

**Pembridge Annual Parish Meeting 2021**  
**Held Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Virtually at 6.00pm**

**Present**

Cllr Andrew Pace,( Chair), Cllr Tom Bennetto, Cllr Philip Thomas, Cllr Roger Phillips, Cllr Fothergill, Cllr Mifflin, Cllr Powell, Bridget Rose.

In attendance: Clerk Rebecca Bissell.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies were received from Cllr Evans, Cllr Hancock, Cllr Jones, Cllr Duggan, Cllr Rogers, Cllr Owens, Police Officer Dean Wall, Pat Stokes, Robert Hollis**

**Minutes of the meeting 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019**

The minutes were approved. No matters arising.

**Parish Council Chairman's Report 2020/21 – Cllr Andrew Pace**

Welcome to the Pembridge Annual Parish meeting for 2020/2021. Last May we were unable to hold this meeting but thanks to our, now, better grasp of Technology we are holding this virtually.

For the record and as most are aware I am, as Vice Chairman, “subbing” for Garfield Evans, the Parish Chairman, who is presently undergoing medical treatment. We thank him for all his work before the treatment began, wish him a speedy recovery and hope it will not be too long before he is able to return.

As everyone appreciates 2020/2021 has been a different, difficult year and the Parish as a whole is to be congratulated for the mutual support that has been given. Thanks are due to businesses, individuals and volunteer groups all of whom rallied around to enable the Parish to successfully cope. It is impossible to name everybody to whom thanks are due without inadvertently leaving someone out who should be mentioned so I hope I will be forgiven if I restrict myself to specifically offering special thanks to Pat Stokes and the Pembridge Good Neighbours Team for their outstanding work whilst also expressing deep appreciation to all those who also contributed to the overall effort. It is to be hoped that the end is in sight but the Parish can remember with pride the community response to the challenges that presented themselves.

Since the last Parish Annual Meeting (2018/2019) the following were some of the points of interest:-

- Following the May 2019 election Wendy Powell kindly agreed to be co-opted to fill the vacancy on the Parish Council
- Due to Covid Parish Council meeting have taken place with the usual frequency but on a virtual basis. It is possible that “in person” meetings might resume in June or July.
- The precept, having been increased for 2020/2021 to £34000 to partly cater for potential legal costs has been reduced to £24,000 for 2021/2022 as agreement was achieved which prevent the costs reaching the maximum estimate.
- A new lease has been arranged between the Parish Council and the Amenity Trust now that the Car Park is owned by the Parish Council
- The Village Green track works were completed by Welsh water but legal issues continue regarding access and mitigation of damage arising therefrom.
- As foreseen in the last report funding for footpaths is now zero.
- Gigaclear installation has been ongoing since February 2020.
- February 2020 saw local storm and flood damage.

- In 2020 the 3 year village green tree inspection was completed and the necessary work undertaken
- The Verdun Oak became unsafe and had to be taken down. Tony Norman is organising a suitable carving for the remaining trunk.
- The Parish Council agreed to take part in a “pilot” scheme (at no cost to the Parish) introducing a 20 mph speed limit where at present there is a 30 mph limit.
- Great strides have been made with regard to the Bell Tower clock electrification and the playground upgrade. Councillor Rogers will provide an update on these items but I take this opportunity to thank him and his teams for the efforts they have put into these projects.
- The Parish Council reviewed the NDP and agreed that no changes were required at present.

The Parish Council has had a busy year dealing with numerous planning applications along with other routine matters. As well as thanking all the Parish Councillors for their dedication and work I would like particularly to express our gratitude to Becky Bissell, our clerk, whose support, hard work and “can do” attitude is much appreciated and benefits us all.

Pembridge is very fortunate to have many who volunteer to help the Parish run smoothly. In addition to Pembridge Good Neighbours there are many who deserve our thanks for the contribution they make to the community. They include the teams that set up the Christmas Trees and lights (which always draw admiring comments from visitors and surrounding communities, who despite their best efforts are unable to match our displays). Tony Norman for his continuing involvement as our Tree and Flood Warden. Judy Rogers for her excellent production and editing of the Pembridge News and Michael Hancock for his work as footpath officer and local correspondent for the Hereford Times.

No report would be complete with mentioning the Parish’s gratitude for the work undertaken by the Pride in Pembridge volunteers which makes the village so welcoming. We owe them many thanks and know that they will miss the participation of John Petrie who recently passed away. He was a leading light in “PIPS” and his hand could be seen in much of the groups work. We will, as a community, remember him for all he has done and given to the Parish.

