

Pembridge Annual Parish Meeting 2019
Held Wednesday 8th May 2019 in the Parish Hall , Pembridge 7.00pm

Present

Cllr Garfield Evans, Cllr Andrew Pace, Cllr Tom Bennetto, Cllr Philip Thomas, Cllr Roger Phillips, Cllr Steve Jones, Pat Stokes, Merry Albright, Tony Norman, Robert Hollis, Val Crossley-Jones & clerk Rebecca Bissell.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Hancock, Cllr Owens, Cllr Fothergill, Cllr Mifflin, Richard Goddard & Rev Branston.

Minutes of the meeting 2nd May 2018

The minutes were approved. No matters arising.

Parish Council Chairman's Report 2018/19 – Cllr Garfield 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 the chairman may permit them to contribute to a debate. 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 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 ended on 31 March 2019 the Council set the precept at £24,000 and after completion of the external audit, details of the income and expenditure figures will appear on the Council website (www.pembridgeparishcouncil.gov.uk). For the year to 31 March 2020, the Council has budgeted for income of £27,726 and expenditure of £31,255 which would result in a deficit of approximately £3,500 to be taken from reserves. Of the budgeted income, £24,000 will be again raised via the precept, which is unchanged from 2019. Continued reductions in central government funding mean that more and more services have to be funded at parish level, with all funding for the lengthsman having now been withdrawn.

For the year to March 2019 the P3 (public rights of way) grant scheme funding was unchanged at £15/km but looking forward, this will also reduce. The current understanding is that the funding for footpaths will reduce to zero by 2020.

Each year, before being submitted for external audit, the Parish Council accounts undergo an internal audit. This year, the internal audit was undertaken by Mrs Anne Pickup and on behalf of the Council I thank her for agreeing to undertake this important task.

The Parish Council has had another busy year, dealing numerous planning applications along with other routine matters. The neighbourhood development plan has finally been completed and is now integrated into local planning law. On behalf of the Council, I thank Councillor Andrew Pace who has been the lead councillor on the production of the plan. He will be giving a final update a little later. We maintain links with the local police, who regularly attend meetings and report to the Parish Council.

A few other points of note.

The impact of traffic is a perennial problem and the safety of Parishioners is a perennial problem. This year we have seen the resurfacing of the A44 through the village and a new system of white lines which are designed to make the road appear narrower and thus slow down traffic. The decision to implement the new system lines was taken on the back of extensive advice received from experts in traffic management. Although it has taken a while to get used to the new system, the results so far are positive with a measured reduction in the average speed of vehicles being driven through the village. As well as speed, there have been further problems caused by parking near the entrance to the school. Following on from our meeting with the headmaster and with Herefordshire Council, zig-zag white lines have now been painted on the carriageway to prohibit parking where it is dangerous for children and inconvenient for other road users.

The condition of the track across the village green, leading to the Long Meadow had deteriorated very badly as a result of frequent use by large vehicles. The Parish Council have been in negotiations with Welsh Water and they have finally agreed to undertake repair work. We will continue to monitor the use and condition of the track.

This year, Herefordshire Council ran a consultation on traveller sites to which the Parish Council gave a robust response. We have argued that the local site has been poorly managed and that we have received regular reports of unacceptable amounts of litter being generated by the site. As a result of our efforts, management of the site does appear to have improved although we will continue to monitor the situation.

Residents living at the West end of the village expressed great concern about the apparent contamination present at Dump Lane (aka Leaders Lane). We arranged two meetings where parishioners could put their concerns to Herefordshire Council environmental department. We believe that as a result of those meetings, the concerns of the residents have now been properly addressed.

Details relating to all of 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 previously been maintained on behalf of the Parish Council by Bob Pierce, but he has now decided to retire and I thank him for all that he has done. We are now at the latter stages of creating a new website which will be maintained by our parish clerk. As before, the new site will contain a wealth of information relating to the work of the Parish Council.

It would be wrong of me to make my report without a mention of the work done by the Pride in Pembridge volunteers. This year, their efforts were recognised when they were nominated for and won a Queens Award for Voluntary Service. The award was presented to members of Pride in Pembridge by the Lord-Lieutenant of Herefordshire, The Dowager Countess of Darnley at an event organised by the Parish Council. The event was well attended and enjoyed by all, including Lady Darnley who was most impressed with the work of Pride in Pembridge and how vibrant the village is.

