



## Minutes of a Highnam Parish Council (PC) Meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Chair Cllr Charlie Coats  
Cllr Hannah Layzell  
Cllr Jill Smith  
Cllr Dave Rhodes

Cllr Nick Cook  
Cllr Russ Bailey  
Cllr McGillion

**In Attendance:** Wendy Barnard - Parish Clerk (PC)/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)  
8 Members of Public

### Public Questions:

- **Solar Farm Development:** In response to a resident's query regarding activity in local fields, the Council confirmed that an application for certified completion has been lodged. The Council has submitted its observations, but a decision from the Borough Council Planning Committee may take several months due to technical details. Trial boreholes and soil surveys are currently being conducted by the promoters.
- **Bromford Development:** The Council discussed the approval of the Bromford development, which related to reserved matters only, as the principle of development was determined at appeal 18 months ago. The Council plans to contact Bromford regarding the appointment of a Community Liaison Officer to discuss timelines and Section 106 funding.
- **Potholes:** Residents raised concerns regarding potholes on Oakridge and near Park Brake. It was noted that several holes have been marked with white dots for repair. Residents were reminded they can report issues via Fix My Street.

### 1. Election of Chair

Resolution - That Councillor Coats be elected Chairman of the Parish Council for the ensuing year, following an acceptance of the nomination and a unanimous vote.

Proposed by: Councillor Cook

Seconded by: Councillor Rhodes

### 2. Election of Vice Chair

That Councillor Cook be elected Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council for the ensuing year.

Proposed by: Councillor Coats

Seconded by: Councillor Smith

Vote: Unanimous

### 3. To receive apologies for absence.

Cllrs, Badham, Nicol. It was noted that Cllr Bailey would be arriving late.

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

There were none

### 5. To allow dispensations.

N/A



## 6. To approve minutes of meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026

That the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 21st April 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

- Proposed by: Councillor Rhodes
- Seconded by: Councillor Layzell
- Vote: Unanimous

## 7. Committee/ Working Group Representation

- Planning & Environment Committee** - Cllrs Charlie Coats, Nick Cook, Jill Smith, and Russ Bailey. Cllr Badham's status on this committee remains uncertain.
- Finance, Audit, Governance & Staffing Committee** - Membership confirmed as Cllrs Bill Nicol, Jill Smith, Charlie Coats, and Nick Cook
- Road Safety & Projects Working Group** - Membership includes Cllrs Dave Rhodes, Mark McGillion, Hannah Layzell, Chairman Coats formally stood down from this group to avoid "hogging everything."

## 8. To receive Reports

- County Councillor**- none received
- Borough Councillor**

**Cllr McLain (Full report can be read on website)**

### Community Governance Review (CGR)

- Status: A Borough-wide review of parish governance is now underway.
- Triggers: Rapid population growth from new housing developments and multiple parish requests.
- Scope: Adjusting boundaries, warding arrangements, and increasing councillor numbers.
- Core Goals: Ensure local representation reflects community identity and stays efficient.
- Strategic Value: Parish boundaries will form the "building blocks" for upcoming unitary council warding across Gloucestershire.

### Legislative & Financial Outlook

- Devolution Bill: The House of Lords approved an amendment strengthening parish governance; it now moves to a Third Reading.
- Council Future: TBC expects to dissolve by April 2028 due to local government reorganisation.
- Budget Deficit: The 3-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy projects a £3.5 million base budget deficit.
- Financial Pressures: Driven by a £2.1 million business rate reduction, lost recycling credits, new legal duties, and global inflation.
- Inflation Risk: Every 1% increase in projected inflation adds £207,000 in annual costs.

### Planning & Appeals Updates

- Neighbourhood Planning: New GOV.UK guidance provides practical advice on delivery, monitoring, and partner Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).
- Planning Appeals: Fast-track rules for written representations started on 1 April 2026.
- Evidence Rule: Appeals now rely strictly on evidence submitted during the initial application stage.



- Action Required: Councils must provide robust, complete information upfront, as introducing new evidence later is restricted.

