

**MINUTES OF BRIMSCOMBE & THRUPP
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE WEST SUITE, BRIMSCOMBE PORT MILLS,
BRIMSCOMBE, STROUD, GL5 2QG
ON TUESDAY 12th March 2024 at 6.00pm**



Present: Cllr Gwen Grant Chair
Cllr Bob Tyler Vice-chair
Cllr Brian Castle
Cllr Alex Middle
Cllr Greg Pilley
Cllr Martin Whiteside

Apologies: Cllr Tim Harris
Cllr Joa Robins
County Cllr Chloe Turner
District Cllr Beki Aldman
District Cllr Tricia Watson
District Cllr Helen Fenton
PCSO Mel Olivera

In attendance: Hannah Warren (Clerk)

1. Apologies and declarations of interest:

(a) Apologies: To **receive** and **accept** apologies and note absence.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Harris and Robins and accepted by Council.

(b) Declarations of Interest: Members are requested to declare any interest they may have in the business set out on the Agenda to which the approved Code of Practice appears.

There were no declarations of interest declared.

2. Co-option to the Council: To **consider** application and expression of interest from a member of the public to be co-opted onto the Parish Council.

Following an expression of interest which had been submitted prior to the meeting, Council resolved to co-opt Alexandra Middle to the Council; proposed by Cllr Whiteside, seconded by Cllr Pilley and unanimously approved by Council.

3. Minutes of the last meetings: To **approve** and **sign** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13th February 2024.

The Minutes were **approved** and signed as a true record [**ACTION: Clerk** to add to website]

4. Public participation: An opportunity for the public to raise issues relating to the Parish

There were no members of the public present.

5. Monthly reports: To **receive** monthly reports from:

(a) County Councillor – Cllr Turner

Apologies had been received from Cllr Turner who was unable to attend the meeting.

(b) District Councillor – Cllr Aldam

Apologies had been received from Cllr Aldman who was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Aldman had submitted a written report ahead of the meeting ([Appendix 1: District Councillor Aldam's Report](#)).

(c) District Councillor – Chalford Ward

Apologies had been received from Cllr Watson and Cllr Fenton who were unable to attend the meeting.

(d) Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

Apologies had been received from PCSO Mel Olivera who was unable to attend the meeting.

6. Planning applications:

(a) To **receive** application received since the posting of the agenda, **consider** and **agree** any comments to be submitted by the Parish Council

- **S.24/0371/HHOLD** - 24 Bourne Lane, Brimscombe, Stroud, Gloucestershire.

The Council requested for the Clerk to ask for an extension to consider this application at the meeting in April 2024 [**ACTION: Clerk** to contact SDC].

(b) To **note** decisions made by Stroud District Council on planning applications.

Council noted decisions made by Stroud District Council on previous planning applications.

(c) To **discuss** the prospective sale of land in the Heavens Valley

Cllr Whiteside provided an update: Thrupp Farm is for sale with 102 acres of land in the Heavens Valley, at a value of £750,000. A Community group, the 'Heaven's Valley Action Group' has been formed and are trying to coordinate a community purchase. The group is asking for funding from various organisations that might want to contribute.

Council agreed that it is supportive of retaining community access to the area and a pedestrian route from Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish to Stroud town.

7. Finances:

(a) To **approve** the accounts for payment

Payments made between meetings to be ratified: March 2024

	Payee	Details	Payment method	Amount
1	Thrupp School	Walking bus grant	BACs	£700.00
2	Local Toilet Hire	Toilet hire for POTPF 2024	BACs	£792.00
3	GlosJobs	Job advert	BACs	£58.80
	TOTAL			£1,550.80

Accounts for approval and payment: March 2024

No.	Payee	Details	Payment method	Amount
4	Hannah Warren	Expenses - MS office	BACs	£20.64
5	NEST	Pension (March 2024)	DD	£175.13
6	Salaries	Salary payments (March 2024)	BACs	£2,122.57
7	HMRC	Payment for 4th quarter of financial year (to be made between 5th April and 19th April)	BACs	£785.99
8	PATA	Payroll services	BACs	£77.10
9	Rory Boden	Maintenance work	BACs	£401.36
10	Nick Hallard	Hedge cutting	BACs	£330.00
11	WaterPlus	Allotment water supply	BACs	£53.55
12	James and Owen	Stationary	BACs	£8.12
	TOTAL			£3,912.79

The accounts were approved for payment.

(b) To **receive** and **note** monthly breakdown of income and expenditure

The Council received a monthly breakdown of income and expenditure.

(c) To **receive** monthly budget monitoring statement, including **noting** of any budget variances

Council received the monthly budget monitoring statement. There were no variances to note.

