

Minutes Pembridge Annual Meeting 2017

Held Wednesday 12th April 2017 at 7.00 pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Cllr. Evans Chairman, Cllrs. Pace, Owens, Bennetto, Purslow, Thomas, Phillips, Hancock & Stokes.
Mrs P. Stokes, PC Alford, Mr B Pierce & Mrs Albright.
4 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Apologies

Cllr Fothergill, Cllr Duggan, Cllr Mifflin, Cllr Rogers, Mr Hollis,

2. Minutes of the meeting 2nd March 2016

The minutes were approved. No matters arising.

3. Parish Council Chairman's report 2016/17. – Cllr Evans

This year the Council has again held eleven ordinary meetings. 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 they may contribute to a debate, if invited to by the chairman. There is always an open session for Parishioners to comment or ask questions.

A Parish Council cannot function without a clerk and at Pembridge we are very fortunate to have Becky Bissell as our clerk. We are an active Parish Council, who place a heavy workload on our Parish clerk and Becky deals admirably with all that is asked of her. Becky is also our lengthsman co-ordinator and the person to contact if anyone has concerns about ditches and verges on the minor roads in the Parish.

In the year which ends on 31 March 2017 the Council set the precept at £21,000 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 31 March 2018, the Council has budgeted for income of £30,874 and expenditure of £30,170 which would result in a small surplus being added to reserves. Of the budgeted income, £24,000 will be raised via the precept. The increase in precept for the second year in a row is a further reflection of the changes that are taking place in local government. Reductions in central government funding mean that more and more services must be funded at parish level.

In the year to March 2018, there is a change to the grant funding for the lengthsman scheme with the Parish Council required to make mandatory contributions of 66% to receive 33% of grant. In monetary terms, the funding has dropped from £120/km to £30/km. For the year to March 2018 the P3 (public rights of way) grant scheme funding is unchanged at £15/km but looking forward, this will also reduce. The current understanding is that the funding for lengthsman and footpaths will reduce to zero by 2020.

Each year, before being submitted for external audit, the Parish Council accounts undergo an internal audit. Mrs Carrie Pierce accepted the post as internal auditor for the year to March 2016 and has agreed to continue for 2017. On behalf of the Council I thank Carrie for her support.

The Parish Council has had another busy year, dealing with several planning applications and other routine matters. We continue to make progress towards producing a neighbourhood plan and Councillor Andrew Pace will be giving an update. We maintain links with the local police, who regularly attend meetings and report to the Parish Council. The Parish Council were pleased to hear a presentation from the St Mary's Community Project, which informed us of their hopes for the future safeguarding and use of the St Mary's church. The Parish Council was pleased to be able to give its written support to the Project's Heritage Lottery Fund application.

A few other points of note.

The impact of traffic is a perennial problem and the Parish Council have followed up on the findings of a public meeting, held in June 2016, which requested that a 20mph speed limit should be implemented. We consulted with representatives of Herefordshire Council and were advised that the only way of implementing a lower speed limit would be by seeking a Traffic Regulation Order. However, there would be several difficulties to be overcome in obtaining a TRO and we were advised that it would be better to try to implement other traffic calming

measures, such as a gated entrance to the village. As well as speed, there have been further problems caused by parking near the entrance to the school. The Parish Council have met with the headmaster and with Herefordshire Council and it has been agreed that zig-zag white lines will be used on the carriageway to prohibit parking where it is dangerous for children and inconvenient for other road users.

During the year, the Parish Council have made progress in taking ownership of the public car park and toilets. The contract to transfer ownership has been reviewed by our appointed solicitor and we are awaiting the final approval by Herefordshire Council for the transfer to take place. The Parish Council has continued its review of facilities on the Millennium Meadow (although the site itself is occupied under licence from the Pembridge Amenity Trust) and plans are in place to install new equipment, some of which will be suitable for use by children and adults. The Parish Council hopes to be able to fund a substantial proportion of these costs from grant money but it is almost inevitable that a contribution from Parish Council funds will be required.

