

Highnam Parish Council

Highnam ~ Linton ~ Over ~ Lassington



Minutes of a Highnam Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 17 October 2023 in Gambier Hall at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Charles Coats Chairman
Cllr Bill Badham
Cllr Nick Cook
Cllr Rees Keene
Cllr Phillip Sherratt
Cllr Jill Smith
Cllr Michael Welsh

In Attendance: 15 Members of the Public
Tina Balgobin Locum Clerk
Roy Balgobin Locum RFO
Wendy Barnard Clerk Designate

Public Questions:

A resident raised his concerns that the agenda and accounts for payment schedule were not on the Council's website prior to the meeting. The resident also stated that the EWG had not given permission for the Council to receive an update.

A resident expressed his concern about the condition of the Oakridge footpath. The Chairman advised that this would be covered during the meeting

A resident reported concerns at the Lassington Lane Junction where there have been several near misses. Cllr Jill Smith commented that there had been an accident at the junction and Highways were aware.

A resident asked about the Planning appeal for APP/G1630/W/22/3312539. The Chairman reported that this matter will be discussed during the meeting.

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr Bill Nicol and County Cllr Paul McLain.

The council also noted the resignation of Cllr Valerie Tustin Smith with immediate effect and Cllr Rees Keene with effect at the end of November. Cllr Keene will continue as the Snow and Flood Warden for the parish.

2. To approve minutes of meeting held on 19 September 2023

The Council agreed to approve the Minutes without amendments, the Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman

3. **Members of the council are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out below**

There were none.

4. **To consider and agree any dispensations**

There was no requirement for any dispensations.

5. **To note the appointment of the Locum Clerk, Tina Balgobin effective from the 1 October until 31 October 2023**

The Council noted the appointment of the Locum Clerk.

6. **To note the appointment of the Locum Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), Roy Balgobin effective from the 1 October until 31 October 2023**

The Council noted the appointment of the Locum RFO.

7. **To note and confirm the appointment of Wendy Barnard as the Clerk / RFO with effect from the 1 November 2023**

The Council noted and unanimously agreed to the appointment of Wendy Barnard as its Clerk / RFO with effect from the 1 November 2023.

8. **To receive the following reports:**

a) **County Councillor report.** County Cllr Paul McLain sent in the following report which was summarised by the Chairman:

“Highways. Fix my street soft launch w/b 18.9.23. Minor works programme to be published imminently. Find and fix gangs have fixed 11,451 non safety defects.

Flooding. Full-time, permanent NFM Project Delivery Officer (PDO) appointed to run the Natural Flood Management Project. It is hoped that they will accelerate the identification and delivery of interventions across the county; adding value to existing projects whilst identifying new potential.

Children in Care. Following on from my previous report re Trevone House and care placements, GCC are working on building a facility in Stroud to support Children in Care. Due to local opposition this is going slowly, but with the publishing of the report on Trevone House it is hoped that get this moving.

Background

- Our numbers of children in care is 871.
- In the 2022-23 financial year, the GCC fostering service recruited 30 new mainstream fostering households, against a target of 40, representing an additional 45 beds.
- In the next three years we need to recruit 150 new foster carers which will equate to 225 additional beds.
- Recruitment plans need to be as innovative as possible, whilst continuing to utilise tried and tested traditionally effective methods. We have been trying modern ways to recruit new carers including launching a TikTok channel,

*setting up a podcast, and doing video interviews with current foster carers
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XnLaSoRWFdM>*

Pressure on social care staff. *Most of the Key Measures are moving in the right direction, including number of cases per Social Worker, percentage of Agency Staff and Staff attrition. However, they remain above target in some areas.*