I conclude by again stating that 2020/2021 has been a different, difficult year. Pembridge has rallied together and the community as a whole can congratulate itself on its achievements.

### **Parish Matters raised**

None.

### **Police report – PC Dean Wall**

There have been a few domestic related logs, sheep in the road and concern for welfares but nothing that we would be raised to the PC. So I am happy to report no recorded thefts/damage in your area

### **Head Teacher Report – Mr Robert Hollis**

It has been a difficult year for so many of us though we have been fortunate in having no serious positive cases since lockdown began last March. The school has been open throughout. During the first lockdown, we had a small group of children (maximum 10) whilst in the latest lockdown, we had around a third of the school (30). We were positively focussing on getting children into school wherever possible this year so that we could more closely monitor their well-being and progress.

Each class had a dedicated hour of online lessons through Zoom – yes, we had the mute problems, the pet cat or dog on screen, the parent on a telephone call in the background – but we all learnt very quickly how to teach remotely, how to learn at home and, as parents, how to balance working,

teaching and generally living! We used an online system for children/parents to upload work/photos of work so that teachers could mark it and set more work. Families were incredibly supportive.

On our return to 'bubbles' in school where classes are separated, we have found that, generally, children have coped admirably. It is the youngest ones who will need increased support to get them back on track. There has been much talk of mental health and we continue to look carefully at how we can best help all our children – and staff too.

Numbers remain relatively stable – 94 children on roll. We will have 18 children leaving in July but about 15 entering Reception with one or two more coming into different year groups. The most significant need is a long-term approach to getting a purpose-built room for pre-school so that it can open five days a week. This is essential to getting families to keep children here rather than go to outlying pre-schools which often feed into different primary schools.

I am pleased that we continue to provide a high quality of education which enables our children to flourish in their next phase of education. Many children become school 'prefects' and represent their next school with confidence. Long may this continue!

### **Village Hall Report**

The Hall has been closed for most of the year, but has started to open up again as restrictions allow. The Playgroup have continued as normal and the auction are looking to return in May. COVID assessments and practices are in place.

### **Pride in Pembridge Report – Cllr Philip Rogers**

Despite the many problems caused by the COVID crisis PiP has, after a period of reflection, begun to work in the community outdoors whilst maintaining safe distances between individuals. There are currently 14 members of PiP and it is encouraging to welcome new members who have moved to live in the community and who wish to get involved in the works we do. It is also a very social group !

Over the course of the last year the members of PiP have logged up some 528 hours of voluntary service and have been involved in the following...

**LITTER PICKING** As well as the week to week pickups, this spring's pick from the centre of Pembridge to Milton Cross yielded 54 sacks of litter added to which the Norman family have collected 12 sacks from Curl Brook plus several tyres and an oil drum!

**CONSERVATION AREA** We keep the invasive Himalayan Balsam under control to allow native plants to flourish, rotten boards in the boardwalk have been replaced, the boardwalk pressure washed after flooding, paths mown, benches cleaned. All to maintain clean and safe areas for residents and visitors. This season has seen the emergence of many fritillaries from previous years' plantings

**WALKWAYS** The pavement to the village hall has been weeded and cleared three times to keep the route to the hall safe for pedestrians. Paths to the church have been cleared at the request of the PCC. The playground is monitored and cleaned as necessary.

**PLANTERS** New planters have been built at Townsend following damage by Gigaclear and those in the car park and by the telephone box have been replanted. Hanging baskets outside the shops have been similarly maintained. **MOAT** This is regularly strimmed and kept clear and planted with wild daffodils

**VILLAGE GREEN** Paths are mown, new signs directing visitors to the village toilets and the defibrillator have been erected. Picnic tables have been cleaned after several floods! **CAR PARK** Shrubbery is cut back and litter removed regularly

PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS We are currently waiting for the results of our lottery application for funds to improve the playground in line with the results of the parish questionnaire

JOHN PETRIE You will all be aware of the tragic passing of John Petrie. As well as being Vice Chairman of PiP, John was the most stalwart PiP member. For years he and Barbara have been our 'go to' members. He was always out, cheerfully hardworking and the source of all knowledge and the right tool for the job! Above all he was a great friend to all who knew him and who didn't? John will be very much missed by us all. His legacy is all around.

### Pembridge Clock Tower Update

COVID restrictions have delayed the planned improvements but much progress has been made.

