

MINUTES OF ANNUAL OPEN MEETING OF PEMBRIDGE PARISH
For the Parish

Held Wednesday 7th May 2008, at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. G. Evans – Acting Chairman
Cllr. R. Phillips Ward Cllr.
Cllr. D. Morgan
Cllr. P. Thomas

Cllr. A. Stokes
Cllr. Mrs. J. Mifflin
Cllr. Mrs. S. Smith
Cllr. R. Pierce

Mr. C. Buchanan – Parish Warden
Mr. A. Teale – Headteacher
Community Support Officer
Donna Jones &
Police Crime Officer Charles Naylor

+ 4 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies and Reasons for Absence

Cllr. J. Purslow, Cllr. D. Owens, Cllr. K. Myers, Cllr. K. Duggan, Cllr. Mrs. P. Lloyd

2. Minutes of the last meeting & Matters arising from them – 9th May 2007

The Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3. Questions to be raised by Parish Residents

No questions were raised at this point.

4. Parish Council Chairman's Report – Read by Cllr. Garfield Evans

This is the first report of the Parish Council since the uncontested election in May 2007. Twelve candidates put their names forward and all were duly appointed. Mr. John Purslow joined the Council for the first time. At the first meeting of the Council, Mrs. Patricia Lloyd became a co-opted member thus completing the required number of thirteen councillors. Mr. Glyn Whiting, who had been chairman of the Council decided not to stand in May last year and on behalf of everyone I thank him for his time and dedication in serving the Parish.

The Council was the first in Herefordshire to attain Quality Parish status and it continues to maintain this status. This places a heavy workload on our Parish Clerk, Mrs. Heather Harding and I thank her for all of the work that she had done this year. The Clerk, the Vice Chairman and myself have spent a lot of time this year trying to make the agendas for meetings more interesting for Councillors and the public alike and it really is a pity that more Parishioners do not attend.

Quality status brings with it added responsibilities, which in turn bring added costs. In the year to the 31st March, 2008 the Council set a precept of £18,000 against which expenditure (net of VAT reclaimed) was just over £22,800. Roughly £1,300 of this shortfall was met by income from other sources with the balance coming from reserves. Councillor Myers has provided more information relating to these figures in the May edition of the Parish News. For the year to the 31st March, 2009 the Council has set a precept of £19,000.

Mr. Keith Douglas has agreed to continue his appointment as internal auditor and to audit the accounts before they are presented to the external auditors. This is an honorary post and the Council is very grateful that Mr. Douglas is continuing.

This year has been a busy one with the full Council holding ten ordinary meetings and one special meeting. During the year, the Council considered and commented on more than forty planning applications. In addition, various councillors attended sub-committee meetings and represented Pembridge on outside bodies including the "Shobdon Noise Abatement Group" and the Kington Rural Regeneration Company. It is essential for Councillors to keep up to date and some have attended a variety of training courses.

We are living in a time of almost continuous change in local government and the Parish Council has formally adopted changes to both the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders. The change to Standing Orders is significant for everyone. It gives the Chairman the discretion to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to business to be transacted by the Council. Such sessions form part of the Council meeting and in law should be minuted. This really is a dramatic shift from the previous rule whereby members of the public were never permitted to speak while the meeting was in progress.

There has been progress in a number of areas, some of which will be reported on later. A community Access Point has been established and my thanks go to Mr. Henry James, who has chaired the project, and Councillors Mrs. Su Smith and Kevin Duggan for their dedication to the project. The Parish Council website has been completely revamped and my thanks go to Councillor Bob Pierce for his dedication and expertise. A group has been set up for the proper management of the Village Green and I thank Councillors Ken Myers, Bob Pierce and their team for all that they have done. The Parish Plan is under review and my thanks go to the Councillors involved in this project. The Pembridge Parish News continues to flourish and my thanks go to our volunteer editor Mr. Glyn Whiting.

The Parish Council continued to actively support the provision of Affordable Housing for Pembridge and is in regular communication with Marches Housing Association to ensure that progress is being made. Negotiation with Marches Housing has included a Section 106 Agreement, giving priority to application by local people when new housing becomes available.

The Parish Council is pleased to be forging closer links with Pembridge School and during the recent round of proposed closures within the County, sent a letter in support of the school. We are also working to provide a safer environment for children to travel to school. The Council, after consultation with the school, are pursuing the installation of "Speed Activated Devices" at strategic points so that traffic becomes aware of the dangers to children and other residents.