### **Cllr Smith (Full report can be read on website)**

#### **Council Appointments and Leadership**

- New Leadership: Councillor George Porter is the new Mayor.
- Deputy Mayor: Cllr Jill Smith was invested as Deputy Mayor.
- Council Structure: Committees and portfolio holders for the coming year are now agreed.

#### **Policy and Campaign Approvals**

- Debate not Hate: Council approved full support for this campaign to promote respectful political debate and reduce abuse.
- Housing Strategy: Approved the Housing and Homeless Strategy for 2026–2028.
- Grant Spending: Approved the spending plan for the 2026/27 homeless rough sleeping and domestic abuse grant.
- Financial Strategy: Approved the Medium-Term Financial Strategy up to April 2028.

#### **Council Future and Local Services**

- Unitary Transition: Council is investing significant time into transitioning toward one or two Unitary Councils.
- Potential Dissolution: Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) is expected to cease to exist by April 2028, though unconfirmed.
- Planning Department: The department faces ongoing staffing issues and is actively recruiting to fill multiple vacancies.
- Community Funding: The well-attended TBC funding fair took place on 29 April. Community groups can contact Helen Wolfson or Sarah Dittmann for application support at [communityfunding@tewkesbury.gov.uk](mailto:communityfunding@tewkesbury.gov.uk).

#### **iii. Parish Chair (Full report can be read on website)**

#### **Strategic Local Plan & New Settlement**

- Plan Timeline: Officers aim for three-council approval by the end of 2026, targeting Independent Public Examination in 2027.
- Consultation: Previous responses are under evaluation. Borough Councillors will be consulted shortly, but no further public consultation will take place.
- Highnam Sites: All "Call for Sites" submissions in Highnam are deemed potentially suitable, though allocation is not guaranteed.
- Proposed New Settlement: Active consideration is being given to a combined new settlement west of Highnam Roundabout merging with Churcham. Feasibility depends on rail and park-and-ride infrastructure.
- July Meeting: A joint briefing focusing on this settlement concept is being scheduled for early July with Forest of Dean District Council (FoDDC), Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC), Parish and County Councillors, and the local MP.



## Severn Parishes Alliance & Finance

- Alliance Formed: The six-parish group has formally named itself the Severn Parishes Alliance.
- MOU: A draft Memorandum of Understanding will be submitted to our June meeting for review.
- Consultant Invoice: A net invoice of £3,623 (excl. VAT) from the planning consultant was sent to Churcham Parish Council.
- Council Decision Required: Churcham PC will clear the initial invoice and requests financial contributions from the other five member councils. We must determine our contribution amount.

## Solar & Environmental Enforcement

- Linton Farm Solar: Promoter Spring Solar Farm held a project presentation on 30 April. A formal planning application is expected by the end of 2026.
- Community Benefit Funds: Discussions have opened with Two Mile Lane and Lassington solar promoters to secure local community funds, albeit without prejudice. Both projects await a determination date from the TBC Planning Committee.
- Over Farm Illegal Tip: Formal witness statements & Impact statements have been taken to the Environment Agency to support upcoming legal enforcement action. Residents are asked to come forward to provide impact statements.

## Village Maintenance & Land Management

- Verge Mowing: New contractor Greenfields started thier first cut of highway verges. A formal performance review is currently underway.
- Maidenhall Village Green: A formal complaint was lodged with Gloucestershire County Council's legal team regarding delays over the Land Off Maidenhall application. A response is pending.
- Woodland Management: TBC is drafting a replacement Management Licence for Lassington Wood and John's Wood following the expiry of the previous agreement last November.

### 9. To Consider Planning Applications received.

i.