A Bat survey was carried out to confirm the presence of bat roosts. All works carried out and to be completed were and are carefully controlled so as not to be disturbing. The clock mechanism has been electrified by The Cumbria Clock company who have been contracted to carry out the necessary annual maintenance.

The clock is working well and Sally Lewis continues to correct the small time differences each month. These are the same as occurred prior to electrification.

Oak display cases have been made to house historical information and the Bulmer photographs by local builder/craftsman Phil Davies. The clock mechanism itself has been re-cased behind clear door panels so that it is now visibly on display.

The contracted electrical supplier has been unable to start work because of a furloughed workforce but I hope work may be carried out later this month. This will involve new electrical metering to allow accurate electric usage monitoring, LED replacement lighting and LED internal lighting to display cabinets and clock. There will also be an automatic light switching mechanism triggered by visitor presence.

### Pembridge Amenity Trust Report

The trust has not met since 2019 and there is no report.

### Footpaths Report – Dr Michael Hancock

No report.

### The Good Neighbour scheme – Mrs Pat Stokes

Like everything else over the last year due to the pandemic the Pembridge Good Neighbour Scheme has had a challenging time. I reported to the Parish Council last May how extremely busy we had been at the start of lockdown and due to the age of most of our volunteers at the time that new volunteers were needed urgently. The response was outstanding and the 42 new volunteers very willingly supported all the requests that came in. Obviously some volunteers went back to work after lockdown but to date we still have over 20 who are ready to help and support the Scheme. Things have settled down considerably and we are now back to a pre-lockdown situation.

The 1st June this year will see the Scheme into its 10th year of running and I feel that we need to future proof it by moving into a next phase of supporting our community by hosting a Talk Community Hub via the Good Neighbour Scheme. We have had several virtual meetings with Talk Community and hope that we could be up and running as a Hub by the end of the year. I would also like to report that we will be looking for new input, hopefully from our community, to carry on the Scheme into the new phase and we will be actively searching for help during the coming year.

We have continued to fund the annual subscription for all parishioners who use Community Wheels and this has been possible due to some generous donations we have received. We are hopeful that our Coffee morning will resume in the summer because this has always been a well-attended event.

May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who helped and supported the Scheme this year for their amazing contribution.

### **Church Report**

- Bat surveys are being conducted following lottery funding
- Embarking on a new window replacement project in the near future which will require funding.
- Thanks to the Parish council for the £500 donation towards mowing the grass and keeping it tidy.

### **Ward Councillor Report – Roger Phillips**

By law, all Parishes must hold an annual Parish meeting and for this month's update I enclose my annual report presented to all five Annual Parish Meetings.

The last 12 months have been the most difficult time for us all with severe restrictions on our daily life and work. I want to begin by thanking those volunteers in our community who stepped forward to help the local support team to protect the most vulnerable and shielded sections of our communities. Our local Leads, who coordinates that work with public agencies along with all the key workers who brought us through the toughest and most difficult time we have ever known.

Herefordshire Council has received over 20 million pounds from the government to cover the additional costs regarding Covid, compensation for lost income, providing PPE, outbreak control activities including enforcement, school transport, food and emergency assistance, accommodation costs for rough sleepers etc.

By the 9th of April 2021 we had paid 21,200 grants (totalling just over £100m) to businesses, this number and the amount increases every day, nearly 2,000 businesses have had help with their business rates. The Council received grants just over £1m to help households struggling to pay council tax, distributed over £5m to care homes and care providers and also to nearly 300 people required to self-isolate under test and trace rules.

Can I encourage individuals and businesses struggling with Council tax or businesses rates to get in touch with the council to see if we can help?

Throughout the pandemic using broadband, using an informal slogan of being "nice nosy neighbours" I have maintained contacts with the residential emails I hold with monthly updates, and in the six months till Easter weekly local covid information, and will continue in the near future on a fortnightly basis. I have attended Parish Council meetings by zoom and other platforms working with them on a range of issues throughout the year. I have helped many residents and businesses and when possible, under covid compliance arranged personal site visits to address individual concerns. I would value receiving any additional email contacts of residents within the ward who you feel may be interested in receiving information.

As we roll out the vaccines and the locking eases, we must turn our minds to returning to more normal pattern of life. I will be working with Herefordshire Council, public agencies, business, parish councils and my communities to gradually, carefully, and securely build the confidence of all residents during the summer before the winter nights return. None of us I am sure would want to experience another winter like the last one.