The Parish Council gave its full backing to the siting of Christmas trees throughout the village and our thanks go to all residents who allowed trees to be placed on their property and who supplied the power to run the lights. Thanks also to Councillor Mrs. Mifflin who led the project and to all of the team who gave their time to distribute and erect the trees. The trees really do make an impact on the Village and attracted a lot of praise.

Recently, Councillor Alan Stokes organised a "Trash Bash" and appealed for volunteers to assist in cleaning up the streets of Pembridge. Ten people turned out on the designated morning and set to work, collecting a dozen bags of rubbish. We should all be thankful to Cllr. Stokes for his effort and initiative and hope that he will repeat the exercise in the near future.

Every year has its disappointments and this year, it was the failure to secure tennis courts for Pembridge. The Council was given the opportunity to investigate the provision of tennis courts and my thanks go to Councillor John Purslow, who dedicated a lot of time to researching funding and costs and to gauging interest. Unfortunately, it was a lack of interest that led to the project being abandoned. Research indicated that for tennis courts to be maintained, there would need to be a club set up with around fifty members paying an annual subscription. Less than ten residents showed any real commitment to the idea.

Finally, a further comment on the regular meetings of the Parish Council. These are held every month (other than August and December) and a Notice and Agenda are always posted on the Parish Council notice board at least three days before each meeting. This invites members of the public to attend and it really is disappointing that more people do not come along.

5. Police Anti Theft Report – Police Crime Officer

Burglaries in the area are very low – around 1 per day in the County, which is 50% down over the last 3 years. The big concern to businesses and farmers is the increase in thefts of plant and implements, and the Police are raising the profile of these in partnership. Garden thefts are also on the increase and individuals should be vigilant and take added security precautions with their belongings, such as:

- Gates, fences and walls should be kept in good repair to stop intruders getting in.
- Grow prickly plants close to vulnerable area such as windows, fences, boundary walls and drainpipes.
- Don't leave expensive items like garden tools, mowers, mountain bikes and power tools in the shed.

- If you have nowhere else to store valuable equipment, take measures to secure your shed.
- Don't leave ladders and tools lying around in your garden – these could be used to break into your home.
- Mark your garden tools and equipment with your postcode.

Consider invisibly marking your implements with SmartWater

This is a chemical property marking liquid likened in concept to DNA. Each bottle is unique to the registered owner. It can be painted on to any property; dries clear and cannot be easily removed. It's invisible to the naked eye but glows yellow/green under ultra-violet (UV) light.

- When present it will help to identify the rightful owner of property that is recovered by police
- It can assist in linking persons to a crime scene.
- It can act as a deterrent. Premises using SmartWater display signage and items of property marked exhibit a label advertising that SmartWater is present – offender do not like stealing property that can be easily identified.
- The SmartWater can also act as a psychological deterrent; detained persons will be told about SmartWater – we aim to transfer the fear of crime from the victim to the offender.
- Data shows that incidents of domestic burglary in some parts of the County already using SmartWater, have been reduced by 88%.
- The recommended retail price is £35.29 per annum, however, as part of the Police Scheme we have negotiated a special one-off introductory price of £20.00 inclusive of VAT and carriage.

If you would like your property protected with SmartWater, contact your local Police Community Support Worker, Donna Jones on : 07970 602340.

There followed a question: Q: What type of fuels are being targeted?

A: Widespread, from tanks and vehicles/farming equipment, vehicles, parked lorries. Please advise the police.

6. Parish Warden's Report – Mr. Chris Buchan

Fortunately, I am pleased to report that the crime rate in the Parish continues to remain low, although we have had a couple of incidents of Diesel and Central Heating Oil being siphoned from tanks. These were mentioned in the monthly copies of 'West Mercia Constabulary News Beat' of which I receive a copy, and distribute it my Neighbourhood Watch Scheme team members.

We still have quarterly meetings of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme normally attended by Community Support Officer Donna Jones and Police Officer Sharon Wilson, however Sharon continues to be on Maternity Leave. The next meeting is on the 3rd June 2008 at 19.30 hrs. and will be held at The New Inn. I have contacted Mr. Geoge Shaw of Broxwood regarding this meeting.

We did have a problem with the gypsy site early on in the year, but it has been resolved now through Sgt. Colin Smith at Kington Police Station and Mr. Frank Lane the co-ordinator from Hereford.

For Information – CRIMESTOPPERS is an organisation that can be contacted anonymously if you have any information about a crime or potential crime – you will NOT be asked to identify yourself. Their telephone number is: 0800 555 111.