The Parish Council has a duty to protect the ownership rights of the community relating to common land and the village green. We have contacted everyone who has a direct access onto the village green and having received the necessary evidence from each property owner, we have agreed to the access points that currently exist. This does not mean that any further rights of access can be granted. It is a criminal offence to encroach on a village green and the Parish Council has a duty to remove any encroachment. An encroachment will be any structure built or otherwise constructed on the village green. Unlike a right of access, there is no mechanism in law to grant permission for any encroachment.

Details relating to these items and more can be found in the minutes of Parish Council meetings, which are posted on the parish council website (at www.pembridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk). The website has been well maintained on behalf of the Parish Council by Bob Pierce and it contains a wealth of information, which is sadly underused.

It would be wrong of me to make my report without a mention of the work done by the Pride in Pembridge volunteers. They continue to work tirelessly to make the village attractive to locals and tourists alike and on behalf of the Parish Council I thank them for all that they do.

As usual, I will conclude with some further 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 Good Neighbour Scheme for providing such a valuable service and to the volunteers that look after the speed indicator device. Thank you to Tony Norman who continues as tree warden and importantly, as our flood warden. Thank you to Judy Rogers, who along with Bob Pierce has taken over the volunteer editorship of Pembridge Parish News and further thanks to Bob Pierce for looking after the Parish Council website. Thanks to Michael Hancock, who is not only our footpath officer but also our local correspondent for the Hereford Times.

Last but not least, my personal thanks go to the vice-chairman, Andrew Pace, and to all my fellow Councillors for the many hours that they dedicate each year to Parish matters.

4. Parish Matters raised

None

5. Police report - CSO Allford

Crimes from the 31st of March 2016 to 1st April 2017 a total of 14 in the categories of burglary dwelling (3), 2 of these were at the holiday cottage in the middle of a wood at Lyonshall. Burglary non-dwelling (4), criminal damage 3 and all these were detected. Thefts 4.

For the same period the year before there were a total of 18 crimes, so figures are down, which is encouraging. This is only just over 1 crime per month which goes to show that we live in a very low crime area and just goes to prove that Herefordshire is a safe place to live.

Your local policing team at Kington is policed by PC Jo Ellis supported by CSO Dave Boden and myself. We deal with all local issues and are supported by our colleagues from Leominster. Only last night a high-risk missing person was reported and officers were making their way from several stations to assist in the search. Gladly the missing person was found very soon, but it goes to prove that we are a big team and can call upon a lot of people quickly to help us if we have a major problem.

We continue to work closely with the local community and attend Parish Council meetings when we are available or send them a report.

I always take the year 6 pupils at the school for cycle training each year. This is an excellent way of getting to know the pupils and they learn not to fear the police. We also go into the school when requested to give talks.

We run out of PACT surgery every 5 weeks in the Old Steppes by kind permission of Sam. We have given out timer switches and some portable alarms which have been very well received. The next PACT surgery is on Thursday 4th May between 11.00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

As part of the Kington Safer Neighbourhood Team I would like to pass on my thanks to the Pembridge Neighbourhood Watch Team. They are truly committed to the cause and are a source of excellent information. Last year we ran a property mocking event at the Village Hall and the neighbourhood watch Team now have a stock of Cremark to overtly security Mark all your power and hand tools. Just contact one of them and they will only be too glad to make your property for free of charge.

Regular updates about crime in your area can be emailed to you by logging on to the West Mercia website and follow the links to community messaging service.

Please remember to inform us of all incidents by phoning 101. That is the only number you need to remember and this number is the same for the whole of the country. Please remember if you don't report it we don't know it's happening. By working together, we will make Pembridge and even safer place to live.

6. Head teachers report – Mr Rob Hollis

The school's achievements remain strong. Last summer's results at the end of Key Stage 2 (children age 11) were at or above national averages and our combined percentage for children reaching the national expectation for reading, writing and maths was 75% compared with a national 53%. The excellent team of teachers and teaching assistants work creatively to ensure that our children have a broad and balanced curriculum where Christian values are at the heart of our relationships with each other, our families, visitors and the community at large.

