

MINUTES OF ANNUAL OPEN MEETING OF PEMBRIDGE PARISH 2013

Held Wednesday 8th May, 2013 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. G. Evans	Chairman	Cllr. A. Stokes
Cllr. A. Pace		Cllr. D. Owens
Cllr. P. Rogers		Cllr. M. Ratcliffe
Cllr. T. Bennetto		Cllr. R. Phillips (later)

Mr. B. Bowen
Mrs. S. Bowen
Mrs. G. Lomax
Mr. A. Lomax
Rev. B. Jacobs

Ms. K. Finney – School Headteacher
Mr. R. Pierce
Mr. K. Myers
Mrs. J. Myers
Mrs. M. Albright

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Cllr. K. Duggan, Cllr. Mrs. C. Evans, Cllr. Ms. C. Fothergill, Cllr. Mrs. J. Mifflin, Cllr. P. Thomas, Mrs. P. Stokes

2. Minutes of the last meeting & Matters arising from them – 16th May 2012

Were approved. No matters arising.

3. Parish Council Chairman's Report 2012/13 – Cllr. G. Evans

This year the Council has held eleven ordinary meetings and a number of special meetings. Some councillors have also attended sub-committee meetings and have represented Pembridge on outside bodies. The Parish Council meets every month (other than August) and a notice and agenda are always posted on the Parish Council notice board (on the wall of the Red Lion) at least three days before each meeting. Members of the Parish are more than welcome to attend and although they may, are not permitted to take part in any debate, there is always a session for Parishioners to comment or ask questions.

Since my last report, there have been two changes on the Parish Council. Mr. Ken Myers and Mr. Bob Pierce have resigned and their places were taken by Mr. Tom Bennetto and Mr. Mark Ratcliffe, both of whom were co-opted at the July meeting. I would like to record my thanks and appreciation of the service given to the community by Ken and Bob during their time on the Parish Council.

The activities of the Council place a heavy workload on our Parish Clerk, Mrs. Heather Harding and I thank her for her support and for all the work that she has done this year.

In the year to 31st March 2013 the Council held the precept at £18,000 and details of the income and expenditure figures will appear on the Council website www.pembridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk after the external audit has been completed. For the year to 31st March 2014, the Council has yet again held the precept at £18,000 and more detail will be made available on the website. The 2014 precept figure is once again lower than the anticipated spending for the year and any deficit will be met by reducing the reserves held.

I am pleased to confirm that 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.

At this point in previous reports, I have selected a few of the matters that have been dealt with during the year and provided a brief review of them. This year I am going to try to encourage people to pay a visit to the parish council website at www.pembridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk where you will find the Minutes of every meeting and be able to keep abreast of what the Parish Council does. The website is very well maintained on behalf of the Parish Council by Bob Pierce and it contains a wealth of information, which is sadly underused. So please, if you have never visited the website, make it a priority to do so. A visit to the site will also enable Parishioners to sign up to our e mail service whereby the agenda for all upcoming meetings will automatically be sent to you.

Finally, some more thanks. Thank you to the volunteers who help to keep the Parish running smoothly; to the teams of parishioners who involve themselves in the erection of Christmas trees and lights; to the members of the Pride in Pembridge Group who are doing magnificent work in making the village look attractive; to the Good Neighbour Scheme for providing such a valuable service. Thank you to Tony Norman who continues as Tree Warden and importantly, as our Flood Warden; a vital service that benefits from his deep knowledge of the river and surrounding area. Thank you to Bob and Carrie Pierce who are our volunteer editors of Pembridge Parish News and added thanks to Bob for looking after the Parish Council website. Thank you to Philip Rogers, who is our local correspondent for Hereford Times and don't forget to contact him if you wish to get anything publicised.

4. Parish Matters to be raised by Pembridge Electors

One request was made for the Parish Council's draft Minutes to be published on the website, As well as the Precept figures for 2013/14 also.

The Chairman agreed that the Precept figures could be made available on the website straight away, but the matter of the draft Minutes would be discussed at the next parish council meeting.

5. Police Report – CSO Dave Boden

The total number of reported crimes for the year was eighteen.

These comprised of: 6 thefts, 1 burglary from a dwelling, 1 attempted burglary from a dwelling, 1 theft from a shop, 2 criminal damage, 7 burglaries from sheds and outbuildings.

The local Police team works closely with Pembridge School : tag rugby, world book day and cycling proficiencies.

The PACT surgeries are held at the Olde Steppes Shop every four weeks :- the next one is on 23rd May 2013. 11am to 1pm

Police News Alerts are a monthly bulletin, and anyone can sign up for them to be e mailed.