Yes! I am still fully employed as a Range Warden at PATA and am fairly busy with the Iraq and Afghanistan situations.

Chris then handed out an information sheet about the Smartwater Property Coding Kit. These kits can be purchased currently for £20.

7. School Report – Mr. Andrew Teale

The recent traumatic proposal that was put forward to the school, was the very real possibility of closure and a new school opening on site, to include Shobdon, which caused a great deal of upset to both children and parents. It was fought and stopped, and thankfully the proposals were withdrawn.

The school building improvement plan has been ongoing for several months, by the Worcester based contractors 'Spectus' for the development of a new hall, staff rooms, offices, kitchen and refurbished

children's toilet. Rapid progress is being made with the 1970's block being hidden behind the new hall. The purpose of this improvement plan is not to expand the numbers of children, but to improve the facilities for the current children. In this modern education world the space was inadequate. The 1st phase, the biggest phase, should be completed by September 2008. To follow, will be the improvement to the Victorian hall, Classrooms, Library and Conference Room + IT, together with an interior corridor and other small matters.

The use of the CAP IT equipment at the school has been gratefully used by the children every day. It has proved that the usage of the equipment here has been higher than at any other CAP centre throughout the County. The equipment is available for general parish use on Thursday evenings between 6-9 pm in a classroom, to which all are welcome, and where specialist IT training is available.

After school activities and evenings continue, and new ideas are welcome to improve these over the next few years.

The difficulties with funding of schools have been well documented and nationally there will be changes to small schools. Here the number of pupils has been rising, but it is increasingly challenging to make the budget balance. This school does not have falling rolls, and recently had a milestone with its 100th pupil admitted.

Local Authority changes are affecting and impacting on schools support services, with it being increasingly difficult to maintain an Educational Psychologist. Despite some unsettling times, Pembridge School continues to be a happy and thriving community school that values its strong links with the local community.

On behalf of the children and governors you are thanked for your continued support.

If you wish to stay up-to-date with what is happening at the school our regular Newsletter and information can found on the website:www.pembridge.hereford.sch.uk or via office@pembridge.hereford.sch.uk

The School inspection which took place in February 2007, examined five sections: collective worship, RE, leadership and management, meeting the needs of learners, and the overall distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school. The school was given the highest 'outstanding' judgement in every single section of the report, a tremendous achievement which reflects a lot of hard work from every member of the school team.

There followed some questions:

Q: Will the parking situation at the school improve once the building works are completed?

A: No, the parking problem has occurred because architects say that on site parking is not adequate or safe for staff or parents collecting children.

Q: Is safer then for the children out in the road?

A: Parking problems affect all schools – cars cannot drive onto school sites – there are health and safety guidelines to be adhered to.

Q: With the affordable housing to be built in the village, will additional numbers of children be welcome at the school?

A: We are always aware of falling rolls and would welcome more children, although the school is at capacity at the moment, and some parents are undergoing an appeal process to get their children admitted. There are currently more children wanting to come to the school than there is capacity for them, however, it is healthy for a village to have more children wanting to join.

8. Pembridge Village Hall Report – Cllr. Garfield Evans

On behalf of the Parish Hall Management Trustees I am pleased to report another busy year for the Hall.

The hall continues to be booked by a wide range of groups and there is regular 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, and the Women's Institute. Weekend lettings for parties, weddings and similar events have increased.

Income from hiring of the Hall exceeded the previous record level achieved in 2007 and topped £11,100. Mr. Ted Vaughan continues to make weekly trips from his home in Leominster to organise whist drives and occasional bingo sessions and these have provided a further £2,300 towards Hall running costs. As always, our sincere thanks go to Ted for all of the hard work that he puts in.

The Trustees have continued the programme of expenditure to ensure that facilities at the Hall are well maintained and this year, a total of £1,600 has been spent. As always, the major expenditure has been on the regular upkeep of the wooden floor.

Although the general trend is for costs to rise, I am pleased to report that after all other expenditure had been accounted for, the Hall realised an operating surplus of just under £4,400 which has been absorbed into existing funds.

Mrs. Mifflin continues to act as the caretaker and is ably assisted by Mr. Mervyn Powell.

Between them they have maintained the high standards expected by hirers and we are thankful to both of them for their services. Mrs. Mifflin continues to take bookings for the hall on a purely voluntary basis and we are grateful to her for doing so.