Rural School Places. *I have asked the scrutiny committee and Cabinet member to carry out a review into pressure on the availability of rural school places and how this can be addressed for future year intakes. New special school, Sladewood Academy, in Stroud, has opened bang on schedule this week. It uses the building formally occupied by Severn View Primary Academy and has cost £1 million to adapt. It offers 60 much needed places for children aged 4-11 with Moderate and Additional Learning Difficulties (MALD) and helps us tackle the increasing demand in Gloucestershire for special school places. Cabinet, in July, agreed to spend £16.5 million to set up another new special school, again for children with MALD. It will open in 2026 and accommodate 200 primary and secondary pupils in Abbeydale in Gloucester*

Property. *NHS ICB (Integrated Care Board) moved into Shire Hall 29.8.*

Fire Service are moving into Quayside w/b 18.9 from Waterwells (police are keen to take the previously occupied space).

New Dementia Strategy. *Produced in collaboration with the local NHS, the strategy outlines our approach for the medium term. Gloucestershire is considered above average for our performance on Dementia, in particular diagnosing people early, but here is still much to be done specifically in prevention and improving quality of life of those diagnosed. This strategy pulls together all the latest thinking on the topic and should ensure we have a clear set of goals. You can read the Strategy here:
[Dementia Strategy.pdf](#)*

Tree Planting. *Following on from my previous report: Tree planting now delivered over 220,000 trees against our target of 1 million by 2030. But the new planting season is about to start and every year is a new challenge. We always need more land and partners, so please keep your eyes and ears open for opportunity and spread the word that we are keen to help local initiatives such as local parish councils, schools, private estates and businesses.”*

- b) Borough Councillor report.** *Borough Cllr Jill Smith gave the following report:
“TBC have had a recalculation of their 5 year land supply. This looks at houses built, those with planning permission but not yet built and those in the pipeline. At present is it said that TBC only have just over 3 years land supply, and not the 5 years that they are supposed to have. As a result they have withdrawn their support for 3 appeals, as this fact is said to trump any other planning reasons for refusing a planning application.*

There is currently a Polling Station Review, where all Parishes are being asked if their Polling stations are fit for purpose.

A motion to spread the word about Fostering children was passed at Full Council, and all Councillors are asked to encourage anyone within our communities to please look into doing this vital work, if they have the interest, motivation and capacity.

The Air Source Heat pump has started to be installed in the TBC building. There is also a new bike shed in front of the offices.”

c) **Chairman's report.** The Council Chairman gave the following report:

"This update is the first of what will become a regular feature summarising all the various activities and actions which go on between meetings which Councillors need to be aware of. I couldn't have chosen a busier month!"

- **Parish Clerk:** *I am delighted Roy and Tina have stepped into the breach between permanent appointments as it has avoided the cliff edge we experienced two years ago when the previous Clerk took over . They will remain available during November providing support and guidance to Wendy as she get to grips with her new role. Thereafter I hope Roy will be available to continue to provide light touch advice and on the job training over the coming months as required.*
- **Village Green Application:** *Land off Maidenhall: This has now been formally submitted to GCC Legal Services and will in due course be considered by the Council's Commons and Rights of Way Committee. There will be a six week period for public consultation, and we will see what the outcome is. Certainly a learning experience which we should benefit from should the need arise again to use this mechanism to protect small pockets of land around the village for continued public use and enjoyment.*
- **HCCT:** *Work on the second phase refurbishment of the Old School is now underway and should be completed by mid-November. This will include installation of new kitchen equipment and will provide us with a refurbished Clerk's Office which we will be able to use for ad hoc meetings. An Opening event, to include the AGM, is being planned at which time it is hoped it will be possible to appoint three new trustees to the Board following a recruitment campaign which is about to be launched.*
- **Education Provision:** *I have had informal conversations with counter parts in both Minsterworth and Maisemore about the creeping impact of additional residential development across these parishes and the lack of adequate primary school provision which is being made to cater for the influx of new families. Minsterworth PC have already formally considered this issue , and I think there would be merit in the three Councils, perhaps others locally, meeting to consider the broader strategic issues and the need to make representations to the County Council and respective District Councils to ensure a joined up approach and proper provision is made for the future.*
- **FC Highnam:** *Local on street parking arrangements made by the Club during match days certainly seems to be improving, but we do need to keep an eye on this to ensure this continues."*