The majority of Herefordshire Council's budget is spent on care services for adults and children. There is a larger proportion of mature citizens in our county and while many will be self-founders

there is an added pressure of providing respite and residential care. The weaker economy and low wage levels also put pressure on Children`s services. Our Children`s care services have always been under pressure and the recent high court judgement makes uncomfortable reading. It is important to understand if the actions involved were unusual or of a more consistent pattern of poor performance.

## PLANNING

The continued freeze on new development and extensions involving extra bedroom/bathroom facilities is having a significant impact on housing supply and the local construction businesses. It is a major issue for all my parishes as they are all part of the Lugg catchment area which covers 40 % of Herefordshire. However, despite this reduction in applications the planning department is under pressure, unable to deal with applications within timescales, lacking clarity on consultation and reports, poor responding to enquiries and causing frustration amongst applicants.

The Harper development at Holmes Marsh which gained permission before the ban is the only housing development allowed to take place.

## Phosphate in the Lugg catchment

I have been lobbying Government on seeking greater priority on tackling our phosphate issue. There are two main sources of phosphate – that which comes from sewage systems (Welsh water and private) and Agriculture.

I want to see Increased investment by Welsh water in our catchment area there are no plans to upgrade any of our sewage works. The Environment Agency needs to work more closely on policing some of this regular spillage.

The council and the Wye and Usk foundation project of wetlands is an important element of phosphate reduction this seems to have been delayed and again it would appear no sites have been identified in our parishes.

Agriculturally we need to recognise that phosphate is locked in the land and it would take 50 years to lower levels, so we need to target the reduction of soil and effluent run off. DEFRA already was working on this with grants to improve drainage of farm dirty water and proper muck stores, however the council`s planning department frustrates the development of this work.

I have lobbied DEFRA to influence emerging Govt legislation on Agriculture support to target those fields in highly sensitive parts of the catchment area identified in the satellite mapping as having the greatest risk of soil run off. (the satellite apparently goes over our catchment twice a week). These field landowners should initially be financially supported to return these fields to either permanent grasslands or have a wider field boundary also of permanent grassland. Encouragement could be given to plant species of grass plants etc to greater support wildlife. This has greater potential impact than purchasing and giving it to the wildlife trust to manage as you can return a massive percentage of vulnerable fields to a stable position in a very short timescale. Since 1947 British Agriculture has been shaped by Government /EU financial support. This could be a major feature of the Governments 25-year environmental plan in helping reduce the phosphate levels in vulnerable areas such as ours.

The council is bringing forward a potential phosphate calculation to help house building restart by offsetting land out of production. The details of all this should be published soon.

## HIGHWAYS

Although Lawton`s cross is just outside my patch it is much used by my residents and was a serious accident black spot and one of my manifesto commitments. Working with officers we identified a solution of a small roundabout so that all traffic has to give way. This has been installed and to date

seem to have had a positive impact. I had concerns about the length it took to build and the cost, but I know is valued by the many residents who use the junction.

The battle on highways repairs continues to be a challenge and I was pleased to be able to secure resurfacing works on the Easthampton and New roads in Shobdon, Bearwood Lane and Manley Crescent in Pembridge, and Grosty to Lower Green highway near Broxwood. Just before lock down I gained the significant investment in drainage and resurfacing of the Rhyse lane which was accessed direct from Government. However already in places the sides are crumbling reflecting the weight of vehicles over the highway.

After considerable lobbying, the Great hole of Rodd was repaired and work on the collapsed piping under the B3465 at Shobdon will be undertaking in the coming year. Many highways still remain a priority including Horseway head lane, Noke lane, Balls corner to Milton cross, part of Burton lane and Parson walk.

The Government has cut its highway maintenance grant in 2021/22 to prioritise Care services in local government expenditure and to add to this the Herefordshire Council cabinet member has reduced the expenditure on carriageways from 60% of the highway budget to 25% while increasing the expenditure on drainage and bridges. There is only one planned drainage scheme and one bridge repair in my ward planned for 2021/22.

Since 2005 I have ensured that all traffic driving through Pembridge, Shobdon and Lyonshall has been monitored on a daily basis so we can understand the movement and growth of vehicles. This has been invaluable for me to help lobby for additional funding. Speeding is a concern in all the villages, and I have pushed for Pembridge to be the pilot project for a 20-mph speed limit – the first whole village speed limit in Herefordshire. The formal consultation has recently been run and I anticipate the order will come into place this financial year.