Recruitment of trustees is a recurring problem and although the constitution allows for each regular user of the hall to be represented it is difficult to persuade people 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 and prosper. As always, my personal thanks go to Mrs. Joyce Price who is Honorary Treasurer and Mrs. Sarah Parkinson who has taken over as Honorary Secretary.

9. Footpath Officer's Report – Cllr. Ken Myers (Read in his absence)

There were no matters brought to the attention of the Footpath officer in the year.

There is one outstanding item of work for the Herefordshire Council to do which is to replace a sign on PM62 and this work is in hand.

10. Parish Plan Review Report – Cllr. Mrs. Julie Mifflin

The project to review the original Plan completed in 2002 is now about half way through, in conjunction with staff from Herefordshire Council. There have been some inevitable delays owing to family circumstances of the 3 Councillors involved, however, with lots of assistance and advice, the second half of the review will be carried out at the earliest opportunity.

11. Parish Council Website Report – Cllr. R. Pierce

In January 2007 the Council had rejected commercial proposals for a new website that ranged upwards from £950 and instead requested quotes from local web designers to update the existing site. Only the current designer, Bob Anderson responded to this request, but in the event his other commitments meant that further delays were inevitable. At the July Council meeting Cllr Pierce agreed to produce a new website and to maintain it for one year. The new site would use the domain name pembridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk which had been recently registered by the Clerk. Cllr Pierce would also arrange the transfer of site hosting to a new ISP as the current one was not authorised to host .gov.uk domain names. The new site, initially with a very limited content, went live in October 2007 using the existing domain name of pembridge.org.uk and subsequently became available under pembridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk in March this year.

The website is there to provide information of all kinds and also provides a means for parishioners to communicate with the Parish Council. You can view and print Council minutes and the Parish Newsletter from the previous year. Right now, participants can download an entry form for the Pembridge Show

The information available depends on the information supplied so local groups are invited to let us know about their activities. Bear in mind though that this is purely a Parish Council website and the use of the .gov.uk domain precludes us from promoting individual commercial interests.

12. Community Access Point Report – Mr. Henry James (Received belatedly)

In spring 2007, the steering group behind a bid to Herefordshire Council heard that their bid had been successful and that Pembridge was to have a Community Access Point (CAP). The project was funded by a partnership of Advantage West Midlands, the European Union and Herefordshire Council and has led to many rural communities across Herefordshire gaining access not only to broadband but also equipment and a new focus of community life.

The steering group – now the committee - is made up of six parishioners; a IT consultant, two parish counsellors, local business people, a community development worker and a young person – volunteers representing a broad cross section of the Pembridge community. This group consulted carefully both with the community and Pembridge CE Primary School, where the CAP was to be largely based. After surveys and extensive consultations, a list of equipment was finalised: a list, which includes a number of laptops, cameras, video cameras and equipment of use to community groups as well as businesses (e.g. projector, speakers, screens).

Despite the bureaucracy associated with Herefordshire Council, the committee maintained their enthusiasm and drive through the summer, helping to raise funds for the air ambulance and the CAP through “Party at the Park” in July. Several thousand pounds were raised through the efforts of the organisers and generosity of Pembridge and surrounding area.

In September, the equipment arrived, cupboards were built to securely house it at the school and the committee braced themselves for the launch. The launch in late September was very well attended and Cllr Roger Philips officially opened the facilities. Further consultation took place on that evening and has shaped the nature of the sessions offered since.

Attendance at the sessions – every Thursday 6-9pm – has been good and consistent. Users of the CAP range from young people with their homework through to ‘silver surfers’ and absolute beginners. The volunteer committee members take it in turns to open up and run the sessions, aiding the users with their own knowledge and skills.

It was the wish of the committee that the equipment should be used as much as possible, thus leading to the decision that the CAP should be largely based in the school. Pembridge Primary School use the laptops almost every day as well as the cameras and other equipment on a regular basis. Having the additional laptops in the school means that the school has a higher ratio of computers to children and therefore gains additional benefits.

One such additional benefit of having the CAP based at the school is that the school has met its core offer under the Extended Schools Scheme. The Extended Schools Scheme core offer is a government initiative to include the general community in the school – for example, using school facilities after school hours. At the time of writing, Pembridge is one of the first schools to achieve the full core offer in Herefordshire, due almost exclusively to the CAP being at the school.

The CAP has also been active in fundraising activities, making it entirely self-sufficient. Funds have been raised through a race night, held at the Red Lion pub with the kind permission of Cliff and Nicky, Party at the Park thanks to Geoff and Su and also through inter-CAP initiatives. Ideas for the future include reinstating film nights at the village hall in the summer months and dedicated lessons for beginners and silver surfers.