It has to be said that attaining these excellent scores are despite extreme financial pressures which you will have heard about in recent weeks in the national media. Earlier this month, the Governors and I held a meeting in school with parents which outlined the range of **unfunded** costs to us as a school:

- 7 years of 1% pay rises
- Employers contribution to Teachers' Pensions up 2.4% since 2015, and up again another 1.5% in 2019
- National Insurance up an average of 3% due to ending pension contracting out rebates
- Local Government pension schemes for Teaching Assistants (TAs) up 8.8% since 2015
- Deficit in Hereford and Worcester Pension Scheme mean contributions for TAs is 34% of salaries
- Overall price inflation up 1.6% - no increase of funds by Government since 2010.

You may have heard of the 'fairer' funding formula for schools which may increase Herefordshire's income for schools from the Government – by just 0.1% on average! Many larger primary schools in Herefordshire will lose tens of thousands of pounds. A small school such as Pembridge will probably not gain anything unless we have an increase in numbers of children. We have 82 children currently; though a further 3 children will start after Easter. In September, we welcome 14 Reception children with 7 Year 6 children leaving us – so we are increasing in numbers slowly.

So, what are the choices for us as a school? We have several options to work towards and which the Governors are exploring:

- Every school should ideally keep staff costs at 80% of income – our current staffing level is around 90% but this enables the school still to have four classes and support all our children positively.
- 'Soft' federation of schools – local clusters sharing ideas with potential staff savings.
- Shobdon and Luston primary schools have taken this further – 'hard' federating together with an executive head. Sharing heads is now more and more common throughout the county.
- Becoming part of an Academy chain or trust of schools e.g. Bishop Anthony Educational Trust and Herefordshire Marches Federation of Academies – with shared expertise, shared funding and shared ethos/vision.

No decisions have been taken but the school must be ready to act swiftly should an opportunity arise.

We are also working more closely with Pembridge Pre-School to ensure a positive transition and help support pre-school children achieve the readiness for learning in a primary school. It would seem a sensible idea to bring the Pre-School into a purpose-built building in the school grounds so that these links could be further

strengthened and we could offer five-days-a-week wrap-around child care.

We recognise our special place in the village; however, I am conscious that the A44 frontage does not do us, as a school, justice – or encourage members of the public to have the space to reflect and make use of the area around the war memorial. This could be a wonderful opportunity to develop but would need to be ‘entrusted’ to a charitable group to gain funding for improvements.

Our link with St Mary’s, Pembridge and the wider community is strong though we do miss not having a Rector who would do so much to link families, church and school together. The wider community knows how important our school is in the village and I appreciate their support – large or small, physical or in prayer – as this keeps us going in mind, body and spirit!

7. Village Hall Report

The Village Hall continues to be well used by a diverse spectrum of people – ranging from community groups such as The Good Neighbour Scheme, preschool and WI, to more commercial (but regular and profitable) bookings such as the Auction, and one off events such as exhibitions and birthday parties.

At the moment, we seem to strike a good balance of commercial and community usage - which allows us, unlike most other Village Halls, to run as a financially self-sufficient and independent facility - without relying upon the PC or precept reserves for ongoing support and maintenance.

The efficient, cost effective and professional running of the hall is undoubtedly due to the small but dedicated committee and the volunteer services of a handful of people – and my sincere thanks go especially to Chris, Joyce and Sarah. Their work and selfless time giving cannot be underestimated.

It is a testament to her unique dedication that Joyce - who actually asked to resign as Treasurer around 100 years ago - still diligently attends the books and makes sure all matters financial (and otherwise) are in tip top form. Sarah P took a more radical approach to her ‘retirement’ recently and stood down from the Caretaker role with no possible option for a protracted replacement search. Fortunately, her shoes were filled by Sheena Palmer who joins us as caretaker along with two new committee members.

Our meeting agendas are fairly straightforward - with urinals, bollards, the urn and dog mess featuring regularly. We have not spent much this year, after a few years of larger investments, mindful that our reserves are dwindling and that we may well have larger maintenance issues to deal with in the future. New tables have been purchased though and we hope users can see the improvements undertaken.

We believe that there will be more difficult decisions to face in the coming years but remained committed to ensuring the Village Hall functions well as a fundamental amenity for the Parish. We understand that there is a likelihood that the VH may be surrounded by housing land in the emerging NDP, but trust that the NDP will also seek to protect our function and ability to serve the community – both now and in the future.

