

**MINUTES OF BRIMSCOMBE & THRUPP
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AND ANNUAL MEETING
HELD AT THE WEST SUITE, BRIMSCOMBE PORT MILLS, BRIMSCOMBE,
STROUD, GL5 2QG
ON TUESDAY 14th May 2024 at 6.00pm**



Present: Cllr Gwen Grant Chair
Cllr Bob Tyler Vice-chair
Cllr Brian Castle
Cllr Tim Harris
Cllr Bill Harvey
Cllr David Haydock
Cllr Alex Middle
Cllr Martin Whiteside

Apologies: Cllr Greg Pilley
County Cllr Chloe Turner

In attendance: Hannah Warren (Clerk)
Penny Starr (Assistant Clerk)
Tricia Watson (District Councillor)
Beki Aldam (District Councillor)
Two members of the public

1. Annual Meeting items:

- (a) Election of Chairperson:** To **elect** the Chairperson to the Council and for the declaration of acceptance of office to be signed
Gwen Grant was elected, proposed by Gwen Grant and seconded by Bob Tyler and Brian Castle. The declaration of acceptance was signed.
- (b) Election of Vice-Chairperson:** To **elect** the Vice-Chairperson to the Council and for the declaration of acceptance of office to be signed
Bob Tyler was elected, proposed by Gwen Grant and seconded by Martin Whiteside and Brian Castle. The declaration of acceptance was signed.
- (c) Committees and working groups:** To **appoint** Councillors to committees and working groups
Councillors were appointed to Committees, Working Groups and areas of responsibility/representation, as detailed in the table below. Council agreed to dissolve the NDP Working Group and for any related work to be absorbed into the Green Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group.

Committee/working group/representative	Minimum number	Councillors	Chairperson
Staffing Committee	3 + Chair of Parish Council	Bill Harvey Bob Tyler Gwen Grant David Haydock	Bob Tyler
Brimscombe Port Community Hub Committee	5	Gwen Grant David Haydock Martin Whiteside Brian Castle Bob Tyler Tim Harris	Gwen Grant
Summer Party Working Group	At least 1 Councillor and non-Councillors	Tim Harris Alex Middle	Tim Harris
Road Safety Working Group	2 Councillors and non-Councillors	Gwen Grant Martin Whiteside Bill Harvey	Martin Whiteside
Green Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group	3	Greg Pilley Alex Middle Brian Castle Martin Whiteside	Greg Pilley
Social Centre representative	1	Bill Harvey	N/A
Allotment Manager	1	Gwen Grant	N/A
Emergency Plan lead	1	Bob Tyler	N/A
Flood Warden	1	Brian Castle	N/A
Planning lead	1	Tim Harris	N/A

(d) Internal control: To **approve** system of Internal Control and **appoint** Councillors to conduct internal control in June 2024, September 2024, December 2024, and March 2025

Councillors approved the system of internal control. The following Councillors were appointed to conduct internal controls: Cllr Middle – June 2024, Cllr Haydock – September 2024, Cllr Harvey – December 2024 and Cllr Harris – March 2025.

2. Apologies: To receive and accept apologies and note absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Pilley and County Cllr Turner and accepted by Council.

3. 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.

Cllr Middle raised a Declaration of Interest for Agenda item 8.3.

4. Minutes of the last meeting:

(a) To approve and sign the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 9th April 2024.

The Minutes were **approved** and signed as a true record [**ACTION: Clerks** to update on website]

(b) To approve and sign correction to 9th January 2024 minutes – item 8.5

Council confirmed that the minutes should have included a note to the effect that: “Council decided not to instruct solicitors in relation to preparing or reviewing the new lease agreement”.

[Action: Clerk to amend].

4. Public participation: An opportunity for the public to raise issues relating to the Parish. Two members of the public gave an update on work being done on the canal between Goughs Orchard and the end of the Iron Works. **[ACTION: Clerks** to give contact details to Cllr Haydock]

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

(a) County Councillor – Cllr Turner

Apologies were received from Cllr Turner who was unable to attend the meeting. No report was submitted.

(b) District Councillor – Cllr Aldam

Cllr Aldam submitted a written report ahead of the meeting ([Appendix 1: District Councillor Aldam’s Report](#)). She provided a verbal synopsis at the meeting including asking parishioners to contact her regarding any of the following meetings:

- Friday 17th May, Cllr Beki Aldam will be visiting Nu-Pro and meeting with the team there to discuss residents’ concerns over noise and light interference.
- Meeting with residents of Gunhouse Lane to discuss concerns about the maintenance of the lane and surrounding trees.
- Tuesday 4th June, there will be a Public Meeting held upstairs at the Brewery from 7pm to discuss concerns in Brimscombe Valley, along by Swells Hill.