The CAP now also prints the parish magazine on behalf of the parish council, thanks largely to the purchase of a purpose-bought printer by the parish council.

The committee will always welcome new users to the CAP and would encourage anyone interested to come along and volunteer. The CAP is all set for a fantastic year and the committee is really looking forward to the challenges and opportunities it’ll bring.

13. Pembridge Amenity Trust Report – Cllr. Garfield Evans

The last year has been an uneventful one for the Trust, with no major projects currently underway. Nonetheless, I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their input and support throughout the year. In particular, I would like to thank Mrs. Wendy Douglas who has been Honorary Treasurer of the Trust and Mrs. Jen Myers who is Honorary Secretary.

The only change in Trust personnel during the year was the appointment of Wendy Douglas, who kindly agreed to take up the post of Honorary Treasurer after the previous incumbent had moved away. I am very pleased to welcome Wendy and hope that her involvement with the Trust will be both interesting and rewarding for her.

Market Hall

As required under the terms of the restoration, a visual inspection of the building and associated works has been undertaken. No structural problems were identified by the inspection. The Market Hall is a public building and as such, is open to anyone. This inevitably leads to a degree of wear and tear to the floor, which the Trustees are monitoring.

Car Park & Toilets

The lease of the car park and toilets from Herefordshire Council is scheduled to run for another 17 years, with an expiry date of the 15th March 2005. 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.

The toilet block has had some essential repair work carried out, some of which was as a result of defects in the original construction. The operation of toilets and car park has been relatively trouble free and it has been pleasing to receive a number of compliments on the condition of the toilets. Our cleaner deserves to be congratulated for the work that he does.

Millennium Meadow

The Millennium Meadow is owned by the Amenity Trust for the benefit of the people of Pembridge and any changes to it must be approved by the trustees. The development of the Meadow has been delegated to a group, currently chaired by Mrs. Mifflin, who will give an update on the current position a little later.

The Trustees have recently had to deal with two matters relating to the Meadow. The continued use of the Meadow by dog owners has been a cause for concern and gives rise to serious health and safety issues. It has become clear that banning dogs from the Meadow is almost impossible to police and the Trustees have decided to adopt a policy of encouraging **responsible dog ownership**. Signs will be erected asking owners to clear up after their dogs, and bins will be provided at the entrances to the Meadow.

The other matter requiring attention has been the BMX track situated on the northeast edge of the Meadow. In the current climate, it would be very expensive to provide insurance cover and as the BMX track receives very little use, the Trustees have taken the decision to level the track and restore that part of the Meadow to its original state.

Bell Tower

The bell tower has required little attention during the last year with the main items of expenditure relating to the annual service of the clock and the replacement of broken rungs in the ladder leading up to the bells.

The trustees are aware that the bell tower is a valuable yet underused asset and are currently awaiting the recommendations of Trustee Duncan James for improvements to the lighting in the building and the creation of a permanent display area.

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The suggestion was put forward, regarding dogs owned by visitors to the Townsend Caravan Park, that perhaps Townsend Farm could supply their own poop scoop bags to their visitors and erect a sign on the Caravan Park entrance requesting that dog owners respect the village.

14. Millennium Meadow Report – Cllr. Mrs. Julie Mifflin

The cables which ran overhead across the Meadow have now been placed underground for safety. A meeting was arranged and advertised last Autumn to try and encourage new members to join the Millennium Meadow Group, to endeavour to develop the Meadow further for the benefit of all age ranges, however, nobody turned up to the meeting, which was a disappointment. A further meeting will now be arranged for early June and it is hoped that a flyer can be prepared and issued to parents of school children to try and increase membership. If no interest is shown then there may be a further delay of a year or two. It was hoped though to provide football and netball facilities, as well as seating. It may be appropriate to seek funding from the Kingspan Trust.

There followed some questions: Q: Is the Meadow meant just for children's recreation?

A: No, it's for everyone, and in fact a new seat is about to be positioned to encourage older people to enjoy the vicinity.

Q: Could a bowling green be made there?

A: It could be considered.

Q: Could a cricket green be made there.

A: No, the area is not big enough.

Q: Probably a multi-functional family unit would be better.

A: We're more than happy for all to be involved. There is to be a meeting arranged in June.