(d) To **receive** monthly bank reconciliation

Council received the bank reconciliation.

(e) To **approve** internal transfer of £20,000 from Business Banking Instant account to Treasurers Account

Council approved the internal transfer [**ACTION: Clerk** to organise transfer]

8. Items requiring a decision:

8.1 Party on the Playing Field: review and **approve** the proposed plans and budget for the 2024 Party on the Playing Field

This item was adjourned to April 2024, pending further information.

8.2 Grass cutting contract: To review and **approve** the Fromeside Playing Field grass cutting contract for 2024-25

Council reviewed and approved the Fromeside Playing Field grass cutting contract for 2024-25 with T. W. Hawkins & Sons, Sports Grounds Maintenance and Supplies [**ACTION: Clerk** to confirm with contractor]

8.3 Use of playing field: To review and **approve** the use of Fromeside Playing Field by Studio 18

Council reviewed the proposal from Studio 18 regarding the use of Fromeside Playing Field for RAMFete 2024. Various questions and concerns were raised and Council requested that the Clerk gather more information, and for the item to be adjourned for decision to April 2024.

8.4 Grant application: To consider grant application from Gloucestershire Parent Carer

Alliance CIC

Council approved the grant application for £500 from the Gloucestershire Parent Carer Alliance CIC [**ACTION: Clerk** to organise payment]

8.5 Policies:

(a) To **review** and **adopt** the Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council Emergency Plan
Council agreed to adopt the Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council Emergency Plan

(b) To **review** and **adopt** the Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council Grant policy
Council agreed to adopt the Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council 2024-25 Grant Policy
[**ACTION: Clerk** to upload onto website]

9. Reports and working groups: Reports from committees, working groups and projects – to bring members up to date on progress since the last meeting. **No** decisions came be made under this heading but can be an agenda item for the next meeting:

(a) **Clerk's report:** To **receive** the monthly report from the Clerk
Council received the monthly report from the Clerk

(b) **NDP Working Group:** To **receive** an update (Cllr Pilley)

On 21st March SDC Environment Committee will be resolving whether to proceed the Neighbourhood Planning Referendum (NPR) to Poll on Thursday 2 May 2024. Cllr Pilley asked the Clerk to find out from SDC about publicity/awareness raising around the referendum
[**ACTION: Clerk** to contact SDC]

(c) **Port Community Hub Committee:** To **receive** an update (Cllr Grant)
Verbal update provided

(d) **Green Space and Biodiversity Working Group:** To **receive** an update (Cllr Pilley)
Verbal update provided

(e) **Road Safety Working Group:** To receive an update (Cllr Whiteside)
Verbal update provided

(f) **BATCOM:** To receive an update
Unfortunately, the Community Climate Grant application was not successful. The group are now looking into alternative funding options.

(g) **Parish Council Elections – 2nd May 2024:** Distribution of Election Nomination papers and details of procedures which need to be followed by candidates
The Clerk provided a verbal update regarding the election process and distributed nomination papers.

10. Agenda items: To **agree** items for the next agenda or forward to Clerk by **Friday 29th March 2024**

11. Date of the next meeting: 6.00pm Tuesday 9th April 2024 at **The West Suite, Port Mill, Brimscombe, GL5 2QQ**

- 12. Pursuant to 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the Public and Press leave the meeting.
- 13. **Assistant Clerk appointment:** To **receive** recommendations from the recruitment panel and **approve** the contract and terms and conditions for the Assistant Clerk

Council approved the appointment of Penny Starr to the position of Assistant Clerk and approved the contract and terms and conditions.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.57PM**

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 1: District Councillor report

Stroud District Councillors' Report – March 2024

Report of meetings during February 2023

All Stroud District Council and Committee papers can be found here:

<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/meetings>

Recordings of meetings are available via the Council's You Tube channel (Live recordings):

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeH_AmF0s-TShcYIM8Stweg

Housing Committee – 6th February

New homes for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees – Noted that the district council has bid for further money from the Local Authority Housing Fund to part-fund (40%) of the purchase cost of homes for people who have arrived in the UK, via the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement and relocation schemes. The properties purchased will be added to the council housing stock, and will then be available to any households in housing need, once they are no longer required by refugees. The remaining cost of the house purchase will be funded by borrowing, from the Housing Revenue Account.

From previous rounds of this fund, Stroud DC has so far purchased 16 properties. A sale is agreed and due to be completed for five additional properties by the end of March. This means that £2.49m has been secured by the council to part fund the purchase of these properties. The latest grant in January, resulted from a short notice request from the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, due to underspend on the fund. It is difficult for councils which do not manage their own housing stock to find the match funding required.