The Police will soon recommence traffic Speed Enforcement around the village.

6. Pembridge School Headteacher's Report – Miss K. Finney

Pembridge CE School Report for the Parish 2012-2013

Pembridge CE Primary School continues to thrive and we currently have 92 children on roll. This academic year has so far been very busy and successful. Highlights include a whole school visit to Malvern Theatre, Year Six trip to London, which included an over night stay and an exciting tour of the Houses of Parliament, a Friendship conference with our local schools as Lady Hawkins' High School, a Victorian themed afternoon with members of the Pembridge History Group a Gospel Singing project (which culminated in a wonderful concert where our pupils performed at the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford), football, netball and rugby tournaments competing against our neighbouring schools and Christmas and Easter services at St. Mary's Church.

Plans for Summer Term include supporting the village with Pembridge in Bloom activities, using the wonderful village location to enhance the children's learning in their local geography work and study of the Tudors, the unveiling of our new outdoor classroom and spiritual garden and hopefully, weather permitting, an enjoyable Sports Day and plenty of outdoor learning in our beautiful grounds. Over the Easter break we have had our playground extended and resurfaced which will enhance playtimes and PE for all the pupils. WE have also been very fortunate in securing some funding from Kingspan, which is being used to install new wall bars to the school hall. These will make an exciting addition to the children's gymnastics sessions.

The children continue to take a very active part in school life. We have a hard working School Council who has successfully supported events to raise over £400 for Children in Need and Comic Relief. They have also written a Healthy Snack Policy and an Anti Bullying Policy for the pupils. The Eco-Committee have been busy working on a school travel plan and helping the school to get ready for our application to become a Green Flag Eco friendly school. Our Junior Road Safety Officers have met with the Senior Road Traffic Engineer from Amey to discuss parking issues around school. Pupils also recently organised and presented a Talent Show which was highly entertaining and raised just over £200 for the British Heart Foundation.

Our curriculum is rich and vibrant, for instance all Key Stage Two pupils have participated in Heart Start training which teaches simple emergency life saving skills; Key Stage Two pupils have all been learning French and how to play the tin whistle. All pupils have received training from a professional sports coach and also enjoy outdoor learning in our Forest School area. In the Forest School the pupils have learned how to tie various knots which has helped them to fashion twigs into picture frames, whittled wood and toasted marshmallows on the camp fire.

Academically pupils continue to do well, in 2012/13 in Key Stage One pupils performed better than the national average in reading and were broadly in line with national schools for writing and maths. At Key Stage Two 95% of our pupils made their expected good progress in both English and maths. Our achievements have also been highlighted in a recent review of the school, which was carried out by two head teachers from different schools in the county. The key strengths of the school were identified as ;

- The quality of teaching across the school
- The supportive and caring ethos within the school including religious aspects of the school, particularly in meeting the social, emotional and behavioural needs of pupils and their families
- The high quality relationships between adults and pupils and pupils themselves
- Outstanding pupil behaviour
- Early years provision
- Throughout the school, pupils appear motivated to achieve well in their lessons. The pupils' attitudes towards learning are good
- Staff commitment to use of effective Professional Development
- Clear leadership

The Governors continue to work very hard to support the school. The governing Body has seen a few key changes in the past 12 months. Dr. David Griffith stood down after 12 years as Chair and over 20 years as a Governor; Mrs. Julie Mifflin also recently retired from the group after a similar amount of long service. We thank them for their wisdom, dedication and support to the school. Mrs. Sharron Goode is our new Chair and we also welcomed Mr. Iain Murdoch and Mr. Clive Edwards to the body.

We are lucky to also have a committed and enthusiastic group of supporters who make up the Parent, Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA).

The PTFA have held several successful fundraising events over the year which has helped the school to purchase 3iPADS, paid for the theatre visit and will help to finance the erection of the outdoor classroom. The group also funded a gift for all the children to take home for their mums for Mothering Sunday. Many volunteers come into school to support the children with reading and after school activities such as sport and textiles. We are always happy to add to this band of volunteers as it greatly enriches the children's experiences.

7. **Village Hall Report – Cllr. Mrs. C. Evans (Read by the Chairman)**

The Village Hall has again been well used during the year and there are many bookings for the forthcoming year including a wedding! Although the proceeds from Whist Drives were down over the last 12 months the income from hire of the hall was up significantly from the previous year.

Over the past 12 months additional insulation has been put into the hall roof and a new banded oil tank has been installed. It has recently been discovered that the boiler is not working exactly as it should so the Village Hall Committee are currently in the process of getting a Commercial Heating Engineer in to assess our heating system and see if there is any way in which we can make it more efficient.