Pride in Pembridge 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.

It may not have escaped your notice that 2019 was an election year, which meant that the old Parish Council held its last meeting in April of this year. Of the thirteen councillors who had served during 2019, only twelve sought re-election and as there were no other candidates, the twelve were re-elected and will formally take office at the start of the next meeting. We now have a vacancy for a Councillor and will be seeking to fill the post by co-opting someone. Anyone wishing to be considered can request information from the Parish Clerk.

As always, 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 continues to compile and edit Pembridge Parish News. 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.

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Parish Matters raised

None.

Police report – PC Dean Wall

crimes of interest across your ward area.

- Kings House Public House in Pembridge. Between 21:00 and 21:15 hours on Wednesday 24th April 2019 a window has been smashed and a charity St Michael's Hospice collection tub containing no more than £7 had been taken from the inside windowsill.

- Between Tuesday 01st January 2019 and Thursday 25th April 2019 approximately 31 sheep have been stolen from a farmers fields within Pembridge.
- On Monday 22nd April 2019 at approximately 19:55 hours person(s) unknown have removed 6 bird feeders from the business's yard in Pembridge. Only the string from which the bird feeders were suspended remains.
- Between Friday 03rd May 2019 and Saturday 04th May 2019 approximately 53 sheep have been stolen from a farmers fields within Pembridge.

PCSO Dunne has held her usual police surgery in Pembridge this month and the next will be held in June at some stage.

Head Teacher Report – Mr Robert Hollis

The school continues to maintain some excellent achievements with results in end of Key Stage Tests (aged 7 and 11) at or above national averages. Last year, we were thrilled that all 100 % of our 11 year olds achieved the expected standard or above in every subject (maths, reading, writing, and spelling and grammar) and received due congratulations from the Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools and our local MP, Bill Wiggin. I would like to thank all our team of teachers and teaching assistants for providing such a high quality of education which supports and encourages our children to flourish.

The term 'flourish' is one which the Church of England is using to describe an outcome of successful schools. Its vision for education is broad and inclusive, embracing four key areas: Wisdom, Hope, Community and Respect. We continue to develop our response to this, identifying where we can help our children and families to use wisdom profitably, aspire to improve, be part of a broad developing community and have dignity for each other and the world.

We pride ourselves on having a curriculum which is extensive and enriching. Our grounds allow us to learn well outside, with successful sporting endeavours too! Termly topics form the backbone of what we teach and the children respond creatively both in school and at home to a variety of tasks. Our website www.pembridgeprimary.org.uk provides a wealth of information about what we do – and what we believe is most important about educating children. Our weekly newsletter is an important link between home and school; anyone can see our news, 'Ad Lucem', on the website too.

This year, we have 103 pupils on roll which is a reason to celebrate. However, over the next few years, we are unlikely to take in the same number of children into Reception as those who are leaving us. There are going to be financial implications to this. The governors and I try to set a healthy budget for the next five years which reflects a steady intake of children; further pressures from national and local government mean that we find this almost impossible to achieve. In response to this, we have to ensure that the village pre-school (which received a 'good' Ofsted rating last December) is well supported by families who also need a mix of housing to enable them to live here. I am really concerned that there seem to be very few new families coming to live in the village and the question need to be asked: 'why?' There is an overwhelming desire for the pre-school to have a dedicated space from which to run, aiming to offer wrap-around and holiday care, so that parents can choose to keep their young children within the village rather than transport them to other local providers.

We know how much the community valued the school's contribution to Remembrance Sunday, made all the more poignant in 2018 with the anniversary of the end of World War

One. Our links with the village, whether through the church or other associations, continue to enhance and inspire our children to discover and learn even more – long may it continue!

Village Hall Report – Mrs Merry Albright

It was another busy year for PVH and the committee members.

Overall income from hirers was down, despite a small increase in hiring charges. However our overheads remain approximately the same as the previous year - although several annual maintenance projects (such as resealing the floor) will no longer go ahead due to cost.

We organised and completed several large projects - including the refitting and refurbishment of the WCs and an overhaul of the electrics to meet current regulations. The combined cost of these two infrastructure upgrades will be between £5-6,000 which comes out of our reserves as hiring fees will only cover running costs and there is no contingency for larger maintenance/upgrades which we approach as and when money will allow. These costs will show on next years balance sheet.