15. Village Green Report – Cllr. Bob Pierce River Banks

Early in the year our Tree Warden, Tony Norman, recommended the removal of two trees that had become dangerous. He also advised that all the trees along the riverside needed to be surveyed for safety and size. The Clerk made enquiries of the Environmental Agency who offered to survey all the trees along the river and carry out any necessary works free of charge. This was over and above the EA's strict responsibility which only requires them to attend to trees which are detrimental to the river and its banks. The work was delayed by the floods in July but was eventually completed in February this year. Approximately one third of the stems were removed allowing more light onto the river. Some of the resulting brushwood was used by Tony Norman to construct three potential otter holts along the riverside.

Conservation Area

Council discussions concerning the above lead on to a discussion of how the north eastern area of the village green, between the river and Bridge House, might be put to better use. It was proposed that it could be developed as a Conservation Area and that an application be made for funding to the Kingspan Community Trust. This was approved by the Council and a working group was set up to oversee the application to Kingspan and to implement the scheme if successful. The working group comprised two councillors, Ken Myers and Bob Pierce, and four parishioners - Tony Norman, Adrian Lomax, Doreen Furber and Geoffrey Lynn.

The application to Kingspan Community Trust proposed, in summary: "...to develop and protect the village green and riverside as a Conservation Area for plants and animals by coppicing and pruning of the existing flora, the construction of a looped user-friendly pathway, with viewing points, to provide access, particularly for the less able, and provide Information Boards to describe the flora and fauna and encourage sensible and sensitive behaviour on the site." The cost was estimated at £9,600 and the full amount was applied for.

The application was successful but the Trust thought our cost estimate too low and agreed a figure of £12,000 on the following basis:

1. An expert report to be commissioned to recommend how best to achieve the objectives. This to be presented to the Trust by end of March 2008.
2. Detailed specifications for proposed works to be presented by end of June 2008.
3. All work to be completed by end of June 2009.

The Working Group selected Mr Dan Wenczek, a local arboriculturalist to produce a report. Additionally, as the EA did not produce one, Mr Wenczek was asked to submit a plan to cover management of the trees over the whole of the Green.

An interim report was presented to the working group in early February. The report which concluded that it would not be possible to answer the basic questions about the existing flora at that time of year, and recommended further surveys in May and in July. Despite the lack of a full survey, the report identified two likely options:

- if the area was found to be species-rich it would be preserved as grassland - annually mown & baled in July/August, graze with sheep until site gets too wet. Mow a permanent path. Consider augmenting existing wildflower and grassland plants.
- if found to be species-poor consider partial conversion to a wet-woodland: 50-70%. Plant locally native trees, create additional habitats with stacks of deadwood and plant some wet-grassland.

Both options would include benches, information boards etc and could include bird, bat & insect boxes, otter holt.

As a result of this report the Kingspan Community Trust was asked to approve a revised timescale which they did. The current status of the project is that the first of the proposed surveys is to take place shortly.

Car Parking Area

An application was made early last year to the Kingspan Community Trust for funding to produce a Car Park surface that would not only stand up to constant car parking, but the occasional turning and parking by heavy vehicles. The Trust did not offer the full amount applied for and at the Council meeting in July it was agreed that the Council could not justify making up the considerable shortfall. It was agreed instead to arrange for the badly pot holed area of about 15m square to be surfaced with stone laid over a geotextile matting. Cllr Purslow persuaded Tarmac to donate the stone (but not its transport) and it was estimated that the total cost would not exceed a local resident's offer of up to £1,000 to cover the cost of the work. The surface was completed in April, but recognising that it does not offer a long- term solution the Council made a further application to the Kingspan Community Trust for funding to replace it with a more resilient one. We are currently awaiting the outcome of this application.

16. Parish News Magazine Report – Mr. Glyn Whiting (Received belatedly)

I am pleased to submit the annual Parish News Report for 2007-08. During this year the parish magazine has changed its name from Pembridge On-Line to Pembridge Parish News. This is mainly due to the fact that the magazine is distributed as a hard copy and, as such, has no real relationship to 'on-line'. The magazine will still be available on the Council website as a PDF file.

Also during the year I have ceased to be the printer of the magazine, mainly due to my frequent absences from the UK during the printing process. This appears to have caused some problems for the Council and the cost of printing in colour has become an issue due to the advent of a laser printer procured during the CAPS set-up and the ongoing cost of printer peripherals. This is an area of concern to me as I feel the production of the magazine in colour is a fundamental part of the magazine and should not be lost. I feel the format as it stands is enjoyed by the parishioners and that to change it would be a detrimental step.

During the year we have had many enquirers for advertising space and this has been incorporated as an A4 insert page. It appears we now have enough to support two such pages and the council would do well to foster such revenue.