Unfortunately due to ongoing cuts within Herefordshire Council the glass recycling bins were removed from the car park on 29th April, as many people in the village do not have green wheelie bins due to access the council have agreed to put two in the car park which will be collected every two weeks. The concern is that this will result in rubbish/recycling being left in the car park, we shall just have to keep an eye on this and take action if needed.

Border Oak are very kindly donating 10 oak parking bollards which once in place we hope will stop people parking on the grass area at the front of the hall.

Finally after 26 years of service to the Pembridge Village Hall Management Committee Treasurer, Joyce Price, has decided it is time to hand over the reins so if you or someone you know may be interested in taking on this role please get in touch with the Secretary, Sarah Parkinson (01544 388360) for more information.

8. **Parish Warden Report – Mr. Chris Buchan (Sherriff)**

Again the crime rate in the parish remains relatively low due to the continued presence of the local Police and Community Support Officer throughout the year. We have had a few incidents, as follows:-

- a) Theft of a staddle stone and garden ornaments
- b) Theft of hessian covering, from The Steppes Shop – June 2012 (item recovered)
- c) Shed stolen from the allotment – August 2012
- d) Workshops and sheds targeted with power tools/batteries & strimmers being stolen
- e) Vehicle involved in a burglary – Silver Toyota Hylux pick-up – Feb. 2013
- f) Theft of a large ornamental stone wheel from a garden – April 2013

Directions for HGV's from Kingspan: Kingspan Insulation's Logistics Manager, Dave Chillery attended a Neighbourhood Watch meeting in February 2013 and gave us a brief on what information they send to foreign HGV delivery drivers attending the site to try and prevent them from going down Bridge Street and possibly causing structural damage to that and the river bridge.

PC Jo Ellis also arranged for Chris Bestall a Forensic Security expert to give the Neighbourhood Watch group and Allotment members a briefing in February 2013.

I also put up a laminated Security Sign about "Smartwater" marking of items, on the Allotment notice board, to advise all Allotment holders.

We continue to have our quarterly "Neighbourhood Watch" meetings (which I Chair), to discuss incidents from the West Mercia Police weekly bulletins and Neighbourhood Watch updates, and any other business which pertains to the parish. These meetings are usually supported by either PC Jo Ellis or CSO Dick Alford, who update us on what actions have been taken with regard to any local incidents.

The next Neighbourhood Watch meeting is on Tuesday 21st My 2013 at 19.30 hrs in The New Inn.

After 3 years of waiting we have managed to get a grit/salt bin positioned by the entrance to Manley Lane, which has been used a lot this winter !!

The Speed Indicator Device on the A44 is still proving to be a deterrent to vehicles/motor bikes speeding through the village.

We carried out our Halloween duty patrol on Wednesday 31st October 2012 by patrolling the village, walking around in pairs, at hourly intervals - A quiet night !

My team consists of: Alan Stokes, Ian Price, Pat Teale, Linda Jones, Chris & Ron Moore, and John & Barbara Petrie.

9. **Pride in Pembridge Group/In Bloom Report – Cllr. A. Stokes**

Who are we?

We are a group of people from a cross-section of the parish, about twelve in number, who established ourselves in the autumn of 2011 to maintain and improve the visual and environmental aspects of the village on a year-round basis.

The story so far

Initially we concentrated on regular litter picking and general tidying and weeding, but soon found ourselves planting areas for example at the west side of The New Inn.

We held monthly meetings to talk about how we could continue to improve things, and at one of these meetings we decided to enter the RHS Heart of England in Bloom campaign.

To cut a very long story short, following a lot of work, I'm sure most of you know, Pembridge was awarded a gold certificate, and best in category (Village) in 2012.

By achieving Best in Category in October 2012 we were invited by the RHS to enter the finals of the National Britain in Bloom in 2013.

Our work continues on a weekly basis, and has expanded to include weeding; we planted 1000 Bluebells in the conservation area by the river, clearing a large area in the moat, and planting Bluebells there, and siting bird and bat boxes. We have built some more planters by the bridge, and whilst the sewer works were undertaken we cleaned the rod edge of very many wheel barrow loads of mud and weeds. We estimate that we have picked up over 100 bags of litter since we started.