9. **Finances:**

a) **To approve invoices for payment as per the Payment Schedule**

The following payments were unanimously agreed for payment:

| Payee | Amount | Reason |
|----------|-------------------|------------------|
| HCCT | £ 23.25 | Hall Hire |
| Currys | £ 7.20 | Laptop Insurance |
| Fashosts | £ 1.97 | Email address |
| HMRC | £ 101.33 | Tax / NI |
| Salaries | £ 1,604.99 | Salaries |
| Expenses | £ 21.60 | Mileage |
| | £ 1,760.34 | |

b) To approve funding for the refurbishment, carpet and curtains for the Parish Office not exceeding £600.00.

The Council unanimously approved the funding.

10. To consider planning applications received:

a) APPLICATION NO: 23/00748/FUL

DESCRIPTION: Erection of a rear conservatory

LOCATION: 17 The Range, Highnam, Gloucester

The Council unanimously agreed to make no comments.

b) APPLICATION NO: 23/00825/FUL

DESCRIPTION: Porch to front of property.

LOCATION: Pool House , Two Mile Lane, Highnam

The Council unanimously agreed to make no comments.

c) Appeal Reference: APP/G1630/W/22/3312539: To ratify the comments as recommended by the Planning Committee made during its meeting held on the 12 October 2023.

The Council unanimously agreed to ratify the following recommendation made by its Planning Committee:

- That it engages a Highways consultant to provide a formal report on the legitimate concerns that the planning application will have on the highway's infrastructure, concerns being the access and egress to the developments, the additional vehicular traffic on an already over capacitated highways network and also the real concerns to pedestrian safety.
- That it seeks a postponement / deferment of the appeal date, given the late withdrawal by TBC and thus the additional requirement placed on the Council to formulate evidence.
- That the current statement is further reviewed and strengthened, considering aspects such as the local affordable housing needs, the impact on the landscape, the environmental damage, the PROW on the proposed development site, to review the need for additional business units.
- That the Chairman writes to the Inspectorate advising that as a Rule 6 party the Council seeks an additional extension period for statement of evidence.
- That it determines the likely cost to the Council if the appeal is upheld.
- That it considers the Community needs for any Section 106 funding need to be negotiated.

- That its support the local petition and will offer its support by way of communicating the petition to all residents of the Parish.

11. Environmental Working Group update: Cllr Badham gave the following update: *“We need to set up a Parish maintenance fund separate from the EWG. Work has taken place clearing the paths in the Parish and this has resulted in fresher new weeds appearing, we have trialled a white vinegar and table salt as a weed killer which appears to work, should this be responsibility be that of the Council or tbc? 5 benches will need treating sometime. The sculptures have all been treated. The EWG are agreeing on the noticeboards for the nature trail around the parish to incorporate the sculptures. We are hoping to install 1 main board and several on the Bus stop shelters, 1 will replace the missing 1 from the Beech Close bus shelter. The triangle piece of land on the corner of Maidenhall will be left alone as it has been recently purchased”*

12. Oakridge Footpath: To consider the condition of the footpath and to agree reporting actions needed.

The Chairman agreed to speak with TBC regarding the unsatisfactory condition of this footpath.

13. Correspondence: To receive and note any correspondence

There were none.

14. Agenda items for the next meeting. To consider agenda items for inclusion on the next Agenda.

The Council agreed the following items for inclusion on its next Agenda:

- Election of a Vice Chairman
- Setting up a Parish Maintenance Fund
- Installation of a Waste Bin next to the football club changing rooms
- Feedback from the Planning Inquiry
- Review the Council website and the need to upgrade it.

15. Date of the next meeting:

Tuesday 21 November in Gambier Parry Hall at 7.30pm

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.53pm