There is another large maintenance project that we must address - the picket fence which is rotten and has partly fallen down. The cost of this is £1500 but we feel it must be done as it is unsafe. The curtains are also on our list.

Regular hirers include:

Auction

Whist

Pre School

Jive

Pure Stretch

WI

Parish Council

Darts

and we have also had a steady stream of parties, events and one off celebrations

Hopefully the diversity of hirers demonstrates the wide spectrum of the parish that use the hall for an exceptionally broad range of purposes. The building and the committee do well to accommodate all needs and expectations across the year, operating what would be considered a small (but busy) commercial venue in a business sense.

As always the committee remain focused upon providing a good, clean and practical venue at affordable prices for the community of Pembridge and endeavour to do this at no cost to the Parish Council or burden on the precept.

In the past year we have agreed to subsidise the Pre School whose numbers of children can fluctuate throughout the year. The committee feel that it is important to support the pre school, which is strongly linked to the school and very much part of what makes Pembridge a vibrant and popular. The Pre school are long term hirer and as soon as their numbers rise they will be able to reinstate full hiring charges.

We are aware that the current hall has some problems that need consideration as we move forward. The Hall is always very busy and yet we don't seem to make enough money to balance the costs of running the hall - costs which increase all the time and the additional maintenance of an aging building that will quickly eat into the reserves we have built up over 30 years.

The building is not flexible enough and has many limitations and so we have begun looking at ways to generate more income, provide a better hiring experience and reduce our overheads. Whilst it is early days we are investigating the possibility of extending the hall and reconfiguring the existing space - with an aim to provide a larger more modern kitchen, designated pre school space, more flexible and additional hiring rooms and to make the building more sustainable and fit for a 21st Century community. The intention is to create an outstanding community facility.

We have some reserves which will be an important part of our funding strategy - but we will be applying for grants and hope that the Parish Council, our landlord, will be supportive of the next phase.

It is early days and nothing has been decided or put in motion - any ideas, thoughts, comments or suggestions are always welcome.

A special thanks should go to the power behind the hall - Sarah P, Joyce, Lizzie and Chris (almost a full Spice Girl set) -and the committee of volunteers -who give up endless hours of their own time to keep the doors open and lights on. It isn't always easy!

Pride in Pembridge Report – Cllr Philip Rogers

Pride in Pembridge has attracted new members over the year and 14 parishioners now regularly turn out for the core purposes of the group.

During the year PIP has maintained its litter picking programme throughout the village and at the beginning of the season along the roadside verges as far as Dobson Crossroads and the entrances to the village into East Street and West Street. The pavements to the village hall are regularly cleared and the village moat trimmed and kept clear.

The village green and conservation area are regularly trimmed and a major battle is waged on Himalayan Balsam. Planters are filled throughout the village and regularly maintained as is the playground.

PIP was pleased to be granted The Queens Award for Voluntary Service which was presented by The Lord Lieutenant of Hereford, Countess Darnley, during a village celebration morning.

PIP is grateful for the support it receives from the parish council and other individuals and businesses in the village.

Pembridge Amenity Trust Report – Cllr Garfield Evans

The trustees met once during the year to 31 March 2019 and I thank my fellow trustees for their input and support throughout the year. I thank Jan Harvey who has acted as our honorary secretary and our honorary treasurer for their support.

Market Hall

The building is in good condition, with no major or minor works anticipated at present. We will of course continue to monitor this precious asset and undertake any maintenance as necessary.

Car Park & Toilets

The Parish Council now hold the freehold and underwrite the running costs of the car park and toilets. 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 there have been no problems with the Meadow. During the summer months the Meadow is kept tidy with grass cut on a regular basis. Some of the work is done under contract but a lot is undertaken by volunteers and I thank them for everything that they do. This year we look forward to hosting Pembridge Show for the first time and we hope that the new central location will lead to it being a successful event.

Bell Tower

A recent inspection has revealed that some expensive repair works to the clock will be required in the near future and as the PC underwrite all costs, they are currently considering the options. As always, 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.

Footpaths Report – Dr Michael Hancock

There are 42km of public footpaths and Bridleways in the parish of Pembridge. Since taking over responsibility for the paths in May 2015 I have walked all the paths and will continue to walk the paths again before the summer season is fully upon us. The parish is a member of the P3 scheme and has an allocated budget of £800. Our current lengthsman Richard Mills is also our P3 contractor.