Other work completed includes

- Supplying and planting baskets in front of the shop and gallery
- Bulb and summer planting in beds alongside The New Inn, Red Lion and horse trough
- Purchase and planting of ornamental trees by the Parish Hall
- Appropriate maintenance of the Conservation Area
- Planting Snowdrops on Bridge Street verges and in the Car Park
- Clearing and planting the Alms Houses front gardens
- Construction of WI planter in the Car Park, and fitting a rainwater butt
- Supplying and planting Veg Trug which is sited in the churchyard

Next weekend and into June 2013 we shall be painting the telephone kiosk, post box and numerous posts and pillars in the village centre.

Funding

We have been very generously supported by:

- *The Parish Council
- *Hereford Council (via Amey) through the Hereford and Wye Valley in Bloom group
- *We sent begging letters to all the businesses in the village and received generous support from almost all of them.
- * A donation from The Horticultural Society
- * A donation from the Carol singers who sing around the village at Christmas time

Last weekend a number of us attended the Open Garden at Lower Hope in the capacity as helpers and stewards, and from this we expect a donation from the Hereford and Wye Valley in Bloom group.

We held a very successful fundraising musical evening in the village hall in association with the PGNS who provided free of charge a great rock choir – The Helen Vereker Singers. The same choir sang at the Christmas tree lights switch-on in December.

We are also holding a Pembridge Open Garden weekend 8th & 9th June. I think about 14 gardens will be open, and I urge all of you and your friends to take time to visit gardens in our beautiful village.

I wish to publicly place on record our thanks to all those who have given so generously, in money and time and materials. It really is a great feeling to think that so many people appreciate what we are trying to do, and is a great encouragement to the group.

Ongoing Projects

Support to the school in the form planting around their new spiritual garden, and help with their vegetable garden and wildlife area.

Continued work in the conservation area and the moat.

We are producing a pictorial map of the village to be given to the public as a tourist information leaflet, our special thanks to Bob Anderson for producing this for us, and the portfolio that describes the activities of Pembridge in Bloom that is required by the RHS at the end of June.

A tidy up and planting in the bed at the east of the New Inn.

The Heart of England judges will be in Pembridge on 4th July 2013.

We do not yet know the judging date for the National Finalist judges visit, but it will be in the first two weeks of August.

If anyone would like to join the group, they would be most welcome. We meet pretty much every Monday and Thursday weather permitting for a couple of hours. We have two fairly new volunteers, but will always welcome more.

10. Pembridge Amenity Trust Report – Cllr. G. Evans

The last year has again been a quiet one with no major projects currently underway. Nonetheless, I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their input and support throughout the year, and to welcome Brenda Jacobs who takes on the role of ex-officio trustee. In particular, I would like to thank Mrs. Wendy Douglas who is honorary treasurer of the Trust and Mrs. Jen Myers who is honorary secretary.

Market Hall

As required by the ongoing maintenance plan, we are currently planning to treat the timbers of the building to prevent woodworm infestation. Later this year we also hope to undertake the planned work on the cobbles that were installed to catch the rainwater run-off. These are set in traditional lime mortar, which is not a very durable material and they now need to be re-pointed.

Car Park & Toilets

The lease of the car park and toilets from Herefordshire Council is scheduled to run for another 12 years, with an expiry date of 15 March, 2025. The running costs of the car park and toilets are underwritten by the Parish Council.

The operation of toilets and car park has been relatively trouble free. There has been an issue with water charges and an apparent leak but this has now been sorted out thanks to the intervention of the Parish Council.

Millennium Meadow

There is nothing to report. The development the Meadow has been delegated to a group, currently chaired by Mrs. Julie Mifflin, who has gathered around her an enthusiastic group of people. Anyone wishing to know more about developments on the Meadow should contact Mrs. Mifflin.

Bell Tower

There is nothing to report. Our continued thanks go to Mr. Peter Klein, who undertakes the regular task of winding the clock.

Garfield Evans
Chairman of Trustees

11. Parish Footpath Officer's Report – Cllr. P. Rogers

The two bridges at Rowe farm reported last year as being out action have been repaired.

We are currently waiting for confirmation of our P3 allowance of monies from Amey.

This will be used for strimming and repairing footpaths on an ongoing maintenance programme as at the moment none of our footpaths attracts priority funding.

There are currently 3 broken stiles awaiting repair on PM1 and PM29.

12. Pembridge Parish Magazine Editor's Report – Mr. Bob Pierce

Carrie and I took over full time editorship of the newsletter with August/September issue last year although I had produced two of the previous three issues - so seven issues to date. We anticipated that it would be a joint effort, with me writing and editing while Carrie did the laying out. In practice the two roles were difficult to separate so it is now largely produced by me and then corrected by Carrie.

