Minutes of a Highnam Parish Council (PC) Meeting
held on Tuesday 20th October 2026

Chair Cllr Charlie Coats	Vice Chair Cllr Nick Cook
Cllr William Badham	Cllr Russ Bailey
Cllr Josh Hanley	Cllr Hannah Layzell
Cllr Mark McGillion	Cllr Dave Rhodes

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

Public Questions:

- Resident praised the recently installed VAS (Vehicle Activated Signs) saying they have seen a difference in the behaviour of motorists.
- The prompt removal of fly tipping from the layby opposite the Green was also noted and appreciated.
- Have there been any update on the Over tip, Lassington Solar Farm & 3500 houses at Churcham? Cllr Coats response – a recent meeting with EA managers was useful, but we are waiting to see what further action they propose to take. This will be (hopefully) decided in the New Year. Lassington Solar Farm has been given approval despite the Parish Councils strong objections. We are trying to arrange a meeting with PACE, the scheme promoters to discuss a Community Benefit Package. The Forest of Dean District Council are taking a different approach to the housing needs of the district and have currently 'shelved' the plan whilst investigating other options.
- A resident has seen a concerning rise in the illegal use of motorised bikes, particularly involving young children. These vehicles are frequently being ridden across the Oakridge playing field and occasionally along the spine road. This behaviour poses a direct and significant safety risk to pedestrians, road users, and the children themselves.
- A resident has raised serious concerns regarding a perceived lack of democratic accountability, noting that local objections to solar farm developments feel overlooked by the planning authority. After contacting Tewkesbury Borough Councillors, Gloucestershire County Councillors, and the local MP without receiving a response, residents feel isolated and unrepresented in decisions heavily impacting their community. Cllr Coats understands these concerns and is actively exploring strategic ways for the Parish Council to enhance resident engagement and deliver a stronger, more unified voice on future planning matters.

1. **To receive apologies for absence.** Cllr Jill Smith

2. **Members of the council are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out below.** None

3. **To allow dispensations.** N/A

4. **To approve minutes of meeting held on 15th September 2026.** Agreed & signed by Cllr Cook

5. **To receive Reports**
    i. **County Councillor – none received**

ii. **Borough Councillor**

Cllr Jill Smith

The move in Gloucestershire to a Unitary Council has been paused, not cancelled. We are told this was to ensure the new ministerial team had made the right decision for our area. The Secretary of State wanted to ensure the decision was aligned with the new Government priorities under the new Prime Minister. A further announcement is expected the week of the 12th October.

The Councils have been told to pause activities that commit us to a Unitary Council at this stage but continue the workstreams that help us go forward with a better service.

The joint work on the Strategic and Local Plan continues as this is a good piece of work, showing collaboration between Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester. This will help lay out a vision for future developments in the Boroughs and Districts. Alongside this is the Infrastructure Delivery Plan IDP. Amongst other things, it looks at the roads and transport networks across the county to deliver the extra housing required. Councillors are to receive several briefings about this during this month.

Cllr McLain proposed a motion to full Council re the issues with Royal Mail. Its irregularity has increased across the Borough, with delayed, late, or non-arrival of post. There are several examples of missed appointments etc. due to the inadequacies of the current service. This was in no way aimed at the postmen who were spoken about very favourably in many areas. We are told that tracked and 1st Class are prioritised, and that 2nd Class has delivery restrictions. It was unanimously decided that the Council would request a briefing from Royal Mail and discuss possible steps to improve the situation.