I have continued to meet with many of the larger landowners in the parish and talked about the paths that cross their land. We have 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 also 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 that avoid any potential injury to members of the public – and the resulting financial penalties to landowners. Despite this there are still several bridges over ditches that remain in a parlous state. We await action. Last year I reported that we were awaiting action from Balfour Beatty to make the old bridge on PM 29 safe for general use. Unfortunately, during the last year the situation with this bridge has become worse. The current landowners allowed one of their contractors to drive over the bridge with a large tractor towing a slurry tanker which subsequently collapsed one side of the bridge depositing the tanker in the Curl Brook. The slurry was apparently recovered safely and eventually the tanker was removed from the Brook. The closure of the bridge and path was re-confirmed by Balfour Beatty and we await developments almost one year later. Apparently the delay is the lack of apparent insurance settlement between the landowners and their insurers, and an insistence on the part of BB they will only repair the path for foot traffic only. This bridge, and the green lane on which it is situated, is an important piece of agricultural architectural history and I would be loathe to see it disappear

because of lack of action on the part of BB or the landowners and I can only urge them to come to an agreement that will put this path and bridge back at the disposal of residents and visitors alike..

During the course of the last 6 months, several complaints and comments have been received and action was taken bringing the situation to the attention of the landowners concerned. Where necessary return visits to the paths were undertaken to check the problems were addressed.

Maintenance carried out during the last year:

- Set post in yard of Leen Farm at junction of PM 1 and PM3. The landowner was also approached and asked to reinstate PM3 in its entirety and to ensure it is open and un-obstructed through to the lane
- An audit of paths immediately adjacent to the village of Pembridge was produced and work required by the landowners to bring the furniture on the paths crossing their land indicated. This was carried out at the beginning of the year. Much of this work has yet to be carried out.
- Set post to the Grove on PM6
- Reset post on PM11 (Cabal). There is a blockage of PM11 by an electric fence at the stile one field after the commencement of PM11 off Cabal Lane. Waiting for the landowner to clear this.
- PM48 reset post by Marston, also clearance of the stile at the origin of PM48 as it leaves the A44 and a new post at this position too.
- PM45 clear and reset steps out of lane into field
- PM 36 Set post and sign out of lane
- PM 56 add signage to post
- PM62 (by Milton) repair steps and stile (this actually comes off a metalled road and payment should come form Balfour Beatty NOT our P3 budget
- Reset finger post on PM1 as it originates off Bridge Street. Replacement of broken styles behind lambing sheds with self-closing gates on PM1. Repair of stile as PM1 enters the Leen's cattle lane.
- Commission of risk survey of the willows overhanging PM1 as it leaves the Village green and the felling of same in response to the findings of the survey
- Addition of stone and handrail to improve safety on PM as it leaves the Millenium Meadow
- Provision of stakes for the samplings making up the Verdun Oak Walk to be planted along the straight mile. Also the provision of a pamphlet to support this project connecting the sapling walk to existing paths in and out of the village of Pembridge
- Collaboration with the Eardisland memorial walk project
- PM16 . Ditch bridges in need of repair have been reported to BB and we have been awaiting their response

As a continuing point of interest, there is a deadline looming to ensure current footpaths, green lanes, and other historic ways currently unregistered on the definitive map should be so registered with Herefordshire Council as a change to the definitive map. If not registered they will be lost FOREVER.

I would be very grateful for any information about paths in the parish and am available on via my cell phone at: 07956 815943

In conclusion: our paths are an important resource providing both local amenity and attractions for visitors visiting the area who contribute to our local economy. . Additionally, when paths are ill-maintained, there is an increase in the incidence of trespass and a higher possibility of injury to path users which could result in significant litigation and subsequent costs to landowners.

We, in the PC are doing our best to ensure our paths are well maintained and hope that landowners will enter into partnership with us so we might maximise this great community resource for our community's greater benefit.

NDP report – Andrew Pace

The NDP was passed with 82% of those voting in the referendum being in favour. At the end of March it was officially incorporated into the Herefordshire Plan. It is likely to be reviewed from time to time between now and 2031 by at present we hope for a settled few years.

I would like to thank all those without whose help it would not have been possible to put together the NDP, those who gave their time on the steering group, all those who gave us feedback through the different consultations that were held, those who studied the draft versions of the NDP and provided constructive comment that we were able to include in the Plan, The Parish Council as a whole for adopting the Plan, Our consultants Data Orchard and, above all Becky Bissell without whose support progress would have been impossible.