Swedish Timber Houses – Committee supported the proposed options for each site.

- Refurbish the smaller sites: Miserden, Bushy Beeches, The Camp and North Nibley, Barrs Lane.
- Redevelop the larger sites: Wotton-under-Edge, Mount Pleasant; Stinchcombe, The Avenue; Uley, The Knoll.

At the larger sites in Uley, Stinchcombe and Wotton, there is potential to significantly increase the numbers of units at each site, making redevelopment (subject to planning) a realistic option. However, all three sites are likely to involve buying private houses and contact has only recently been made with some of these owners. More work also needs to be done to explore funding options and in particular testing different layouts at the Knoll, Uley. Further consultation with ward councillors and the respective Town and Parish Councils is also needed. A further report recommending options for the potential redevelopment sites will be brought back to Committee in March

Changes to the regulation of social housing – update on the preparations that are underway at Stroud District Council in response to the regulatory changes resulting from the Social Housing Regulation Act, which come into force in April 2024. This act requires four new standards:

- The Safety and Quality Standard requires landlords to provide safe and good quality homes and landlord services to tenants.
- The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires landlords to be open with tenants and treat them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints when necessary, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account.
- The Neighbourhood and Community Standard requires landlords to engage with other relevant parties so that tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods and feel safe in their homes.
- The Tenancy Standard sets requirements for the fair allocation and letting of homes and for how those tenancies are managed and ended by landlords.

A Housing Improvement Group chaired by the Strategic Director, has been established to monitor priority projects and service performance across the four regulatory standards, including the project management of regulatory preparations.

Housing Service Review – following consultation with staff, a new staffing structure for the tenancy management service will take effect in March. Housing Officers previously had to manage around 900 homes each which was difficult to sustain. The new structure involves a focus on resident engagement and more cross team working with the creation of new Housing Assistant roles to support the wider team.

District Heating and Independent Living Charges – amendments to the fees and charges set out in the December 2023 budget setting papers was agreed.

Domestic Abuse Policy – agreed to support this policy which is to ensure support and a sensitive approach to housing solutions for victims of domestic abuse.

New Legionella Policy – approved in line with new reporting requirements and standards from the Social Housing Regulator. The Housing Committee as the Governing body for the Council's Housing Service.

Council 22nd February

Council approved the following reports:

- **Council Tax Support** Schemes for 2024/25 were confirmed as follows:
 - Committee agreed to extend the current Council Tax **Support Scheme** for another year. This provides up to 100% support to around 2,900 working age households in Stroud district who are on low incomes. Government has committed that all eligible residents over the state pension will continue to be entitled to up to 100 % support with their council tax bill (approx. 2,600 households), regardless of local policy.
 - A new Council Tax **Premium on second homes** will apply from 01 April 2025
 - The Council Tax **Premium for empty homes** will be amended to be 100% for properties empty between one and five years (currently two and five years) from 01 April 2025.
 - The Council Tax **Discount for Care Leavers** will extend the qualifying age from 21 to 24 and include care leavers from outside of Gloucestershire.
- **General Fund Budget 2024/25**, Capital Programme and Medium-Term Financial Plan

Council press releases contain the highlights of the budget:

- Investment in community projects in the new SDC budget
<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/news-archive/investment-in-community-projects-agreed-in-the-new-sdc-budget>
- Car parking charges frozen again in 85% of spaces in Stroud:
<https://www.stroud.gov.uk/news-archive/car-parking-charges-frozen-again-in-85-of-spaces>

Council tax rates for each parish are shown in the [appendix here](#).

- **Housing Revenue Account – revised budget** and Medium Term Financial Plan
- **Capital Strategy** for the council
- **Treasury Management** Strategy, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2024/25
- **Civic Timetable** – setting out meeting dates for the civic year from May 2024 to April 2025 was approved.

Development Control Committee – 27th February

- **Land At Sharpness Docks**, The Docks, Sharpness, Gloucestershire S.17/0798/OUT
Mixed use development which includes up to 300 dwellings (C3), industrial and distribution development (B1c,B2,B8) on 6.6 hectares of land 2 no. marinas, up to 1250m² of ancillary retail / food and drink uses (A1,A2,A3 and A4) up to 7,000m² of commercial floor space (B1 office/light industrial of which no more than 4300m² to be B1 office), up to 100 holiday lodges/camping pitches, hotel, public open space, landscaping, visitor parking, new access road and associated infrastructure. All matters reserved.

Permission refused.