iii. **Parish Chair Report**

My theme this month is waiting, indeed more waiting.
We wait for Tewkesbury Borough Council to provide Leader support for our campaign to secure Government funding to address the Illegal Tip issue. We continue to wait after months of badgering for them to provide a new licence for the management of Lassington Woods: for a licence to erect a new Flagpole off Oakridge; for a response to getting weed growth removed from the Oakridge footpath; to repair the damaged fencing adjoining the allotment site. I could go on: so much time is wasted chasing even for the courtesy of an acknowledgement to our requests.
We wait for further news on what's in store in relation to the reform of local government, and how this might affect us.
We wait for dates for planning committee meetings in relation to the Two-Mile Lane Solar Farm scheme, and in relation to reserved matters determination of the Highnam Business Park expansion.
We wait for responses from the promoters on the Lassington and Two-Mile Lane solar farm schemes for meetings to discuss community benefits packages. The only light in the tunnel being a meeting later this week with the Linton Farm scheme promoters to start discussions on their proposed package.
We wait for further announcements regarding progress on the Strategic Local Plan which, we understand, have been imminent for some time.
It's a waiting game. Patience can be a virtue, but it comes at the expense of frustration. Hopefully, next month I can report on progress on all fronts. Let's wait and see!

6. **To Consider Planning Applications received.** None received

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

Item	Expenditure	Income	Power to Spend	Comment
Wages	£ 976.12		LGA 1972 s. 112(2)	Wages
Currys	£ 7.20		LGA 1972 s. 111	Laptop Ins
HMRC	£ 81.67		LGA 1972 s. 112(2)	Tax/NI
HCCT Room Hire	£ 64.50		LGA 1972 s. 134(4)	Room Hire
Barclaycard	£ 207.19		LGA 1972 s. 142	Mobile £6.00/Printer ink 125.65/ Defib replacement Pads £75.54
Unity Bank	£ 7.00		LGA 1972 s. 111	Bank Charges
ICO	£ 52.00		LGA 1972 s. 111	DATA Protection
The Village Link	£ 200.00		LGA 1972 s. 142	Parish Council monthly article
Mark McGillion	£ 15.99		LGA & Rating Act 1197 s.30 Highways act 1980 s274A	VAS Speed sign clips
PATA Payroll	£ 40.35		LGA 1972s.143	Payroll Services
Greenfields	£ 1,435.20		LGA 1972 s. 134(4)	Grass Cutting
October 2026 Total	£ 3,087.22	£ -		

Agreed & signed By Vice Chair for Payment

8. **Proposal for a Further Refresh of the Highnam Parish Plan - To consider the case for initiating a further review and update of the Highnam Parish Plan (last refreshed in 2018), and to decide on the appropriate mechanism for exploring this project.**

   The Council considered a proposal to initiate a review of the 2018 Parish Plan. It was noted that while 13 of the 25 actions from the 2018 Plan have been successfully completed and 4 remain ongoing, 8 actions have seen little to no progress.
   Members discussed the significant changes affecting the parish over the last decade, including a substantial turnover in Council membership, shifting resident priorities, the completion of the Lassington Reach development, and the upcoming Bromford Housing scheme.
   Special emphasis was placed on financial strategy. The original Section 106 funds are now fully spent. New funding streams are on the horizon, including an estimated £60,000 from the Bromford scheme and possible community benefit packages from the solar farm schemes. It was agreed that having a refreshed, evidence-backed "living document" with "oven-ready" projects is vital to successfully securing these upcoming developer contributions and national grant funding.
   It was agreed that:
   i. A review of the Parish Plan be remitted to the Projects Working Group for considerati on
   ii. The Projects Working Group evaluate and determine whether a robust case can be made

for a full plan refresh.

iii. Should a positive case be established, the Projects Working Group prepare a comprehensive Project Brief—detailing the proposed terms of reference, scope, resource requirements, and timeframe—for presentation and approval at a future full Council meeting.

Proposed by: Cllr Coats
Seconded by: Cllr Cook
Voting: Unanimously in favour

9. Solar Farm Community Benefits Packages – Negotiating Strategy

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL & COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE

Cllrs considered a confidential report from the Chair setting out a proposed strategy for negotiating community benefits packages and agreed that:

i. That delegated authority be granted to the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Clerk to initiate, progress, and conduct earnest financial negotiations for all three solar schemes as a matter of priority.
ii. That a consistent, commercially focused approach backed by robust comparable evidence be adopted across all negotiations.
iii. That the negotiating team provide regular progress updates to the full Council, with whom ultimate decision-making and final approval of any community benefit agreements will rest.