Finally I am glad to be able to report that the NDP was produced at no nett cost to the Parish as we were able to obtain grants that covered all our expenses.

Thank you.

NDP – Cllr Andrew Pace

The NDP was passed with 82% of those voting in the referendum being in favour out of a turnout just short of 30 per cent and thanks are due to all who voted. At the end of March the NDP was officially incorporated into the Herefordshire Plan. It is likely to be reviewed from time to time between now and 2031 but for the present we hope for a settled few years.

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Website Report - Clerk

The Parish Council have made considerable progress in producing a new website. Nearly all the recent data has been transferred and new pages created. We are currently waiting on the new supplier to transfer the domain names and hosting and are hoping to go live very soon. The new site will comply with new legislation regarding data protection and accessibility.

The Good Neighbour scheme – Mrs Pat Stokes

We are approaching our eighth year of running the Pembridge Good Neighbour Scheme and we were the first Village in Herefordshire to introduce the schemes that are running throughout the County today.

The simple idea of helping the Community on a volunteer based scheme is still relevant after eight years and we find that we are continuing to get a few new clients every year. However we have had a reduction in people referring themselves to us throughout the year, and that has consequently reduced our volunteer hours from last years. It was decided last year to change the date of our AGM to correspond with the Parish Council Annual meeting so this has in fact reduced our year by two months however if we average the hours per month and multiply by 12 it will bring the hours up to 91 as opposed to 148 last year.

We have had a few new volunteers and we are extremely grateful for their contribution.

I am very happy to report again this year the ongoing success of our monthly Coffee mornings and we continue to see new people attend regularly. At last year's AGM it was suggested that the donations from the Coffee morning would fund the Annual Fee to people in the Parish wishing to use Community Wheels. This now has been organised and set into practice.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank everyone who is involved in running the event, the lovely cakes that we have and all who are involved in helping, such as Pips, WI, Pembridge Parish Council and the Church who take one month a year to set up and run the morning.

I would also like to take this opportunity once again to thank all the PGNS volunteers who have continued to give their time and commitment to the Scheme and also to the Parish Council for their ongoing support.

Church Report – Rev Anna Branston

PCC members:

Mrs Jacqui Thomas (Churchwarden & chair)

Mrs Gill Smith (Churchwarden),

Miss Catherine Fothergill (Treasurer), Miss Marguerite Fothergill (Secretary)

Mrs Meryl Griffith, Mrs. Emma Hardy, Mrs Jenny Locke, Miss Rosemary Mayall,

Mr Eric Price, Mr Roland Scott, Mrs. Carol Taylor, Mrs. Anthea Anderson.

There have been four formal PCC meetings during 2018. There have been other meetings in between; SMCP (community project), fund raising, churchyard clearing, and cleaning.

We continued in interregnum for the first 8 months of 2018 and proceeded as we had in 2016 and 2017 with our usual services, being grateful and enjoying the help of several visiting clergy from around the diocese, and particular thanks to Revd. Robin Rogers and Ian Smith (reader) and to Rev. Stephen Hollinghurst for organising cover. In March Anne Ingham was inducted into the benefice as a licensed reader, and in May we were very

pleased to hear that Rev Anna Branston had been appointed to the benefice. She was inducted on September 3rd in Pembridge church.

We have had services in our church every Sunday at 11 am; Family Communion week 1, informal meditation and chat with coffee and croissants week 2, sung communion week 3 and family service week 4. Week 5 a group service in one of the churches of the benefice. There have also been early morning communion services (using the prayer book) held at Moorcourt on the second Sunday in every month.

The usual services have had an average attendance of 22 but at Easter, Armistice, Harvest and Christmas the congregation filled the church. The Christingle and crib service on Christmas Eve was very well attended and we were very grateful to Mrs. Sarah Norman who had kindly organised our travelling crib to be passed round among the young families in the parish, finishing up in church at the crib service.

A Bible Study group has continued to meet at Rose Cottage twice a month during the day with Anne Ingham as leader, and every week during Lent in the evening when we welcomed Rev Nick Read who lead the course taking "Climate Change" as the topic. Some people have attended monthly evening meetings in people's homes in Shobdon. There have also been prayer meetings in Shobdon Methodist Chapel twice a month, and the quiet reflective prayer time at Moorcourt is going well.