Sept 2020 average 5-day figure

	Shobdon	Lyonshall	Eardisley	Pembridge
Motorcycle	97	62	45	57
Car or Light Van	3516	1616	3221	1885
Car + trailer	97	34	87	46
Rigid, Heavy Van or Minibus	606	424	903	587
Articulated HGV	170	51	217	144
Bus or Coach	10	29	12	3

Highway surfacing in Bearwood Lane, piping on the Rhyse Lane and surfacing at Lawton`s cross.

## Broadband

I am committed to ensure as many households and business in my ward have the potential to be connected to fibre optic broadband with high speeds. Following on from the completion of the Shobdon contract this year so the start of the Pembridge and Lyonshall contracts. This involved

traffic diversions and impact on many residents and businesses with a great deal of care been taken in Pembridge with the recent installed surfacing. The rural elements still progressing.

Hardwick was included in the Pembridge build and the remainder of Eardisland will be done under their own contact this year. The Broxwood area will be covered by the Ameley build this year.

I was particularly pleased to get the Titley build contract agreed in the last 12 months and that should also be rolled out this year. I had agreed extensions to Knill and Nash and some of the most isolated residencies in the ward. We also secured 175K to ensure broadband was supplied to the businesses on the Shobdon Aerodrome.

The Gigaclear contract continue on our highways.  
If you have any concerns on the works, please contact [networlbuildcare@gigaclear.com](mailto:networlbuildcare@gigaclear.com) or tel. 0186 5591 137

I have given all parish councillors maps of local highways and they receive a weekly note from our local Balfour Steward on all the works done in the parishes. As ever on other highway or footpaths concerns, please report any problems using the links below or phone 01432261800.

[Go onto Herefordshire Council website and download the pothole App to help report potholes](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/maintenance/potholes)  
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/maintenance/potholes>  
<https://myaccount.herefordshire.gov.uk/report-a-pothole>

Footpaths

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-highways/footpaths-byways-and-bridleways/cg-report-prov-problem>.

Report fly tipping it will be dealt with in a much quicker time frame. by either calling the Contact Centre on 01432 261800 or by logging the fly tipping via the council website on the links below as your [https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report\\_a\\_problem/98/fly\\_tipping](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200226/report_a_problem/98/fly_tipping)

If you wish to make a claim as a result of damage to your vehicle <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/2>

I thank all the Parish clerks for their work during the year and to all of you who have supported me during the last 12 months. It remains a privilege and pleasure to represent the communities of the Arrow ward.

### **Pembridge Charities Report – Cllr Owen**

#### **DUPPA**

The Duppa Almshouses are currently under repair. It is hoped they will repaired as soon as listed building approval is received. The land at Lyonshall has now been sold – funds from this sale will help pay for the renovations at Duppa.

#### **TRAFFORD**

All 6 homes at Trafford are currently let. The rent for qualified alms people are

Larger properties £188 /month - Smaller property £100/month

## **Royal British Legion Report – Bridget Rose Lt Col (Retd)**

### AGM 2020

The Branch AGM has been postponed to 14 October this year and will run concurrently with the meeting for 2021.

### Poppy Appeal 2020

Despite the fact that there were no door to door collections this year, due to Covid restrictions, the Branch raised £2300. Extra boxes were deployed in Pembridge and in Shobdon. The Branch would like to thank all our parishioners for their generous contributions.

### Remembrance Parade 2020

The Remembrance Service at the War Memorial went ahead within the restriction guidelines and although there was no parade, there were many doorstep participants which enabled the service to proceed with the usual dignity and decorum. The 6 person event was videoed and sent to all the Branch members which was well appreciated. We hope to be in a position to parade this November.

### Annual Dinner.

The annual dinner has been postponed and will now take place on Sep 24th 2021

### RBL National Membership Centenary Awards

Two members of the Branch were nominated for the National Centenary Awards initiative which was an opportunity to recognise those who have made an outstanding contribution to the work of the RBL. Pat Teale, our Standard Bearer and long serving member was nominated in the Collaboration category for her work together with other partners to achieve community goals. We are delighted to report that Pat was selected as the County nomination and has received an RBL pin and will be put forward to the West Midlands next stage. We all congratulate her for her wholehearted contribution to the village.

### Centenary of RBL 15 May 2021

A wreath will be laid at the War Memorial on 15th May at 0900hrs to commemorate the centenary of the formation of the Royal British Legion.

The Branch thanks the Parish for its support and interest in the Legions' fund raising work and we are looking to try to expend some funds on local projects to recognise the contribution of the Parish.