We are always open to suggestions and ideas and would gladly welcome other committee members if someone feels they have an hour or so to spare.

8. Pride in Pembridge Report

2016 has been yet another very good year in Pembridge, and for Pembridge.

The decision not to enter the 'In Bloom' campaign was taken, and despite this I believe the PIP group has maintained the village to a very high standard, with weekly litter picking, cleaning, tidying, weeding, and of course regular mowing and strimming. All without the pressure to meet a judging deadline.

The previously planted snowdrops largely rested themselves this year, but the daffodils in the moat were a delight, as were the planters at either end of the village, and on Bridge St. The natural planting on top of the wall in Bridge St looked wonderful, the baskets on the railings outside the shop and gallery were, as usual fantastic, and gave so much colour, and gave such a welcoming feeling. Further planting of spring bulbs is planned for the moat.

The Open Garden weekend in June was a great success, with almost 200 paying visitors enjoying a very special place and of course teas and cakes. The week end raised almost £500 for PIPs.

A more recent success is the award from The Big Lottery fund of almost £10,000

to extend the wooden boardwalk in the conservation area alongside the river, and to purchase some more waste bins and seating. A local contractor has been appointed to do the work required next Spring.

My thanks go to every one of the PIP team, for all your efforts over the last year, We are fewer this year than last, with David Williams leaving, and my lack of work ethic, but welcome Colin and Jose who I am sure will enjoy being part of PIPs. I particularly want to thank Philip and Judith for opening their garden in June, I know it was a huge amount of work for you, but very enjoyable and worthwhile.

I want to thank Suzanne for working her magic with both winter and summer planting of baskets.

I also want to thank the Parish Council for their continued support, and to all the businesses that made very generous donations.

9. Pembridge Amenity Trust Report

The trustees met once during the year to 31 March 2017 and I thank my fellow trustees for their input and support throughout the year. I thank Suzanne Wenczek, who is our honorary secretary and Jan Harvey who is our now honorary treasurer for their support.

Market Hall

As reported previously, some minor repair works are required but the building is otherwise in good condition and no major works are anticipated at present. We will of course continue to monitor this precious asset and undertake any maintenance as necessary.

Car Park & Toilets

The lease of the car park and toilets from Herefordshire Council is scheduled to run for another 8 years, with an expiry date of 15 March 2025. However, with the Parish Council in the process of acquiring the freehold, a new lease will soon be required. The running costs of the car park and toilets are underwritten by the Parish Council. The benefit of this arrangement is that as a registered charity, the Pembridge Amenity Trust can operate the car park without having to pay business rates.

Thankfully, there have been no serious problems with the car park or toilets during the last year.

Millennium Meadow

I am pleased to report that the large boggy area at the entrance to the Meadow, near to the children's play area has now been dealt with by constructing a stoned entrance. The fence around the children's play area has been removed for safety reasons and there is no proposal to replace it. There have been problems associated with dog fouling and we have tried a variety of measures to overcome the issues. However, a small minority of dog owners seem either unable or unwilling to clear up after their dogs. For this reason, the decision was taken to order that dogs should be kept on leads whilst in the Millennium Meadow.

Bell Tower

There have been no problems with the bell tower or clock during the year. My thanks go to the volunteers who keep up the tradition of winding the bell tower clock.

The bells in the tower continue to be used for weddings, some funerals and by visiting groups of bell ringers and this generates a small amount of income which goes towards the running costs and upkeep of the building. It is our continued aim to provide improved lighting and interpretation boards in the bell tower and there will hopefully be some progress this year.

10. Parish footpaths report. – FPO – Cllr Hancock

There are 42km of public footpaths and Bridleways in the parish of Pembridge. The parish is a member of the P3 scheme and has an allocated budget of £2450. Our current lengthsman Richard Mills continues as our P3 contractor.