(c) District Councillor – Chalford Ward

Apologies had been received from Cllr Fenton who was unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Watson was in attendance and explained that Cllr Jockel has retired, and Cllr James Boyle is a new District Councillor for Chalford Ward.

(d) Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

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

(e) Neighbourhood Warden

The Neighbourhood Warden Mark Dodd was unable to attend the meeting. **[ACTION: Clerks** to invite to the next meeting]

6. Planning applications:

(a) To **consider** the following planning applications and **agree** any comments to be submitted by the Parish Council:

- **S.24/0662/TCA** – 2 Cleeve House, Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud

The Council agreed to ‘No Comment’ on this application. Stance: Neutral

- **S.24/0539/FUL** – Land Adjacent to Dencroft, Brimscombe Lane, Brimscombe,

The Council agreed to object to this application due to inadequate parking provision. Stance: Object

- **S.24/0576/HHOLD** – Ardmore, Bourne Lane, Brimscombe, Stroud
The Council agreed to ‘No Comment’ on this application. Stance: Neutral
 - **S.24/0705/HHOLD** – Cotswold, Gunhouse Lane, Bowbridge, Stroud
The Council agreed to ‘No Comment’ on this application. Stance: Neutral
 - **S.24/0737/TCA** – Canal Iron Works, London Road, Brimscombe, Gloucestershire
The Parish Council expressed concerns about the impact on wildlife and the timing of the work in relation to this. Stance: Neutral
 - **S.24/0735/TCA** – Canal Iron Works, London Road, Brimscombe, Gloucestershire
The Parish Council expressed concerns about the impact on wildlife and the timing of the work in relation to this. Stance: Neutral
 - **S.24/0732/VAR** – 68 Thrupp Lane, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire
This application had been withdrawn.
- (b) To **receive** application received since the posting of the agenda, **consider** and **agree** any comments to be submitted by the Parish Council
- **S.24/0750/VAR** – Land At 17 Great Orchard, London Road, Thrupp, Stroud
The Council agreed to ‘No Comment’ on this application. Stance: Neutral

(c) To **note** decisions made by Stroud District Council on planning applications.
Council noted decisions made by Stroud District Council on previous planning applications.

7. Finances:

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

Payments made between meetings to be ratified: May 2024

	Payee	Details	Payment method	Amount
1	Roadware	Grit bins	BACs	£738.78
2	GAPTC	2024-25 annual membership subscription	BACs	£547.99
	TOTAL			£1,286.77

Accounts for approval and payment: May 2024

No.	Payee	Details	Payment method	Amount
3	Grace Network	Use of office space	BACs	£240.00
4	The Cotswold Hay Bale Company	Hay bales for summer party 2024	BACs	£300.00
5	Hannah Warren	Expenses - refreshments for APA	BACs	£20.78
6	Waterplus	Allotment water supply	BACs	£58.06

7/8	Salaries	Salary payments - May	BACs	£1,791.11
9	NEST	Pensions - May	BACs	£240.51
10	Rory Boden	Maintenance work	BACs	£495.00
11	Hannah Warren	Expenses - MS office	BACs	£20.64
	TOTAL			£3,166.10

The accounts were approved for payment.

(b) To **receive** the year end accounts statement for 2023/24

The accounts were received.

(c) To **approve** virement of underspends (as detailed) from 2023/24 budget to 2024/25 budget
Council approved the following virements of underspends from 2023/24 to the 2024/25 budget:

- i) Virement of £1,500 to the 2024/25 budget for Parish Maps
- ii) Virement of £960 to 2024/25 budget for stagecoach bus shelter refurbishment - this being £1213.00 approved spend (3rd October 2023, min ref: 8.7) minus £253.00 spent in 2023/24
- iii) Virement of £800 to 2024/25 budget for defibrillator installation outside Thrupp school
- iv) Virement of £1,000 to 2024/25 budget for the refurbishment of Toadsmoor Junction bus shelter
- v) Virement of £700 to 2024/25 budget for additional grit bins needed, not purchased in 2023/24

(d) To **note** the 2024-25 budget and earmarked reserves, and **approve** adjustments applied
Council noted the 2024-25 budget and earmarked reserves and approved the applied adjustments as detailed below:

- i) Virements (detailed in item 7c) to be applied to the 2024-25 budget.
- ii) The removal of the previous sum of £3,000 budgeted for legal fees for the Queen's Court land purchase loan, as this spend is no longer needed.
- iii) The removal of the previous sum of £15,000 budgeted for the Queen's Court land purchase grant, pending a new decision to be made at this meeting.
- iv) The removal of the previous sum of £20,000 budgeted for the Queen's Court land purchase loan, as this spend is not allowed and the decision called in.
- v) Adjustment of 2024/25 Summer Party expenditure budget from £6,071.58 (as approved PC meeting 14/5/2024, min ref: 7g) to £4694.92 to account for monies already spent in 2023/24 (as detailed in item 7c above).
- vi) Adjustment of Summer Party 2024/25 income from £12,000 to £4,800 following budget reset - PC meeting 9/4/24, min ref: 8.1.
- vii) Money previously approved for transfer from the Community Centre project earmarked reserves to Queen's Court land purchase (repayable grant) returned to the Community Centre project earmarked fund.

[**ACTION: Clerk** to update 2024-25 budget]

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

The Council received and noted a monthly breakdown of income and expenditure.

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

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

(g) To **receive** monthly bank reconciliation
The Council received the bank reconciliation.

(h) To **approve** the internal transfer of £20,000 between bank accounts, from the Treasurers Account to the savings account
The Council approved the internal transfer. [**Action: Clerks** to work with Cllr Haydock on an investment policy paper for June's meeting]

(i) To **note** Assistant Clerk's acceptance of the offer of a pension
The Council noted the Assistant Clerk's acceptance of a pension.

(j) To **note** submission of VAT reclaim
The Council noted the submission of a VAT reclaim.

8. Items requiring a decision:

8.1 Committee and Working Group Terms of Reference:

(a) To **review** and **adopt** the Brimscombe Port Committee Terms of Reference
The Council reviewed and adopted the Brimscombe Port Committee Terms of Reference

(b) To **review** and **adopt** the Green Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group Terms of Reference
The Council reviewed and adopted the Green Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group Terms of Reference.

(c) To **review** and **adopt** the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group Terms of Reference
The Council approved to dissolve the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group with any work to be absorbed into the Green Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group.

(d) To **review** and **adopt** the Party on the Playing Field Working Group Terms of Reference
The Council reviewed and adopted the Party on the Playing Field working Group Terms of Reference.

(e) To **review** and **adopt** the Road Safety Working Group Terms of Reference
The Council reviewed and adopted the Road Safety Working Group Terms of Reference.

(f) To **review** and **adopt** the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference
The Council reviewed and adopted the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.
[**ACTION: Clerks** to update on website]

8.2 Parish Council Policies:

(a) To **review** and **adopt** the Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council Members Code of Conduct
The Council reviewed and adopted the Members Code of Conduct.

(b) To **review** and **adopt** the Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council Standing Orders
The Council reviewed and adopted the Standing Orders.

(c) To **review** and **adopt** the Brimscombe & Thrupp Parish Council Finance Regulations
The Council agreed to adjourn the review to the next meeting.

(d) To **review** and **adopt** the Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish Council Risk Management Schedule
The Council agreed to adjourn the review to the next meeting.

(e) To **review** and **adopt** the Sickness and Absence Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Sickness and Absence Policy

(f) To **review** and **adopt** the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Anti-Harassment and Bullying Policy

(g) To **review** and **adopt** the Disciplinary Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Disciplinary Policy

(h) To **review** and **adopt** the Grievance Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Grievance Policy

(i) To **review** and **adopt** the Data Protection
The Council reviewed and adopted the Data Protection Policy

(j) To **review** and **adopt** the Asset Register
This item has been added to the agenda in two places in error, and was considered under item 8.7a (see below).

(k) To **review** and **adopt** the Councillor Training Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Councillor Training Policy

(l) To **review** and **adopt** the Training and Development Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Training and Development Policy

(m) To **review** and **adopt** the Data Protection Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Data Protection Policy

(n) To **review** and **adopt** the Records Management and Retention Policy
The Council reviewed and adopted the Records Management and Retention Policy

[ACTION: Clerks to update on website]

8.3 Green space behind Queen's Court: To **reconsider** the decisions made on 5th December 2023, agenda item 8.1, and 9th January 2024, agenda item 7(f), and to **agree** funding from the Parish Council, the budget from which this is allocated and any future budgetary provisions needed as a result.

Cllr Middle declared an interest in this agenda item and took no part in the discussion; leaving the room for the duration of this item.