While we have several articles that feature on an ongoing basis there is still need for more anecdotal stories and features that add variety and interest to the magazine. I also include pictures, even if this means leaving out something that I have been sent, as a magazine with just words is no magazine at all. I have also received comments regarding the inclusion of Weobley and Staunton in the magazine. These contributors offer unique opportunities that are not forthcoming from anyone in the Parish and as such will be given priority in future issues. Offering things to do is great for the parishioners and something to be encouraged.

There have been some teething problems with the advertising but we have now resolved that and hopefully all adverts should be as requested.

I feel the magazine has been well received this year and, if the printing costs can be addressed, could become self-funding. The format works well and most months delivers enough space. However, should we wish to expand to include letters, poetry or any form of competition then we would need to increase the number of pages. This would then have an impact on the printing costs and so back to square one.

I am happy to continue as editor for the foreseeable future, but feel that it would be beneficial for the helm to change from time to time to inject fresh thinking and impetus. As this seems to be in short supply I'll press on !!

In conclusion I would like to thank all the contributors for their articles and helpers who have folded or delivered over the last year and hope that you can continue in 2008. Any constructive comments will be well received and feedback is always appreciated.

There followed some questions:

Q: Do we need to have the magazine printed in colour at all, as it would be much cheaper to produce in

black and white only?

A: It has been a positive move to print the magazine in colour. The Parish Council made a decision to stay that way.

Q: Is it worth it at greater cost? Did anyone complain at black and white as it used to be? Could it be reviewed in future?

A: It is being reviewed currently, certainly the advertisements are to be in black and white only. The Parish Council has spent considerable time discussing this matter and the status quo is to be retained for now.

17. **Pembridge Charities Report (Reg. No. 216294) – Cllr. David Owens**

This report covers the period 1st January 2007 to 31st December 2007

Registered Address:-

Jubilee Cottage, Upper Hardwick, Pembridge, Herefordshire. HR6 9HE

Trustees:-

Mrs. L. Jones	Mrs. A.M. Reid	Mrs. B. Norman	Rev. J. Read
Mr. D.T. Owens	Dr. D. Griffith	Mr. R. Smith	Mr. R. Gwilliam

Clerk:- Mr. M.J. Coleburn

Financial:-

Total Receipts: £18,351	Total Expenditure: £4,465	Nett: £13,886
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Almshouses: Duppa Cottages, Bridge Street & Trafford Cottages, East Street

Almshouses Occupation:-

At the start of the year, all ten Almshouses were occupied, eight by alms persons appointed by the trustees and two houses not required for charitable purposes, turned to account.

The death of one of our long term alms persons during May left a single bedroom house vacant and the departure of a non alms couple during June left a two bed roomed house vacant.

During October, the vacant single bedroom house was turned to account and occupied by a non-alm person. At the year-end, the two bed roomed house remained unoccupied, the Charity became liable for the payment of Council Tax on it from 25th December 2007.

Almshouses Minor Works:-

During the summer, all almshouses underwent an electrical test and inspection, as a result of which, the existing Consumer Units with rewirable fuses were replaced with modern units equipped with miniature Circuit Breakers and Residual Current Breakers. It was also found that a small amount of internal wiring needed to be replaced. All necessary work has been carried out and Test Certificates issued for each house with the recommendation that future testing should be carried out at 5 yearly intervals.

A number of roof tiles which had been dislodged by high winds had to be replaced or refixed.

Timber treatment to eradicate wood boring weevils at 4 Duppa Cottages was carried out.

18. **Ward Councillor's Report – Cllr. Roger Phillips**

Herefordshire has a population of 180,000 people with a quarter over the age of 60. The Government continues to under fund the Council giving a settlement 23% less than that given to the average local authority, and our school funding per pupil is 19% less than average Unitary Council being the 3rd lowest County in England. The challenge of delivering services over a large geographical area should never be underestimated.

For 2008/09 the Council has set a budget of 131 million pounds and identified 3.75 million pounds worth of savings. The Reserves are in a healthy position and the Council monitors its expenditure with regular reports in the public domain.

This year over 53 million will be spend on capital projects including new Primary Schools at Riverside in Hereford, Sutton St. Nicholas and Staunton-on-Wye. Plans are afoot to build new High Schools at Leominster and Wyebridge. A new Crematorium will be completed this year, flood projects in Hereford and Ross, and the Rotherwas Access Road will be opened in June. This is the first new road build in Hereford

City since the opening of Greyfriars Bridge in 1968.