This last year the Parish has concentrated using our P3 budget to complete a circular easier access walk on public footpaths around the main settlement in the parish using several kissing gates given to the parish by the Council. These gates were installed on PM59 (x2 with renovations to steps exiting Shekarty Meadow and exiting the Lynches), PM 60 entering the Millennium Meadow), PM 29 crossing behind Court Farm, the crossing Bearwood Lane, then the link between PM29 and PM27 at the top of Manley Lane extension. The only remaining slight problem to this route is a drainage problem coming from the Marshes Field behind the Village Hall onto Manley Lane.

We feel this route, encompassing as it does, the centre of village including all the retail businesses, the church, the market hall and many of the houses of medieval Pembridge will greatly enhance visitor experience to the village and the surrounding parish.

We are really pleased to have completed this renovation of this route and are hoping in the coming year to create a small pamphlet to accompany strollers using the walk – dependent on acquiring some funding.

We would like to thank the following landowners who co-operated so unstintingly with our efforts to complete this walk: Mrs Sue Adams-Wheeler, Mr Michael Bevan, Mr Garfield Evans, Mr Richard Jenkins, Mr Keith Johnson, Colonel Bridget Rose, Mr Alan Ryan, and Mr Barry Temple-Purcell. Our lengthsman Mr Richard Mills and his lads Tom and Patrick must also be thanked for their sterling and timely work.

It only remains now for our larger landowners in the parish to start to contribute to our growing plan to make our parish an enjoyable locale to visit, spend time and relax in our stunning countryside. It is important that this be achieved without visitors impeding farming activities or trespassing willy nilly and this can only be achieved if land owners meet their statutory responsibilities and keep their paths in good working order.

I have met with many of the larger landowners in the parish and talked about the paths that cross their land. We discussed how I can best support them in ensuring ease of access to these public rights of way without encouraging, or rather to discourage, trespassing. I have been able to bring several dangerous situations to their attention (rotten foot bridges, trenches and drains blocking access to stiles and gates, rotten stiles, inappropriate fencing hindering the proper use of stiles, insufficient or incorrect way markers, bulls in fields with paths). In this way, it is hoped to avoid any potential injury to visitors and other parishioners – and the resulting financial penalties and insurance to landowners. Despite this there is still much action needed.

This next year's focus will be on some of the VERY DANGEROUS ditch crossings that still exist in the parish. If you need help with identifying these or with addressing the problem I can be reached on 01544 387941.

By acting together, we can begin to make our corner of the county a safe and enjoyable place to live and visit. In this way, we will all benefit.

11. Pembridge Charities report. – Cllr Owens

Alms house Occupancy:

There are currently 10 properties available to let of which 7 have tenants at present. The homes at Duppa have need further refurbishment, 2 residents will need to be moved. There have been some problems with the listed buildings officer at Herefordshire Council delaying the works but work is expected to start soon.

Alms house Charges:

Single Bedroom £27.50 per week

Double room £41.25 per week for tenants to be reviewed 8th May 2017, there has been no increase since May 2015. There is currently a surplus of £2K in the accounts.

Tenants need to qualify to rent a property, living or working in the parish/surrounding parish of pensionable age with a need.

Trustees: -

Looking to appoint an 8th Trustee, currently there are 7 trustees.

Clerk: Mr. Michael Coleburn continued as clerk to the trustees.

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

Charity Registration:

Registered Number: 216294.

Future plans are hoping to build new residential homes in Lyonshall to fund new alms housing in and around Pembridge area.

12. Parish Council website report. – Mr Bob Pierce

The site continues to be primarily a source of information about Council activities although there are also pages devoted to local services and groups. It provides access to Council minutes, agendas and other reports. Minutes are available going back to January 2007 and are much quicker to access on the website than on paper.

The number of visitors has steadily increased over the last 12 months. The server logs show up to 60 visits per day but this includes both automated and human visitors. Access by real people might be up to 20 per day but many of them may have arrived by accident while searching for something else.

In the past, we've seen a variety of search engines used to access the site, notably the Chinese site baidu.com and the Russian yandex.com. This year neither of those feature and Google is almost the only search origin. Many people arrive having entered the address directly or via a bookmark, in which case they are probably regular visitors.

Recently, I've been working on adding extra pages to give a fuller coverage of the Neighbourhood Development Plan activities. These pages will show minutes of Steering Group meetings, public consultation documents and material used to support the plan's development. This will be live within a week or so.

