



**Minutes of a Highnam Parish Council (PC) Meeting
held on Tuesday 15th September 2026**

Vice Chair Cllr Nick Cook
Cllr Russ Bailey
Cllr William Badham
Cllr Hannah Layzell

Cllr Mark McGillion
Cllr Dave Rhodes
Cllr Jill Smith
Cllr Paul McLain (Borough Councillor)

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

Public Questions:

When will the sculptures be varnished? – The clerk will contact the volunteers; it was postponed due to the wet weather in Apr/May then the extreme heat following.

There is a new field entrance on B4215 opposite golf course entrance, did the landowner need permission for this? – The clerk will check with the relevant authority.

Is there any update on the path on B4215 from the village green to the golf club? – There is no update on this, Highways have said it is on their list for this year's budget, the parish council will continue to press for an answer.

1. **To receive apologies for absence.** Cllr Charlie Coats
2. **Members of the council are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out below.** Cllr Cook declared an interest in item 8 v, as a member of the Fenton Trust who will also be applying for the removal of trees, on B4215, in conjunction with the Highnam Community Centre Trust (HCCT)
Cllr Rhodes declared an interest in item 9 ii as he is a Director of Lassington Reach Management company, who is applying for the waste bin on Lassington Reach.
3. **To allow dispensations.** Cllr Cook & Rhodes were granted dispensation but will not vote.
4. **To approve minutes of meeting held on 21st July 2026.** Agreed & signed by Cllr Rhodes
5. **Councillor Co-Option.** A secret ballot was conducted. Josh Hanley received 5 votes and Rosemary Williams received 2 votes. Josh Hanley achieved an absolute majority and was formally co-opted to the Parish Council with immediate effect
6. **To receive Reports**
 - i. **County Councillor – none received**
 - ii. **Borough Councillor**

Cllr Jill Smith

In July, a Unitary Council for Gloucestershire was agreed. Last week there was a U-turn by the Government, and we are to stay as we, with no timeline for how long. There will therefore be



the normal Borough Elections for Councillors next year, but as yet we don't know the length of office. How we progress going forward, we have not been told at this stage.

A lot of work has been going into the Strategic Local Plan for Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury together. Tewkesbury was to be taking the lion's share of the required houses, as we have the land. We all still need a 5-year land supply for housing. We are asked as a whole County to take 43 000 houses by 2040. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the planning legislation that all applications are judged against. This has been amended by the Government during the summer recess to make planning easier and quicker, with less local influence, to determine an application.

Work has been done on a Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan and Design Guide, which sets out Tewkesbury's history and how this has been maintained and future aspirations for the Town. It will be on the TBC website and makes interesting reading. It is a good document going forward for the rest of the County to understand Tewkesbury as one of the smaller but important Towns in the County

Cllr Paul McLain

- **Planning** The council is doing well, and our teams have successfully handled more cases over the last few weeks.
- **Upfront Cash:** The government surprised us by giving us our funding money early and upfront.
- **Losing Workers to Higher Pay:** One of our IT workers left for a private company in Manchester because they offered a **40% pay raise**. The council simply cannot afford to pay that much.
- **Fear of Public Sector Jobs:** People are scared to take government jobs right now because they feel these roles are risky or unsafe in the current economic climate.
- **More Council Members:** A small village of 400 people (Twigworth) asked to grow their local parish council from **5 to 7 people**.
- **Planning for the Future:** This is allowed by law. They need more Councillors because a lot of new houses will be built there over the next 10 years.

iii. Parish Chair

My apologies for being absent for this meeting and the fact that these notes are being written six days beforehand so may be overtaken by events in the intervening time.

Advice has been sought from our planning consultant on the question of whether to seek a Call In/Judicial Review of the Lassington Solar Farm planning decision, and that opinion has been related to Cllrs on a confidential basis. I am aware though that private individuals in the village have also been looking into this and with whom I have had informal conversations. Whether they decide to pursue this course of action we wait to see. What is clear though is that there are lessons for us to learn in terms of how we address similar future applications and these we will return to shortly.