- **A T C Loudspeaker Technology Ltd**, Gypsy Lane, Chalford, Stroud S.23/1250/FUL
Redevelopment and expansion of existing employment site with new bespoke buildings, new access points and associated parking, landscaping, biodiversity enhancements and associated works.

Permission granted.

- **Stroudwater Canal Phase 1B**, Eastington, Gloucestershire, S.19/0291/FUL
Reinstatement of the 'Missing Mile' section of the Stroudwater Navigation and development of associated infrastructure including locks, mooring basin, car parking, cafe and leisure facilities building with combined office and residence for basin manager.

Permission granted.

Cotswold Canals Connected Project

The planning decision by the Development Control Committee marks a big step forward for canal restoration and means reinstatement of the missing section of canal that was filled in during the construction of the M5 motorway in the 1960's, can go ahead. This will include the construction of a new canal channel from John Robinson (Westfield) Lock at Eastington near Westfield Bridge to connect with the new channel already constructed at the A38 roundabout. The scheme in Eastington covers both sides of the M5 and includes a towpath with new pedestrian bridge, a new mooring basin with space for 44 non-residential moorings, and a two-storey building including café and canal basin manager's accommodation.

Since Stroud District Council and Cotswold Canals Trust took on leadership of the project in 2008, 7.5 km of canal between Stroud and Stonehouse has been restored, transforming the route into a peaceful walking and cycling alternative to the busy adjacent A419, and created a vibrant new water habitat for nature. The route diverts away from the historic route of the canal, as this original route has been built on at the motorway junction, highway depot and A38 roundabout and link road. The new canal channel diverts south from Westfield bridge before going under the motorway, sharing the existing River Frome underpass with a dividing wall which will act as a flood barrier.

Key partners in the project include Gloucestershire County Council, Canal & River Trust and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, plus charities including Cotswold Boatmobility. Canal restoration has made access to the water easier for a wider section of the community, and seen the successful staging of talks and events including The Lock Challenge. Work on the Missing Mile has been scheduled into the engineering programme and will commence later this year in line with the planning conditions.

A significant proportion of the works on both the Missing Mile and other sections of the canal will be volunteer-led projects. Cotswold Canals Trust is currently scaling up its restoration volunteer teams with the skills, equipment and resources required to deliver this project.

Anyone interested in volunteering on this historic project to restore the Stroudwater Navigation can find out more at cotswoldcanals.org/volunteer/volunteering-opportunities/

This project would not be possible without the work of volunteers and the generous support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Highways, public grants, charitable trusts, corporate sponsorship, legacies and private donations. Progress can also be followed at www.facebook.com/cotswoldcanalstrust/ and www.facebook.com/cotswoldcanalsconnected



Images credit: YouTube - Court Above the Cut

Strategy & Resources Committee – 1st February

As noted in last month's report, the Committee considered the following papers for further approval by council on 22nd February:

- District Council budget for 2024/25.
- Council tax schemes from April 2024

Other reports

- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** - Spending allocations for 2024/2025 were approved. This funding supports additional demand placed on local infrastructure created by new housing growth, in accordance with adopted planning policy. Following a recommendation from the Environment Committee, £1.2 m has been allocated to seven projects:
 - Standish multi-user path – Gloucestershire County Council: £400,000.
 - New entrance/reception/office at Gastrells Community Primary School - Gloucestershire County Council: £228,000.
 - Berkeley Town Improvement Plan (detailed design) – Berkeley Town Council: £200,000.
 - Berkeley Community Hub – Berkeley Books: £170,000.
 - Stroud Merrywalks Interchange Hub - Gloucestershire County Council: £98,000.

- Stroud Subscription Rooms' new catering kitchen and toilets – Subscription Rooms Trust: £66,759.
 - Sustainable drainage for water quality and habitat at Stratford Park – Stroud District Council: £45,852.
- **The Fair Pay and Senior Pay Policy Statement** – the annual statement was shared. The council continues to pay the Living Wage Foundation living wage (the real living wage) to staff on the lowest pay grade (now £12.00 per hour). The Government requires Apprentices to be paid £5.28 per hour however the council rate for apprentices is more generous, as it is based on the National Minimum Wage for 18-20yr olds of £7.49. Excluding the apprentice grade, the pay ratio between the highest and lowest employees of the council is 1:6.
 - **Corporate Asset Management Plan.** The plan includes action plans for all the assets of the council, such as the leisure centres, the Brunel Mall in Stroud and Woodchester Mansion.
 - **Market Towns Vitality Fund** - £200k was allocated to this fund. £150k will be allocated to projects, and £50k will cover district council officer time for engagement and administrative costs. ([Link to paper.](#)) Officers will engage with the towns, Chamber of Trade and other stakeholders. Priorities and potential actions to be supported by the fund will be identified during the spring and summer, with decisions on funding support to be made in Autumn 2024. There may be some projects that are more appropriate to deliver on a wider geographic basis, potentially even district-wide, to benefit more than one market town.