13. Parish Lengthsman report – Cllr Stokes

The Lengthsman is contracted by the Parish Council to carry out minor works in and around the Parish, routine drainage, general maintenance, and cleaning of unlit traffic signs, and where requested by the parish other works on the B and C category roads and lanes e.g. storm damage.

The parish has 38km of such roads, and until this year the lengthsman has been funded by Herefordshire Council at a rate of I think £90/km.

This year the grant is reduced to £30/km, and match funded by the parish council, and from 1st April 2018, funding from HC ceases.

Our lengthsman Richard Mills knows our minor roads and verges, including flooding hot spots very well, and has given very good service without the need for supervision.

He is also responsible for the maintenance of the footpaths in our parish, but Michael Hancock will report on that.

14. Church report

No report provided.

15. Good neighbour scheme - Mrs P Stokes

Over the last twelve months the Scheme has actioned 35 different requests. As well as continuing to help our ongoing clients we have had requests from 4 new people. The total hours that our volunteers have contributed equates to 145hrs.

We continue to have a diverse number of requests from dog walking, shopping and hospital visiting to name a few. However, as I have reported over the last couple of years there is still an ongoing decline in parishioners requesting help. This may be for different reasons; a reluctance to ask for help; or maybe still not knowing about the Scheme. We will continue to put fliers in the Parish News from time to time and would request that everyone would spread the word about the Scheme.

Our monthly Coffee mornings are still successful and again I would like to take this opportunity of thanking everyone involved, that is our volunteers for their time and cake baking, other community members such as Pips, WI, Pembridge Parish Council and the Church for taking one month a year to run the event.

We are still receiving enquiries from other villages to help set up their own Scheme, the most recent being St. Michaels Tenbury Wells.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank all the PGNS Volunteers, and the Parish Council for their ongoing support.

17. Ward Councillors report - Cllr Phillips.

The austerity cuts to local Government and rising costs of Adult and Children's Care continue to have a huge impact on the delivery of services by Herefordshire Council to the local communities and business. From 2010/11 to 2016/17 the Council has made £70 million savings and needs to identify another £17.5 million between 2017/18 to 2019/20.

The Council has managed its budget tightly and with the benefit of a milder winter will see an underspend for 2016/17. In March the Council set its three-year medium financial plan which included for this year a 1.9% increase in Council Tax and an additional 2% to cover increased social care costs including the National Living Wage.

A budget for 2017/18 of approx. £145 million has been identified which required finding savings of £6.8 million. Expenditure includes adult social care budget at £51 million and the Children's non-school budget will be £21 million (both after income fees). Additional funding has been announced by Government for social care but the details of this still need to be worked through. This will be funded by

Council tax	£93 million	£89m in 2016/17
Business rates	£32.5 million	£30m in 2016/17
Government grants	£19 million	£27m in 2016/17.

Herefordshire Council collects and sends to Government approx. £10 million in business rates and receives back after a national reallocation £32 million. The Government is reviewing this element of local government finance and it will be vital for us to continue to receive the current return funding levels post 2020.

As I have voiced before the reductions in Government support have a greater impact in rural areas such as ours who have a geographical challenge and receive less funding per head than urban areas and significantly less than Wales and Scotland.

Included in savings plan is the transfer of the costs of the lengthsman and footpath schemes to Parish Councils which impacts on the Parish Precept.

There continues to be a rising issue of access to services in rural areas both in the private and public sector with the closure of banks, our local six form at Lady Hawkins, and maintaining GP practices and the Kington library centre

The Government has announced funding for the new University project in Hereford, new Cyber security centre at Rotherwas and planning permission and funding secured for the first phase of the Hereford by pass from A49 to A465. The consultation of the rest of the By-pass is currently underway with an exhibition in the library in Broad street. Both the new retail Market Development and Livestock market are continuing to be successful as are the recycling centres at both Leominster and Kington are very successful.

