggest proportion of Council Tax is spent in our schools, that continue to achieve above national standards of education. At the present time none of 104 schools are considered to be in special measures and Lady Hawkins and Pembridge Schools are performing well. At a county level there are concerns about the safeguarding of some potentially vulnerable children, which the Council and its partners takes very seriously.

Currently there is a review being undertaken on our local schools in Kington, Weobley and Wigmore catchment areas. The number of children across the county in our schools is starting to fall and will continue for at least the next 10 years or more, with 2,000 less pupils.

The review is encouraging each school to be proactive about sharing administration and education costs to ensure we maintain our rural schools. Since 1930 117 schools in Herefordshire have been closed, with in some cases huge impacts to the local community. I am sure the Parish Council would support me in encouraging our communities to support our local schools.

The Council is working with the voluntary sector to support local tourism with the setting up of a Destination Partnership. The last phase of the County Heritage Centre in Hereford is being built where all the Council's collection can be properly stored and cared for.

The Council continued to work very closely with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and has joint agreements with them on Learning Disabilities, Mental Health, Community Equipment, Kington Court and the Hillside Unit in Hereford, which will also have a specialised Stroke Unit. The Government is reforming PCT's nationally and we have worked to support Herefordshire continuing to retain its own PCT, which unlike Worcestershire PCTs is not in debt. We await to hear the announcement. Herefordshire Council has also supported the PCT in building a new NHS Dental Centre in Leominster.

The Council is supporting West Mercia Constabulary in its fight not to be abolished and integrated into one large West Midlands force. I have personally gone on record to indicate my beliefs that this would mean less resources for rural areas and council tax payers money being spent on new uniforms and car badges.

I have attended most of the Parish Council meetings throughout the year, attended various social events and made several visits to see individual people on a variety of issues. Within the Parish we have seen an individual business receiving regional and national recognition, and our own Pembridge Young Farmers Club winning the annual county one-plus competition.

I would like to thank the Chairman, Clerk and Members of the Parish Council for their support and co-operation during the last 12 months. It continues to be a privilege and pleasure to represent the parish of Pembridge.

Cllr. R. Phillips – Tel 01544 340269 or 01432 260046
E Mail: rjp@herefordshire.gov.uk
Herefordshire Council: 01432 260000

PEMBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS - YEAR ENDING 31.3.2006

	31.3.2005 £	31.3.2006 £	
1. Balances brought forward	19,304	14,470	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the council's financial records.
2. Annual Precept	16,500	17,500	Total amount of precept income received in the year.
3. Total other Receipts	857	1,887	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook minus the precept.
4. Staff Costs	3,136	3,340	Total expenditure or payments made to an on behalf of all council employees. Including salaries and wages, PAYE & NI (employees & employers) pension contributions related expenses.
5. Loan Interest/ Capital Repayments	NIL	NIL	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the Council's borrowings (if any).
6. Total other Payments	19,055	9,324	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash book minus staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. Balances Carried Forward	14,470	21,193	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year (must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)).
8. Total Cash & Investments	14,470	21,193	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held as at 31 st March of all fixed assets owned by the Council and any other long term assets e.g. loans to third parties.
9. Total Fixed Assets & Long Term Assets	16,971	17,139	The recorded current book value at 31 st March of all fixed assets owned by the Council and any other long term assets e.g. loans to third parties.
10. Total Borrowings	NIL	NIL	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 st March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).