Other news

Low-income families urged to check whether they could get help to buy food and milk

Almost 200 low-income families in the Stroud district are missing out on financial support which would help them buy healthy food, milk and vitamins.

The NHS Healthy Start scheme is available to people who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four and receive qualifying benefits, and anyone who is under 18 and more than 10 weeks pregnant. It can be used to buy fresh, frozen, and tinned fruit and vegetables, fresh, dried and tinned pulses, plain cow's milk and infant formula. Healthy Start vitamins for pregnant and breastfeeding women and vitamin drops for children under four years old are also included in the scheme.

According to data 187 people in the Stroud district that are eligible for the scheme have not applied.

You can find out if you are eligible on the NHS Healthy Start website www.healthystart.nhs.uk or by emailing healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk or phoning 0300 330 7010. Successful applicants will receive a discreet, prepaid card which can be used in any shop that sells healthy food and accepts Mastercard.

The card will be topped up every four weeks to a value of:

- £4.25 each week of your pregnancy from the 10th week
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to one year old

- £4.25 each week for children between one and four years old

For other sources of support see www.stroud.gov.uk/costofliving

Community groups can contribute to a video snapshot of Stroud district

The diversity, community, and inclusivity at the heart of the Stroud district is set to be celebrated in a new short film – and community groups are welcome to take part.

“Our District Lives” will create a snapshot of the many and diverse communities of the Stroud district and feature as many different community organisations or groups as possible.

The project is the result of work by the Council’s Community Representation Taskforce which was established following the review of street names, monuments and buildings across the district. The Taskforce is made up of recruited community representatives who have been working together to develop a project which demonstrates and celebrates Stroud district as a welcoming and inclusive place to live, work and visit.

As an added bonus, the final videos will provide community groups with a resource to help promote their group and increase their membership. The film as a whole will be published online and launched with a premiere at Stroud District Council’s Ebley Mill offices before being shown throughout the district.

The project looks to include teams, committees, musical groups, community action groups and any other group that meet these criteria. The project is especially keen to hear from groups giving a voice and presence to those who feel marginalised or underrepresented in all aspects of our communities, interests and areas.

The deadline for applications is Friday, 15th March. To apply, please complete this short submission form: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/DM8R1L/>

National Apprenticeship Week

Stroud District Council’s apprentices are showcased their talents during National Apprenticeship Week (5-11 February) by taking over SDC’s social media channels. Stroud District Council currently has 12 apprentices in a variety of roles – from working in the finance department to plumbing and carpentry, developing a range of on-the-job skills and experience.

SDC has been recognised for the contribution it makes to apprentices and won the Gloucestershire Live Apprenticeship Employer of the Year award in 2020. Cirencester College is the educational provider for apprenticeships at SDC. Apprentices receive one-to-one coaching and workshops tailored to their position, helping them achieve key skills, knowledge and behaviours in their chosen field.

Find out more about apprenticeships and National Apprenticeship Week at: <https://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk> and check www.stroud.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/jobs-with-the-council for apprenticeship opportunities.

Revamped play area opens

A playground in Cambridge Avenue Dursley has been upgraded and extended and now has a new surface and new multi-use piece of equipment made using recycled materials. Although the official opening in February was marked by rain, it didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the most important guests – local children who continued to play despite the downpour.

The play area is one of six throughout the district to be revamped by Stroud District Council. Five - Acacia Drive and Cambridge Avenue in Dursley, Wharfdale Way in Stonehouse, Archway Gardens in Paganhill and Mason Road and Stratford Park in Stroud.

Stratford Park playpark will be reopened on Friday 15th March with new equipment, from 3:30pm

International Women's Day Bike Ride

The International Women's Day Bike Ride took place from The Bike Drop to Access Bike on Saturday 9th March, with a good turn-out and lots of young riders.

Gunhouse Lane tree maintenance

The owners of the land between Gunhouse Lane and Thrupp Lane have agreed to undertake some maintenance work on the trees. We are currently awaiting an update on when that will be.

Heavens Valley Action Group

There is currently an action group discussing the situation at the Heavens Valley and how to keep it accessible to the community in light of potential ownership changes. The group wants to, "protect and enhance the environmentally and socially important area known as the Heavens Valley. We aim to ensure it flourishes for the benefit of both nature and the whole community of Stroud, through stewardship on our own or with complementary partners." There will be a [public meeting](#) on Monday 25th March at the Sub Rooms.