26/00332/FUL	Little Thatch, Newent Road, Highnam	Car Port for residential dwelling	<b>No Objection</b>
26/00230/FUL	11 West Field Highnam	Single storey rear and side extension.	<b>More details required</b>

### ii. To note TPO (Tree Preservation Order) Document attached

Noted

## 10. Finances & Governance



- i. **To approve invoices for payment as per the Payment Schedule. (Circulated beforehand)**

Item	Expenditure	Income	Power to Spend	Comment
Staff Costs	976.12		LGA 1972 s. 112(2)	Pay
Currys	7.20		LGA 1972 s. 111	Laptop Insurance
HCCT	88.25		LGA 1972 s. 134(4)	Room Hire
Bcard	99.60		LGA 1972 s. 142	Cork Noticeboards x8
Bcard	132.42		LGA 1972 s. 111	Printer Ink
Bcard	28.98		LGA1972 s137	Garden Hose GRCC Village of the Year
Bcard	64.77		LGA1972 s137	Coir discs GRCC Village of the Year
Bcard	6.00		LG(FP)A 1963 s.5	Mobile Phone
TBC Precept		28500.00		Precept
TBC s106		1600.00		Bus Shelter
GALC	721.12		LGA 1972 s. 143	Annual Membership
Unity Trust	7.00		LGA 1972 s. 111	Service Bank Charge
HMRC	83.87		LGA 1972 s. 112(2)	Tax/NI
William Badham	28.84		LGA1972 s137	Fruit Bushes GRCC Village of the Year
GALC	50.00		LGA 1972 s. 111	Chair Course
<b>Total</b>	<b>2294.17</b>	<b>30100.00</b>		

Approved All in Favour

- ii. **To note the completion of the internal financial control check conducted by Cllr Bailey and to receive assurance that the Council's finances are in order.**  
Noted & approved
- iii. **To note the internal Auditors Report for the Financial Year Ending 31st March 2026 (Circulated beforehand)**  
Noted & approved
- iv. **To adopt the accounts for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2026**  
Noted & approved
- v. **To approve the Annual Governance Statement for The Financial Year ending 31st March 2026 (Circulated beforehand)**  
Noted & approved



- vi. **To approve the Annual Accounting Statement for the Financial Year ending 31st March 2026 (Circulated beforehand)**  
Noted & approved
- vii. **To note the dates of the Exercise of Public Rights (5<sup>th</sup> June until 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026)**  
Noted & approved
- viii. **Expenditure – Replacement Hardware: To authorise the expenditure of £89.00 for a new mobile telephone for the Clerk, noting that the current asset is no longer fit for purpose**  
The Council approved £89 for a new mobile phone for the Clerk
- ix. **Review and approval of Parish Clerk email mailbox storage capacity upgrade. The Parish Clerk's email requires immediate additional storage facility. The current mailbox requires upgrading to a 10GB capacity limit. Current Cost: £0.00 (Free upgrade until next renewal). Renewal Date: March 2027.**  
Email upgrade approved

#### **11. To adopt the Risk Assessment & Management Procedures (Circulated beforehand)**

The risk assessment and management procedures were adopted, with a request for the Clerk to investigate policies regarding personal risk to members.

#### **12. Roads**

- a. **To receive an update from Cllr McGillion regarding the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and to consider any necessary next steps.**

New contact Mark Richards confirmed proposed camera locations at the Village Hall entrance and the Golf Course entrance. Installation is now expected in September.

- b. **To note recent correspondence & meeting with Ewan Greenhill, Route Manager, Southwest Operations regarding A40 Over Bridge Refurbishment and other works in the area.**

A40 Bridge Repairs: National Highways will begin a £7 million repair project on the A40 River Bridge starting June 8th. This will involve the permanent closure of the Over Causeway slip road until March 2027. Work will take place 10 hours a day, six days a week.

#### **13. Community Emergency Plan**

**To receive an update from Cllr Smith regarding the community emergency plan and consider necessary funding needed for items listed in the draft plan.**

This is in hand and will be ready for Council consideration at the next meeting.

#### **14. Clerks Correspondence**

- Environment Agency: The Council will release redacted emails to the Environment Agency regarding illegal activity behind Over Farm.
- Parking: Complaints were received regarding parking on Oakridge during football matches; the club has been contacted

**Date of next meeting 16<sup>th</sup> June 2026**



Date:

Signature

DRAFT