On a without prejudice basis, I have been researching comparable evidence to support any negotiations we may wish to enter into to secure community benefits packages as and when any solar farm applications are approved. This data is, of course, commercially sensitive, so it would not be appropriate to publicly divulge it at this stage.

The Government's decision to review its Local Government Reorganisation plans for Gloucestershire seems to have caught everyone by surprise. We wait to find out more about



the timescale, scope and terms of reference for this review, but we need to be alert to pursuing every opportunity available to ensure our best interests are fully represented once again.

Lack of any form of action by the Environment Agency regarding the illegal tip at Over is beyond depressing. I have therefore written to the Leader of Tewkesbury Borough Council asking him to join with us in making a direct request to the highest levels in central government to require the E.A. to immediately put in place a detailed plan of action to tackle this.

7. To Consider Planning Applications received.

Decisions	TBC DECISION - PERMIT	
26/00481/FUL	4 Wetherleigh Drive Highnam	Single storey extension to rear and garage

8. Finances

i. To approve invoices for payment as per the Payment Schedule.

Sept 2026

Wages	976.12		LGA 1972 s. 112(2)	Pay
Currys	7.20		LGA 1972 s. 111	Laptop Insurance
HCCT Room Hire	39.00		LGA 1972 s. 134(4)	Old School
Barclaycard	6.00		LGA 1972 s. 142	Mobile
HMRC	83.87		LGA 1972 s. 112(2)	Tax & NIS
Greenfields	1,722.24		LGA 1972 s. 134(4)	Grass Cutting
HMRC VAT REFUND		756.15		
TBC Remaining s106		3857.29		
PKF	378.00		LGA 1972 s. 142	Audit
David Crofts	112.00		LGA1972 s137	Consultancy ref Planning applications
Unity Bank Charges	7.00		LGA 1972 s. 111	Bank Charges
Total	3,331.43	4613.44		

Agreed & signed By Vice Chair for Payment

- ii. **To note the conclusion of the Annual Audit for the year ended 31 March 2026 and note any comments.**
No comments were made
- iii. **To receive Internal Financial Control Report (RB)**
Approved
- iv. **To note the pay increase back dated to Apr 26 of 3.3%.**
Noted & approved
- v. **Request for Funding – Highnam Community Centre Trust Tree Works**



A tree survey identified 7 dead fir trees along the main road on Parish Council / Community Centre Trust land as dangerous. HCCT accepted Greenfields' quote of **£6,700** for tree felling and traffic management, subject to Highways coordination.

Resolution: Voted 5 in favour, 1 against to allocate £2,000 from the parish tree budget/reserves toward the total removal costs. Noted that 3 dead trees near Church Lodge will be evaluated for removal under the same road closure order to reduce costs and traffic problems,

9. Environment & Recreational

i. **A proposal has been put forward to explore a tree planting initiative within the Oakridge area.**

Discussed planting cherry blossom trees along Oakridge footpaths. Councillor Badham and the Clerk will formulate a detailed plan addressing land ownership, watering requirements, and grass-cutting maintenance.

ii. **To approve funding of £450 for the purchase and installation of a dual waste (litter and recycling/dog waste) bin at Lassington Reach.**

Approved allocating **£450** from reserves for installing one dual waste/dog bin at Lassington Reach, pending Ubico/Tewkesbury emptying permissions.

iii. **To consider a formal request from a resident to purchase an additional disability-accessible bench at the Oakridge Recreation Area.**

Deferred for a formal budgeted proposal and exploration of external health/community grants or potential football club contributions.

10. Illegal Tip at Over

Unanimously approved sending a letter to the Leader of Tewkesbury Borough Council.

11. Clerk Correspondence

Royal Mail Delays: Compiling evidence of postal delays affecting resident medical appointments and DWP deadlines etc for submission to Borough Councillor Paul McLain.

Potholes: Following up on skipped potholes along Oakridge with Highways.

Meeting closed at 9.10pm

**Date of next meeting 20th October 2026
Gambier Parry Hall @7.30pm**

Date:

Signature