We print 500 copies of the full colour newsletter and the black and white advertising flyer every two months. We are grateful to the group that distributes the Arrowvale Messenger for also distributing the newsletter. This by no means includes all the properties in the parish so a number are placed in the Steppes and elsewhere for collection.

The newsletter is produced for The Parish Council and it's primary role is to convey Parish Council information which, on its own, would be fairly dry stuff. By printing in colour and having groups like the Pembridge Good Neighbour Scheme, Pride in Pembridge and Pembridge Open Gardens to provide a source of news and pictures we can produce an attractive looking publication.

There is really very little more to report. We have received almost no feedback apart from comments raised during conversations with friends, so it's difficult to assess how the newsletter is viewed. Before I became involved with producing it, I can't say that I eagerly awaited each issue but I usually read most of it.

By asking a few casual questions my impression is that many people do little more than glance at the front page. If you find that difficult to believe it's probably because you're at this meeting tonight and they're not!

Realistically, the newsletter isn't very important to most parishioners but it is a valuable means of communication for the Parish Council, particularly in a community where internet use and digital communication is below the national average. Whether the cost of producing it in colour is justified might be reconsidered. The annual net cost of production, including advertising revenue and subsidy from Kingspan, is about £635. Reverting to black and white would save about £395.

13. Pembridge Almshouses & Charities Report – PC Representative: Cllr. D. Owens

This report covers the period 1st January to 31st December 2012

Trustees:-

Mesdames Mrs. B. Norman Mrs. C. Price Rev. B. Jacobs
Messrs Mr. D. Owens Mr. R. Smith Mr. R. Gwilliam Mr. G. Evans Dr. D. Griffith

Charity Contact: Mr. M. Coleburn, Jubilee Cottage, Upper Hardwick, Pembridge. HR6 9HE
Telephone: 01544 320115 Email: pembridgecharities@live.co.uk

Almshouse Occupation:-

On 1st January 2012 only No.2 Trafford Cottages was vacant, it became occupied in November. No.5 Trafford became vacant in June and remained unoccupied until November. 1 & 2 Duppa Cottages both became vacant in March, No.2 remained unoccupied for the rest of the year, however No.1 was occupied from June to August, and thereafter remained unoccupied for the rest of the year. The occupation of Nos. 2 and 5 Trafford Cottages was due directly to the excellent article written by Bob Pierce which appeared in the October Messenger and so our thanks to Bob.

Almshouse WMC Charges:-

The weekly maintenance charges were reviewed at the October trustee meeting, the new charges from 1st January 2013 are:

Single Bedroom Houses increased from £22.00 per week to £25.00 per week.

Two Bedroomed Houses increased from £34.50 per week to £37.50 per week.

Council Tax Exemption:-

Exemption class B Exempt for 6 months from last date of occupation, thereafter 100%.

14. Parish Plan Review / Neighbourhood Plan Report - Cllr. A. Pace

During the past 12 months your Parish Council applied for approval to formulate a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) encompassing the Parish as a whole. Our application was approved by Herefordshire Council (H.C.).

A Steering Group has been formed of all those who offered to help. Members are Merry Albright, Geoff Hardy, Stephen Jacques, Steve Jones, Sue Tong, Pip Norman, Tricia Lloyd, Terry Baker, David Owens, Philip Rogers, Andrew Pace and Heather Harding. It should be noted that a majority are not Councillors and I would thank them for their willingness to participate.

In March H.C. published their draft Local Plan or Core Strategy (LP/CS). This is important for our NDP as it has to comply with the LP/CS as well as with the National Planning Policy. Consultation on the LP/CS closed on the 22nd April and your Council responded to the draft with the following comments.

1. Whilst the LP/CS might have application for those Parishes which did not wish to draw up an NDP it was much too prescriptive and inflexible for those that did, particularly predominately rural Parishes.
2. We also commented that there was too great an emphasis on affordable housing and that Pembridge would like a good mix of housing in the period covered by the LP/CS to 2031.
3. We stated strongly that the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Pembridge at £140 per square meter was excessive, particularly when compared to £50 for Lyonshall and £0 for Leominster. This level of CIL will discourage any building in Pembridge Parish. Developers would seek sites in areas with a low CIL whilst self-builders and individuals would find the Levy exorbitant. I understand that there might be changes at National Level to the CIL but as yet I have no detail.

The Steering Group is in the final stages of preparing a questionnaire aimed at finding out how residents would like the Parish to develop. It is hoped to distribute, collect and analyse this before too long in order to begin the process leading to a draft NDP.

However, progress is likely to be slow. Before any plan can go to an examiner it has to be agreed by H.C. as complying with the LP/CS, and this cannot be finally done until H.C. has finalised the LP/CS. It is not anticipated that this will happen before next Spring at the earliest.