We welcomed into church the children from Pembridge School for a service at the beginning of the school year and end of term services. At Easter we were once again very pleased to take part in their "Experiencing Easter" activities which took place in church during the last week of the Spring Term. This year the topics were to do with "The Cross" and everything that meant.

The choir continues to sing at some services - choral communion in Pembridge once a month and choral evensong in Shobdon occasionally as well as Christmas carol services in 4 of the churches.

We continue to greatly appreciate the leadership of Tim Hollinghurst for the choir and for playing the organ so magnificently at our services throughout the year.

Fund raising has, as always been very much on the agenda. There was the annual quiz in March, Gill's and Jen's Annual Strawberry cream tea at The Curl and then Sunday afternoon cream teas during the Summer, the fete in August, Harvest Supper in October and the bigger than ever Woodcock Fayre in November. We finished the year with another Christmas concert by The Village Quire in December.

Thank you to everybody who helped in any way with the running of the events and thank you to all the people who attended them and so made them successful.

In August we were again pleased for The Presteigne Festival to hold a concert here.

We hosted a 'Pembridge Good Neighbours' coffee morning, and had a tombola at the "Turning on of lights" evening for the start of Christmas in the village.

We have been co-ordinating with the other parishes in the Arrowvale Group.

The Tapestry Group has continued to meet in Staunton-on-Arrow Village Hall. (see report attached)

The Arrowvale Messenger has been produced bi-monthly in conjunction with Lyonshall, Shobdon, Staunton-on-Arrow, and Byton, and as far as possible it has been distributed to every household in all the parishes.

The church has been kept clean and tidy throughout the year by volunteers and there have been many occasions upon which the church has been beautifully decorated with flowers etc.

Thank you to all the cleaners and flower arrangers, and particularly to Joyce Williams, Barbara Petrie and Pat Teale. Also to Roland and Liz Scott for the hard work they put in to the churchyard.

Dave Morgan retired from mowing the church yard this year. He has been doing it for many years and we were pleased to present him with a framed picture of scenes round Pembridge. We still employ James Skelton to carry out the mowing and major hedge trimming and we are very grateful for the £500 that we receive from the Parish Council. There is a lot of other general tidying up required as well and this is done by volunteers and we appreciate the work that they do.

Many thanks to all the people who have read lessons at services during the year, the bell ringers, and to all the people who see to the delivery of the Arrowvale Messenger. Very many thanks to Clare and Eric Price who look after Moorcourt for us.

Our Church is always opened and closed every day of the year (by Catherine or Marguerite Fothergill, occasionally Jean Heaven) This is much appreciated and we hope that many visitors are able to enjoy it.

Finally a big thank you to our two churchwardens for the relentless attention given by them throughout the year.

We hope we have continued to connect with all members of our community, and our fundraising events have been varied in order to appeal to most people in the village.

Rector's notes

I was installed on 3rd September 2018 which was a moving occasion and I felt warmly welcomed.

I would like to thank the dedication and hard work of so many in the parish Churchwardens Gill Smith and Jacqui Thomas, Catherine and Marguerite Fothergill Treasurer and PCC Secretary and PCC members who kept the show on the road during the vacancy. The list of things that they contribute to is too long for this report however it does not go unnoticed and I am so thankful for you all.

Ministry Team

Earlier in the year Anne Ingham was licensed as a reader to this Benefice and along with Ian Smith, Anthony Mills, and Reverend Robin Rogers, has been a huge support in taking services and helping to plan new services. I am entirely grateful for all their help and hard work.

Special Services

The Harvest festival saw many families and generous gifts in the church. We were delighted to launch a food bank collection point. Thank you to all for their generosity towards this cause.

I am indebted to members of the British Legion for their part in the moving tribute and service of Remembrance this year as we remembered, in particular, the 1918 armistice. The church had a spectacular display of cascading poppies which was greatly admired by many visitors and locals alike. Thanks to all concerned.

At Christmas we had a lovely Christingle service lead by Roland and Liz and Rosemary. It was a very special moment as we stood around the crib with the lights dimmed and gazed at our Christingles - parents and children alike.

There was the full complement of Christmas carol services as well as Midnight Mass and Christmas Morning Eucharist.