Proposed by: Cllr Coats
Seconded by: Cllr Bailey
Voting: Unanimous

10. Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) report

Overall Compliance: Most drivers travel between **20mph and 30mph** at both locations. Average speeds consistently hover at a relatively safe **24mph to 26mph**.

- **High-Risk Violations:** Speeding over 40mph is a persistent problem at both sites. The **Community Centre** recorded the single highest extreme speeder at **83mph**, while the **Business Park** experiences high volumes of vehicles exceeding 30mph during extended monitoring.
- **Volume Disparity:** Long-term data reveals that the **Business Park** handles a lower density of traffic per hour compared to the **Community Centre**, despite both locations showing similar average speeds.

Location Breakdown & Metrics Comparison

To normalise the data across different timeframes (24-hour vs. long-term monitoring), the metrics have been categorised by location below:

1. Community Centre

- **Average Speed Consistency:** Across all duration (24 hours and 552 hours), the average speed remains locked at exactly **24mph**.

- **The 27th Sept- 19th Oct Peak (552 hours):** This extended period tracked **77,377 cars**.

- The bulk of drivers (**45,581**) travelled between 20–30mph.

- A concerning **1,444 vehicles** travelled at speeds exceeding 40mph (1,339 at 40-50mph, 102 at 50-70mph, and 3 at over 70mph).

- This period logged the highest individual speeder of the entire dataset at **83mph**.

- **Daily Fluctuations:** Comparing October 3rd to October 17th shows a major drop in daily volume (from 4,589 to 2,473 cars), yet the proportion of speeders in the 30-40mph bracket doubled on October 17th (~29% of traffic vs. ~9% on October 3rd).

2. Business Park

- **Average Speed Consistency:** The average speed stays consistently higher than the Community Centre, settling at **26mph**.

- **The 4th Oct - 19th Oct Peak (360 hours):** This long-term block captured **45,155 cars**.

- **35,156 cars** stayed within the 20-30mph tier.

- Extreme speeding was lower here; only 5 cars exceeded 50mph, and 0 cars exceeded 70mph. The highest recorded speed during this stretch was **56mph**.

- **Daily Fluctuations:** October 5th saw high volume (6,670 cars) with tight compliance (only 34 cars over 40mph). However, on October 17th, while volume dipped slightly to 5,759 cars, the number of drivers traveling between 30–40mph nearly doubled to **1,446 cars**.

11. To elect/nominate two parish councillors to represent Highnam Parish Council on the Highnam Community Centre Trust.
Cllrs Coats & Bailey were unanimously voted to remain on the Trust as representatives of the Parish Council.

12. Clerk Correspondence

- **Business centre Road repairs** – Max Kelly reply
  In relation to the footway on the B4215, we are aware of the issues and had intended to carry out vegetation clearance works. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing A40 improvement works, there is currently an embargo on traffic management within the area. As the footway works require traffic management to be undertaken safely, we are unable to proceed at this time. We will continue to review the situation and programme the works as soon as restrictions allow.
- **Lassington Reach Waste Bin**-Due to the roads etc. having not been adopted by GCC we cannot have a bin installed.
- **Disability Bench** – am awaiting the next stage of the application to be sent to me
- **I have had** correspondence from a youth asking the Parish Council to be a sponsor for his Duke of Edinburgh award, he will be litter picking around the village over the next few months.
- **A resident** is keen to look for an area to install tennis courts for the community
- **Field Development Access gate** – spoke to Max Kelly – reply about the new field entrance opposite the golf club, I am unable to comment on whether planning permission has been obtained, as this would be a matter for the Local Planning Authority.

However, if the access is intended to serve a property, planning permission would generally be required. If it is a single vehicle access crossing the highway verge or footway, permission from Gloucestershire County Council would also be required before the works are carried out.
Having looked at the planning application there is no permission for one but looking at the google street view there may well have been one there before. But I am still chasing as answer,

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Date of next meeting 17th November 2026`
Gambier Parry Hall @7.30pm

Date: **Signature**

DRAFT