- The Council reconsidered the previous decision and agreed to grant £20,000 towards the project.
- Council agreed that a virement of £20,000 is transferred from the Community Centre project earmarked reserves for this purpose.
- The Parish Council will make a contribution to this project under its function of 'Recreation', and the 'Power to acquire land for or to provide recreation grounds, public walks, pleasure grounds, and open spaces and to manage and control them' – under the Local Government Act 1972, Sched 14, para 27. Under this function the council has the power to give financial assistance to another person or body performing the same function.
- The Council agreed that a resolution regarding any future budgetary provisions needed as a result will be reviewed at the next budget setting meeting later in the year.
- In deciding to make this grant Council noted the following benefits of this project: benefits to immediate residents; benefits to the wider residents of the Parish; supporting the local development plan; protecting this area as a designated green space; and wider biodiversity and environmental benefits.
- Council would therefore need to provide a justification for this contribution to be noted in the minutes. This might include: a justification of the need to protect this area as a green space; wider biodiversity and environmental benefits.
- Council decided to request the same monitoring and reporting as required from Charlea Community Gardens C.I.C. by the Community Ownership Fund.

[**Actions: Clerks** to notify grant recipient. The **Clerks** were asked to find out what happens to the land asset if the Community Interest Company ceases to exist. **Clerks** to investigate Cllr Harris joining the CIC board or being a representative].

8.4 Development of Hope Mill Lane Site for composting purposes: To **approve** works at the Hope Mill Lane Site for composting purposes for use by BATCOM and to **approve** contractor and associated costs.

- The Council approved to carry out the works specified, using K Yateman and Sons as the contractor, and approved the associated costs of £9,700 +VAT.
- Council agreed that a virement of £9,700 is transferred from the Community Centre project earmarked reserves for this purpose. (The powers under which the Parish Council can undertake and fund this work include: 1) Conserving biodiversity: Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, section 40, which sits under the Environmental Act 2001', and 2) Providing recycling facilities: Open Spaces Act 1906, which comes under the Highways Act 1980, section 47).
- The Council agreed that a resolution regarding any future budgetary provisions needed as a result will be reviewed at the next budget setting meeting later in the year.
- In deciding to approve this work and associated spend, Council noted the following:
 - Completing the work itself would save the composting scheme approximately £2,000, as a result of the Parish Council being able to reclaim the VAT – thus amplifying the contribution from the Parish Council.
 - Large capital expenditure projects like this are difficult to fundraise for, especially for fledgling new start enterprises. Providing the infrastructure with the site, would ensure that the composting scheme is able to begin its operations and benefit our community.

- Providing the site with completed ground works moves the project from a concept to having a working facility, which will enable further fundraising and activity needed to establish the scheme.
- As a Parish Council owned site and asset, there is a clear justification for providing the infrastructure.
- Council further noted the following benefits in relation to facilitating a composting site in the Parish:
 - Provision of direct composting facilities to approximately 150 – 250 households.
 - Membership to households within the Parish of Brimscombe and Thrupp. Membership will not be restricted to the users but is open to all parishioners. 150-250 households is estimated to be the capacity of the compost facility as proposed.
 - This is a vital service for a Parish which has a high proportion of households that are unable to use Stroud District Council's brown bin (Green Waste collection) service due to accessibility issues. It is also an alternative to the brown bin service with the additional benefit that composted material will be available for local growers and gardeners.
 - In addition to the direct benefit of its membership, the composting scheme will offer many other wider benefits to the community and residents of Brimscombe and Thrupp Parish, including:
 - The option to become a shareholder/member – is open to anyone in the Parish for £1 (only residents in the Parish can become shareholder members). All shareholders (regardless of the number of shares they hold) will have one vote in any significant decisions made about BATCOM.
 - The site will be open to non-members to collect compost for a donation.
 - Other low costs/free activities will be open to the rest of the Parish – including school workshops, public workshops, and garden advisory service – thus providing awareness raising and education on biodiversity issues.
 - Providing opportunities for volunteering and employment.
 - Making connections between people and local organisations, thus addressing social isolation.
 - Building community resilience to climate change, by creating a low impact circular economy.
 - Meeting the needs of the Neighbourhood Plan – as described above: supporting community activity and social enterprise, reducing waste, raising awareness of recycling and reuse, improving the biodiversity value of the site and supporting activity in the wider site and playing field.
 - Reduction of waste and a reduced carbon footprint within the Parish.

[Actions: Clerks to notify K Yateman and Sons and coordinate the work].

8.5 Football Club car parking agreement: To **review** and **approve** agreement regarding parking on Fromeside playing field by Brimscombe and Thrupp Football Club on match days.

Adjourned to the next meeting.