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

Site address: www.pembridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk

Server statistics suggest that visits to the site by human beings have been up in recent months to around 12 per day. It is difficult to confirm this. The top three referring sites, that is sites from which visitors arrive at ours, are google.co.uk, Kington.org.uk and bing.com and the visitors from all three amount to just over 20 per month. The majority of over 400 visits per day are by automated agents from search engines and by other software trying to find email addresses for spam use - most of these originate in the USA or Russia.

The site provides access to council minutes going back to January 2007, details of how the precept is allocated and also includes the Pembridge Parish News going back to the January 2007 edition. The site also gives the Pembridge surgery opening times and emergency contact details, times for the mobile Post Office service and a link to the local bus timetables on the Herefordshire website. From next week it will also include the Police surgery times!

On the site you can register to receive agendas by email in advance of each Council meeting. The number on the list was eighteen at this time last year with a small number added this year. (As I am no longer on the Council, I do not have access to the list!)

My report last year concluded by saying that my task for the coming year is to replace the current Flash based site with one in HTML5. Unfortunately, other priorities have meant that my task for the coming years is to replace the current Flash based site... The work is actually well under way so in a couple of months or so you'll be able to see the site on your iPad.

16. Lengthsman Scheme – Cllr. A. Stokes

For the last few years our Lengthsman has been Richard Mills of Wormsley, he also has a number of other parishes that he services.

Mrs. Carrie Pierce does a good job in administering the service on behalf of the Parish Council.

Initially we had a few problems, but over the last couple of years I think that we have developed a good working relationship with Richard and we are very happy with the work that he does in the parish.

He now knows the parish very well, and a large part of his work is to conduct routine maintenance on the 'hot spots' and problem area.

This involves cleaning ditches and gulleys, grips, cleaning road signs etc.

Last winter proved quite a challenge because of the sheer amount of rainfall; I think that in the main he did a very good job.

Other works requested were for drainage problems in Weston, Broxwood, Rhyse Lane, Marston, Luntley, Suckley Lane etc. etc.

Last year the budget was £4,230, and we actually spent £4,250 (£20 over budget).

I understand that the Lengthsman scheme is currently under review with Herefordshire Council, we await the results of the review, and in fact there is a meeting in Leominster this evening.

17. Good Neighbour Scheme – Mrs. P. Stokes (Read by Cllr. A Stokes)

The Pembridge Good Neighbour Scheme has had another successful year with a volunteer force of 18, who have provided support to 13 different people in the Parish. We have delivered in excess of 100 hours of volunteer time and have several people who need ongoing support.

We have been approached with referrals from the Social Work teams and from the British Red Cross.

We have given advice on our scheme to a member of Dilwyn Parish Council who was considering setting up a similar project.

A letter was received from the Cabinet Office, this was from Nick Hurd, his officials in the Local Intelligence Team brought to his attention the work the Good Neighbour Scheme was doing. He congratulated us on the delivery of the project and wished us continued success.

The Scheme has also been included in the Herefordshire Locality Engagement Toolkit as an example of Good Practice.

We have held Coffee Mornings during March and April and these have proved to be successful; we are now intending to hold monthly Coffee Mornings every 3rd Saturday of the month ("Coffee & Company").

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Council for its ongoing support of the scheme and to all the volunteers who give their time and help so willingly.

18. Shobdon Airfield Noise Abatement Group – Cllr. P. Rogers

As reported at the last Annual Parish Meeting, the airport is now operating a log of telephone complaints as well as recording complaints received by e-mail.

Complaints received up till October were discussed at the last Noise Abatement Meeting which was attended by myself and a representative from Shobdon Parish Council in addition to various members of the flying club / tiger helicopters and the gliding club.

Since October 2012 there have been 5 complaints logged by telephone.

In the same time frame there have been 6 e-mail complaints registered.

The next meeting will be at the end of this month, May 2013, at a date yet to be confirmed.

19. Ward Councillor's Report – Cllr. R. Phillips

The last twelve months have been the wettest in living memory for our Parishes and had an impact on the local economy, our roads, community life and well being. However we had the highlights of celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics. Nearly all the Parishes in the ward held events to mark the Jubilee and locally Kingspan were one of the companies who supplied insulation for some of the Olympic buildings.