PLANNING

Inspectors at appeal identified that Herefordshire lacked an identified 5-year housing land supply (along with 70% of all English authorities). This means that with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) a presumption in favour to build in and on the edge of the identified settlements in the ward are being passed. The settlements are Pembridge, Shobdon, Lyonshall, Eardisland, Titley, Staunton and Holmes Marsh. All the rest of the parishes are considered to be open countryside with restricted development to Barn conversations and business need properties.

Planning applications must comply with the NPPF, Herefordshire Council Core Strategy and when adopted the local Neighbourhood Plan.

Eardisland Neighbourhood Plan was adopted last year and played an important role in refusing an application for five houses in the village and in the dismissal at appeal. Pembridge, Shobdon, Lyonshall and Titley Neighbourhood Plans are all progressing. The community should understand that these plans involve considerable time and commitment by the local people involved.

The Governments policy to prevent any infrastructure levy on developments of 10 houses or less means that financial contributions to local highway and other projects are lost. I have attempted to get financial contributions from developers for my community but this has not had the full support of some of my parish councillors or developers. The Government announced that the Community Infrastructure levy which was due to come in next year would be replaced in legislation this autumn. I have requested our MP Bill Wiggin put down a parliamentary question clarifying that the Government will continue to insist that 25% of that levy goes to locally agreed parish priorities.

HIGHWAYS

The condition of our local roads is a real concern and this is after a mild winter. I continue to press for more funding into highway maintenance and was pleased to hear that following lobbying from our MP and council we have received £899K for potholes in 2017/18. Following the successful outcome of £6.5 million compensation from Amey I have requested that the resurfacing of the village is a priority in the resulting resurfacing programme.

I work with my Balfour Steward Lara Edwards, Clerks and Parish Councils on highway repairs and submitted a list of highways to be resurfaced in 2017. I have provided all my Parish Councillors with identification maps of all the local highways and they receive weekly reports from Balfour on local working

I have successfully lobbied for the cutting of our highway verges twice in summer but have struggled to get support for drainage investment. The Kingspan sign has finally been installed at Bridge street junction. I reported the damage to the bollard to Police but I understand no action was taken.

In June, I spoke at the public meeting on traffic through Pembridge outlining the list of actions that had been done over the last 25 years. Working with the Parish Council we looked at the introduction of a 20-mph speed limit but it became clear that the practicalities were difficult, no funding available, and no police enforcement.

I chair the advisory Marches European funding which oversees the expenditure of approx. £90 million of grants on business, skills and education. I have successfully worked on getting two funding schemes for businesses still affected with poor broadband which start to roll out this month and later this year. It will be of particular interest where we can identify a nest of businesses.

The Governments new funding structure for schools was intend to improve the budgets for rural schools however this has not been the case. The element for sparsity in the calculation is 0.08%. The federation of Shobdon and Luston schools will take place this September following the retirement of Vicky Handcock and our own village school recognises the need to be proactive to face the future.

I have dealt with a number of resident and local business concerns and continue to lobby for better funding for rural areas wherever I can.

My thanks go to all those of you who support the local community and myself in particular the Chairman, Clerk and members of the Parish Council and the local neighbourhood plan committee. Being an elected councillor in these continued austere times is not easy but I will continue to do my best to represent the concerns and aspirations of my residents and communities.

18. NDP Report - Cllr Pace

- Thanks, forwarded to the Steering group, Data Orchard and the Clerk for continued work to produce the draft document.
- During the year, the Steering group
 - have met in public meetings
 - 2-3 village walkabout to assess views, vistas and sites
 - Consulted with landowners
 - Held public presentations in the village hall and at Pembridge show, where supportive feedback for the plan was received.
 - Held a Parish Council meeting to solely focus and discuss the draft NDP document.
- The Plan is now almost ready for Public consultation in Parish after adoption by Parish Council
- Once adopted at parish Council the document will be forwarded to Herefordshire Council for agreement, when regulatory report have been provided the document will be passed for public consultation Reg 14 in the Parish before moving onto referendum vote to approve at Reg 16.
- It is hoped that the NDP will be made by the end of 2017.

Parishioners Questions

Parishioners raised concerns over continued traffic issues and parish developments which were discussed and noted.

19. Date of next meeting to be arranged and advertised.

Meeting Closed 8.15pm.