Music

Tim Hollinghurst has continued as organist and choir master leading us in our sung worship – the choir goes from strength to strength under his guidance and their visits to other churches in the benefice for carol services, as well as at Pembridge, were greatly appreciated.

The Choir now sing regularly at every 3rd Sunday communion and their contribution helps us to offer the best we have in our worship.

Funerals

Funerals 2018 and early 2019 saw the funerals of some old friends of Pembridge Barbara Atkin, Phillip Jenkins, and Robin Gough in particular. We were very sad to lose them and continue to pray for their families and friends in their grief.

School

Pembridge School continued to come regularly into the church for all kinds of services from a service of welcome to newcomers, complete with the gift of a bible, a school Christmas concert to the school Nativity. We are always delighted to welcome the creativity of the Pembridge Schoolchildren into their church.

I am now a school governor and chair of the Ethos Committee – a committee that works together in strengthening the relationship between school and church, supports the school in meeting developing its ethos as an inclusive Christian school. We aim to ensure that school and church join together in worship regularly. I have been warmly welcomed and included by Rob Hollis and Sharon Goode and I look forward to continuing to develop this relationship.

I regularly lead worship in the school, which is always a joy, with such bright and confident young people. I have been working on a project with the children to create a prayer space within the church and learning more about what prayer means to us all.

Every week I say morning prayer at churches across the benefice. Pembridge morning prayer now takes place the school at 9.00 a.m and all are very welcome to join us.

Fundraising

The PCC has a full report on the fundraising activities and events - it only leaves for me to say how impressive their efforts and energy are and thanks for the excellent events.

Bible Study

The Bible study group meets at Rose Cottage every other week and the group have attended study days at Ludlow Life and Learning.

Flowers and Graveyard

The flower arrangements in church are always a pleasure to see, enhancing the beauty of the building. Thank you to the flower arrangers and also to Roland for maintaining the graveyard.

It is still early days but I would like to thank everyone for the kindness of their welcome and I look forward to continuing to serve all the parishes of Arrowvale to the best of my ability – you do make it easier being such lovely people and I feel very blessed.

Ward Councillor Report – Roger Phillips

The Council continues to face the challenge of austerity with the loss of over £60 million of government funding and £30 million increase in care costs over the last eight years. However despite this situation our finances remain strong compared with similar and other sometimes larger councils.

The cost of supplying care for older adults, adults with severe disability and vulnerable children remains the huge financial challenge across the country. We await the publication of the green paper on social care.

The condition of our 2,000 miles of Herefordshire highways remains a difficult with lack of financial capacity and the extreme pressure placed on the road surface by more and heavy vehicles particularly on minor highways.

I was pleased to secure significant resurfacing of the parish during the summer including a particular resistant mixture due to the large amount of I consulted with the PC, Local businesses and the school on timing and with the PC on the new white lining. The work has achieved the principle objectives of reducing speeds and noise but we need to monitor the vehicle parking particularly at Bridge street junction. Other works were carried out in the parish but there remains many sections of highway requiring attention.

The website recording of potholes remains the best way to alert Balfour to problems.

As usual I reported the October traffic figures from the grey box to the west of the village which records the number, type and speed of all vehicles passing by.

October 2018 Pembridge 2,633 vehicles per day with 26% being larger vehicles (740)

October 2006 Pembridge. 2,332 vehicles per day with 19% larger (443)

I was pleased to see the Local Neighbour plan progress and be adopted this year. I have dealt with many planning issues during the year throughout the parish and defended the

integrity of the NP at the recent planning committee meeting regarding the protection of the Burgess plots.

In January I chaired a meeting between local residents and council officers regarding the old waste site at Leaders lane and I think we secured some clarity and reassurance for local people.

During the year I held two meetings for local PC clerks with our Balfour steward, planners and local Community police officer to help with co ordination.

I was pleased to sponsor the nomination for the Pride in Pembridge group to receive the Queens Award for Voluntary service and attended the presentation in November by Lady Darley.

During the year I have attended many Parish Council meetings and community events, liaised with local business and community organisations.

I continue to send out monthly updates to my email contacts and any local residents wishing to receive it please let me know.

My thanks to the Chairman, Clerk and the Parish Councillors for their support and continued dedication to our community.