While the bad weather saw many local annual events cancelled our community life remains strong with numerous local organisations adding to the quality of life of residents. In particular the ongoing work of the **Good Neighbours Scheme** in Pembridge and Lyonshall has a real contribution to supporting the care agenda and to some of our more vulnerable citizens. I was pleased to attend the service to celebrate the completion of the million pound repair works to **Shobdon Church** in Autumn and also presentations to Julie Mifflin as a retiring Pembridge school governor and Val Davis as retiring Shobdon school secretary for their considerable years of dedicated service. Whether it as individuals or groups our Parishes owe a great gratitude to those who contribute so much time and energy to our quality of life.

Last Autumn a Tesco delivery vehicle scraped the **War memorial at Titley** and left a deep scar on it. Despite being witnessed the company denied the incident. I was pleased the letter I wrote to the Tesco Chairman Sir Richard Broadbent resulted in the company agreeing to a non prejudice offer of £1,690 to repair and protect the War Memorial. If only I could get the same reaction on our highway damage!

Highways

Last October I spent a day in the ward with Amey Officers inspecting our roads. Although we looked at several issues generally the highways were in fair condition and we kept on top of it till Christmas but the winter caused real damage so that by the Spring our highways were in the worst state anyone us can remember. Parish Councillors and recipients of my monthly updates will know the pressure I have put on for pothole repair. Although the main roads potholes are nearly all repaired the C and unclassified roads remain outstanding. The repairs on C1031 Rhyse Lane at the Milton end has been particularly impressive.

Once we get the potholes mended the longer term repair is a real concern. The break-up and cracking of the road surface particularly at the edge of the minor roads is a real worry. I am lobbying our MPs to recognise this concern by ensuring adequate funding to rural highway authorities is supported and locally a front loading of investment in the new council highway contract for minor roads which will be awarded this Summer to begin in September.

All my Parishes operate a Lengthsman paid for by Herefordshire Council. This allows Parish Councils to directly deal with small highway surface issues mostly ditching to keep water running off the road. In the future we must ensure that this scheme provides improved value to our communities and is enhanced to compliment improved working of the main contractor.

Speeding is an issue in the ward and this year saw the **A44 designated as a Community Concern site** with speed monitoring done by the police which I have reported to the Parishes. I had a meeting with the new Police Commissioner and I am pleased this monitoring will continue this year.

In Pembridge, Shobdon & Titley with the support of the Parish Councils and through the generosity of our largest employer Kingspan **two Speed Indicator Devices(SIDs)** will be available for use within the speed limits later this year. I have supported a Traffic Order for a reduction in the speed limit in **Titley from 40 mph to 30 mph**. I will continue to work for improvements to the pavements in Pembridge & action on several safety issues in the ward.

Planning

The Government's changes to the Planning System are significant to the ward. I have supported Lyonshall followed by Pembridge and Shobdon Parishes to do a **Neighbourhood Plan (NP)** with a watching brief for the Titley Group. This involves the individual's concerned with a lot of work particularly for Lyonshall who are one of the most advanced in our county. Mr Pickles has indicated that parishes with NPs will be able to receive 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy in the Parish. I will continue to support these plans being developed in the local communities with support of Council offices and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Herefordshire Council has consulted on its **Local Plan** till 2031 which following Council support will go before a planning inspector during the winter. No NP can be confirmed until this Plan is approved by the inspector. The proposal to support a complete A49 to A49 bypass is likely to be controversial.

The year saw identified a significant problem with level of **phosphates** in the river Lugg from its tributaries. This water quality issue is likely to be a problem for us throughout the life of the local plan and needs to be worked with by local businesses and residents.

Council Budget

Only 24% of Herefordshire's overall income comes from Council Tax and after a two year freeze was increased by 1.9% this year. The rest of our income comes through central government grants and income charges meaning that the radical reductions in central grants is having a significant impact on all local authorities. Herefordshire Council has made over £20 million worth of savings in the last two years mostly from internal changes. In the financial year 2013/14 a further £14 million pounds has to be identified. The big budget pressures come from Social Care which makes up one third of the total budget and covers areas like Residential care cost (below 23.5K assets) homecare, adults with learning difficulties and mental health. Last year the 65 million pound budget after income of 15 million was still overspent. Nationally some 800 million pounds worth of reduction are expected in social care in England this financial year. In addition care costs in children services are difficult to control with 1500 children in Herefordshire on the at risk register at various levels of intervention.

The Council also needs to prepare for future reductions in Government support and therefore refocus its work on core activities encouraging wherever possible for services to be undertaken by other councils and community groups.

Health Changes

April 1st brought significant changes to the way Health services are run in this Country and County. The Government has removed all Primary Care Trusts (PCT) and replaced them with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) . The PCTs were run by government appointed individuals who were responsible for administering local health budgets.