The County overseas the education of 23,000 children in 100 schools. Following the withdrawal of the directorate proposals for Schools the Council is committed to not closing any Primary schools outside the existing small schools policy. This affects Primary schools with less than 46 pupils in total with particular concerns on numbers below 36. The Council will be bidding for 8 million pounds under the Primary Strategy for new buildings in our Primary Schools. There will be no change in High School provision (including sixth form at Lady Hawkins) as we allow the new National 14 to 19 Education agenda to unfold. The cost of Home-to-School Transport for the County is 5 million pounds and with rising fuel costs will put pressure on the central budget as this is funded from Council Tax.

The pressures of the Adult Social care budget continue to be a concern on a national and local basis. The maturing population will increase demands and costs on these services. There are 600 residential care places and 250 nursing places to be paid for. The Council is continuing its closer working with the PCT in Children's Care, Adult Care and Support services. This year saw the appointment of a new joint Chief Executive with the PCT, Mr Chris Bull.

The Council has worked hard to gain the support of neighbouring Counties to develop a satellite Radiotherapy service at Hereford alongside the Renton Unit. This is the first such service in the Country and will help reduce the travelling time for treatment which to date has meant journeys to Cheltenham.

In Hereford City plans are progressing for a new Livestock market to allow the development of a new retail development to compliment the existing City Centre and regain Hereford's position as a sub regional centre. Some 16,500 houses will be built in the County till 2025 and a debate on where and what type of housing will take place over the next 12 months as the new Local Development Framework is matured.

The Council is committed to increasing the amount of recycling and retaining a weekly Bin Collection. The maintenance of our Highways and pavements still remains a big challenge for the Council given Government's continued reduction in funding. Projects have been carried out at Milton Crossroads, Rhyse Lane and Bearwood Lane, together with other routine highway works.

I attend and send reports to the Parish Council and Parish Newsletter; pick up various individual issues of Parishioners throughout the year. The identifying of a suitable speed device for the village, revision of the conservation area and the new local development framework are three issues which will be dealt with this year.

I will continue to lobby at County, Regional and National Level for a better deal for our Rural Communities. The increase in fuel costs will have a considerable impact on individual households and the Council's Budgets.

It continues to be an honour and pleasure to be your local County Councillor.

Roger Phillips

01544340269/ 01432260044

Email: rjphillips@herefordshire.gov.uk

19. **Any further questions to be raised by Parish Residents**

Q: The travellers Site is in a mess.

A: Clerk to endeavour to find out what is happening at the site with regard to plot take-ups.

Q: Why does it cost such a lot to place children in Care?

A: Because this is specialist need and sometimes children are placed out of county.

Q: Hereford High Town shops closure – what is being done about it?

A: If we do nothing the city will just die. The new development on the old Cattle Market site will encourage new companies to arrive. We must complement the city centre as well as developing the Butter Market. 70% of retail spend is made outside of this county.

Q: Hospitals – some operations used to take place in Llandrindod Hospital – does that still happen?

A: Uncertain, but do know that lots of Welsh patients must come to Hereford. Doctors can offer choices.

Q: Can Business Rates be reduced?

A: No, they are set by Government nationally.

Q: High rents may mean that more companies leave Hereford.

A: Rents may be reduced.

Q: Are the Speed Indicator Devices going to be introduced here?

A: Yes, we are in the process of arranging these and hope to have them in place later this year.

Q: We used to have someone to keep the village clean, is there likely to be a replacement?

A: No, we have not been successful in finding anyone to do this, despite advertising, so hopefully the occasional "Trash Bash" clean up will suffice.

20. Next Meeting Arrangements

Next year's meeting will be held on Wednesday 6th May 2009.

Meeting Closed at 9.15 pm

ANNUAL RETURN - YEAR ENDING 31.3.2008

	31.3.2007 £	31.3.2008 £	
1. Balances brought forward	21,193	20,562	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the councils financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. Annual Precept	15,000	18,000	Total amount of precept income received in the year.
3. Total other Receipts	3,273	10,197	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook minus the precept. (£308.93 Unclaimed VAT included)
4. Staff Costs	3,548	3,690	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	15,356	20,827	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	20,562	24,242	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year (must equal (1+2+3) – (4+5+6)).
8. Total Cash & Investments	20,562	23,934	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held as at 31 st - to agree with bank reconciliation. (£308 VAT still to be reclaimed)
9. Total Fixed Assets & Long Term Assets	46,948	47,127	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).