Pembridge Charities Report – Cllr Garfield Evans

The trustees have had a very busy year and have met a number of times. There have been some changes in personnel and with the previous clerk having resigned, the roll is now being fulfilled by Val Crossley-Jones. Val is proving to be a valuable asset and the trustees are grateful for her support. During the year, one trustee chose to resign but we have been pleased to welcome three new trustees: the rector, Anna Branston; Mr Geoff Hardy and Mr Stephen Jaques.

The Pembridge United Charities is a registered charity which operates to maintain the almshouses in the village and to provide housing for those in need. Attached to the main charity are a couple of smaller charities, which are now of little importance. During the year, it became clear that the current structure was becoming dated and on the advice of a specialist firm of solicitors we have been making progress towards setting up a charitable incorporated organisation. This has taken a great amount of work, most of which was undertaken by two of the trustees, Clare Price and David Griffith. Their work has not only enabled us to make progress but has also saved the charity considerable cost and the other trustees are all most grateful.

The United Charities manage Duppa Cottages on Bridge Street and Trafford Cottages in East Street. When all are in a condition that is suitable for occupation, we have 10 properties which can be made available to local people. It is regrettable that we currently have just 5 properties occupied, one at Duppa and four at Trafford. This is largely down to the condition of the Duppa Cottages which the trustees are actively trying to address. The current occupants of Duppa will move to Trafford and the trustees will then make a further attempt to obtain planning permission which will enable us to undertake a viable project to bring Duppa Cottages into use.

Issues with Duppa have been present for a long time and we have been attempting to negotiate with Herefordshire Council for a number of years rather than months. We believed

that we had a scheme in place and ready to begin this year but a final review indicated that the scheme would not provide value for money and it had to be abandoned. It is urgent that we make progress as quickly as possible and we have recently had a site meeting with the historic buildings officer with this aim in mind. It may surprise many to hear the although we are a charity with the aim of providing housing for the local community, Herefordshire Council charges us rates for empty almshouses. We have taken advice and tried to appeal against the charges but have met with a firm refusal from the Council.

We are currently addressing the condition of the Trafford Cottages and are renovating them as opportunities arise. The sad passing of one of our tenants has enabled us to undertake work at number six, installing a new kitchen and bathroom and making a number of improvements. We are about to undertake a similar project with number one Trafford, before the tenants currently housed in Duppa move in. A lot of the renovation work is being organised and overseen by the trustees, with a special mention for Mr Richard Smith for the time that he continues to dedicate to the project.

The Trustees will continue to work had upgrade and maintain the properties and hope that next year, we will be able to report on real progress having been made.

Pembridge Allotments – Mr Richard Goddard

The allotments, which are on land just outside the village with easy, secure road access, had a good productive year. We have lost one member but gained two more, so there are now only 2 and a half plots available. However, we would really like to let these plots as well, so please encourage people to find out more (contact Richard Goddard on 01544 387571).

As well as growing lots of produce to use and to share, we have had three social events including a very well-attended barbecue and a winter get-together, plus our friendly AGM. As allotment use is at a high, this year's Pembridge Village Show, on 27th July, will revive the old "allotment holders" class in the produce marquee, so friendly rivalry is increasing!

Thanks to Rosie Melvin, our secretary, and Rod Mifflin for much advice and deputy-chairing.

Pembridge Film nights

Once or twice a month from September to April, we show films in association with Flicks in the Sticks in the downstairs restaurant of the New Inn. This season's films included "Dark Horse" (about the racehorse Dream Alliance), Mike Leigh's "Happy Go Lucky", "The Baker" (filmed in Grosmont), "Beauty and the Beast" – the brilliant live action version, "The Greatest Showman", John Boorman's "Hope and Glory", "Stan and Ollie" (which we were more or less the first to show outside the main cinema circuit), and finally Martin Scorsese's wonderful fantasy "Hugo" which was particularly well-received. We also showed "Chewing the Cud", the feature documentary story of Hereford's markets, to the local farmers' buying group.

We try to show feel-good films which put a smile on the faces of the audience, and we had good attendances for a number of films, though a couple were less well attended than we hoped. This really is a community undertaking – there are no profits, and Jane and Rosie Melvin kindly let us use the room at no cost (and even provide free ice cream and popcorn for everyone during the films!) so

we need to urge everyone to support us . We can only keep going if at least 25 people attend every show as we have to pay a hefty licence for every film we show.

Our autumn season will begin on Sunday 29th September, so please watch the Parish Newsletter for more information nearer the time.