In Herefordshire this meant an approx 150 million pound NHS budget for the running of the County Hospital, Community Hospitals, all GP practices, NHS Dentists and public health matters.

Under the new scheme some funding has gone to a national NHS body, **public health budget to Councils** (over 7 million in our case) and the remainder to CCG which is run effectively by representatives of the local GPs. The Government's thinking that practitioners (clinicians/doctors) should be in charge of the local NHS.

Whatever the system, in Herefordshire the running of our small County Hospital will always be the challenge and under both old and new systems are run by a separate board appointed by NHS. Their accountability to the public they serve I believe is an issue. Our geographical position requires us to need an A&E, trauma and maternity facility and while the management of the hospital can be done with joint arrangements with other sub-regional Hospitals the relationship between the County Hospital and its local care sector (including Community Hospitals and social care) is critical in providing appropriate support and value for money.

Last September I was invited by the local practice to join Dr Richard King in opening the **new surgery at Kington** and afterwards saw the superb new facilities in the 3.5 million pound project. The practice which covers over 600 square miles will continue to operate their other surgeries at Pembridge and Eardisley. The new surgery has a small operating theatre, numerous consulting rooms which means many patients will not have to travel to Hereford in the future. There is a 60 space car park, dental surgery (not at the moment NHS) and facilities for other medical and social care partners. This is a building to some extent ahead of its time but one we can be proud to have in our community.

Dr. King and his team have worked very hard to secure the funding and deliver the project. I am sure that the improvement to the management of the National Health Service to 8,500 residents will mean a more enhanced customer focus in **all three surgeries** of our local practice. I seldom hear any comments regarding the Kingsland practice.

Schools

The Government's Academies policy has had a significant impact on the way our schools are supported. Both Wigmore and Lady Hawkins High schools are **Academies** and are totally responsible for their own running. None of the primary schools in the local area are academies but Government has a clear agenda to diminish local authority involvement with schools. Given the small size of the remaining education department it will no longer be possible for the Council to support its schools as it has done in the past particularly when insufficient number of schools choose not to buy their services from the Council. As a governor of both a High and Primary school I regret this as despite all the traditional knocking of the local authority schools valued the support they got from Herefordshire Education Department.

All our local schools are performing well and offer a safe and secure environment for our children to develop and learn. This year sees the age of participation of pupils in school or training rise to 17 years of age and in 2015 it will rise to 18 years old.

Economic.

Growth of the local economy is important to sustain our communities. Most of the business in the parishes are small, employing under 5 employees, with my three largest Employers being Kingspan, Lynhales Nursing Home and Burgoynes. Generally access to finance, employees with right level of skills and **Broadband** are the priorities for the future. The Council has signed an agreement with BT to deliver better outcomes by 2016. I would encourage all telephone subscribers to register an interest at www.fastershire.com.

Agriculture and Tourism play a significant part in the local economy and the last twelve months have been particularly challenging. I continue to work with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure we get access to any European or Government funding to support business needs and infrastructure growth.

In Hereford City work on the 29,000 square metre **development of the Old Market** continues with completion next April. This will include 83,500 sq ft Debenhams department store, 23,000 sq ft Waitrose food store, six screen cinema, retail units and an additional 615 car parking spaces. Debenhams are due to access their building at the end of October to begin a six month internal fit out to be open in Spring 2014. A live webcam link to the site should be up soon and details posted on the website www.herefordfutures.co.uk.

2015 ELECTIONS

The Boundary Commission published recently their proposals to reduce the number of County Councillors from 57 to 53 and redraw the ward boundaries for the **2015 elections**. Our ward remains the same with the addition of Eardisland. I intend to stand again with the support of local residents.

You may recall the Boundary Commission also looked at changing the Westminster seats with a proposal to link us up with South Shropshire. This will now not happen and our Leominster seat stays the same.

I feel very honoured to be your local County Councillor and privileged to represent these Parishes I have known all my life. I send out every month an update to all email contacts on Council and local issues and will continue to do so. I attend as many Parish councils meetings and community events during the year as possible.

Can I place on records **my thanks** to the support I receive from the local community in particular my Parish Councils and their Clerks. The next twelve months look like being extremely challenging and the relationship between Parish Councils and Herefordshire Council will need to be based on realism and serving the best interest of the people and businesses they both look after.

Cllr Roger Phillips

Councillor for Pembridge, Shobdon, Lyonshall and Titley Group Parishes.

Any Additional Electors' Questions

Would it be possible to have some more picnic benches on the village green ?

20. Next Meeting Arrangements Date to be arranged.