8.6 Training:

(a) To **approve** the Assistant Clerk undertaking the following training courses and **approve** the associated costs: i) Clerk's the Knowledge Part 1 £45; ii) Clerk's the Knowledge Part 2 £45; and, iii) Councillors Social Media Skills £30

The Council approved the above training courses and associated costs.

(b) To **approve** Councillor training courses and costs

The Council approved the following training courses and costs. Cllr Middle to attend “Introduction to Local Councils” and “Planning in Plain English” and Cllr Grant to attend “How to recruit and retain a more diverse pool of local councillors.” [**ACTION: Clerks** to book]

8.7 Asset register:

(a) To **review** and **approve** the Parish Council asset register

The Council reviewed and approved the asset register [**ACTION: Clerks** to upload to website].

(b) To **confirm** that the method of asset valuation is on the basis of replacement value

The Council confirmed that the method of asset valuation is on the basis of replacement value.

[**Action: Clerks** to check whether the asset valuation for the AGAR should include any depreciation]

8.8 Insurance renewal: To **review** insurance renewal quotes, **decide** on length of insurance cover (1 year or 3 years), and **approve** associated costs (see papers) and to **confirm** that cover is still fit for purpose

The Council noted a correction to the agenda item, to read: To **review** insurance renewal quote, **approve** associated costs, and to **confirm** that cover is still fit for purpose.

The Council reviewed the quote, approved the associated costs of £775.24 and confirmed that the cover is still fit for purpose [**ACTION: Clerks** to renew insurance]

8.9 Asset inspection:

(a) To **receive** a progress report on actions agreed from previous asset inspections and **note** actions taken/ still outstanding

Item adjourned to the next meeting.

(b) To **review** the asset inspection carried out during July 2023 and **agree** actions to be taken and associated costs

Item adjourned to the next meeting.

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 can 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).

No report was given and the Council agreed to dissolve the group with any work to be incorporated into Green Spaces and Biodiversity Working Group.

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

Cllr Grant informed that there was no update and the meeting on 13th May with Stroud District Council was cancelled as there was nothing to report. A new meeting is planned for June.

(d) **Green Space and Biodiversity Working Group:** To receive an update (Cllr Pilley)
Cllr Pilley was absent from the meeting, so no verbal update was given.

(e) **Road Safety Working Group:** To receive an update (Cllr Whiteside)
The Council received a verbal update from Cllr Grant who explained that the speed limit on the A419 in Brimscombe and Thrupp will not be changed as Highways are not currently looking at TROs unless there has been a fatality. A parishioner has asked the Parish Council for support in installing a crossing at the bottom of Toadsmoor. This is being researched by a member of the Road Safety Working Group which will receive a report. The report will be forwarded to Paul Helbrow of GCC Highways.

(f) **BATCOM:** To receive an update (Cllr Pilley).
In Cllr Pilley’s absence no update was given.

(g) **Party on the Playing Field:** To receive an update (Cllr Harris)
Cllr Harris gave a verbal update – there will be a big top marquee with local performers and a committee member is contacting companies for sponsorship having already secured £50 from Ken Yateman and Sons.

10. Agenda items: To agree items for the next agenda or forward to Clerk by Friday 31st May 2024.

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

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.44PM**

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 1: Stroud District Councillor's Report

Stroud District Councillors' Report – May 2024

Report of meetings during April 2024

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

Elections

Elections were held on Thursday 2nd May for Stroud District Council, the Police & Crime Commission for Gloucestershire and for the seven parish and town council wards which were contested (due to more candidates being nominated than places on the council).

The election results for Stroud District Council: 22 Green Councillors, 20 Labour councillors, 7 Conservative Councillors and 2 Liberal Democrat Councillors.

Conservative Chris Nelson was re-elected as the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Council meeting – 25th April

A long meeting which covered numerous items:

M5 Junction 14 – Work on design and costing of junction improvements

Council approved a budget of up to £100k for to pay for consultancy work on design and costings for improvements to Junction 14 of the M5.

The Planning Inspectors examining the draft Local Plan for Stroud District have stated that this is a requirement for the Local Plan Examination to continue. National Highways have noted that the existing junction arrangement at J14 is operating at capacity and an improvement is required to accommodate housing growth in the area.

The draft Local Plan Examination is currently in a ten month pause to undertake several tasks as set out in a Joint Action Plan, as agreed with Gloucestershire County Council, South Gloucestershire Council and National Highways and the work on Junction 14 is one of the tasks.

The costings and design work will start with existing work previously undertaken by South Gloucestershire Council and National Highways. SDC has already approved additional funding to work jointly with Gloucestershire County Council on improvements to Junction 12 of the M5, which is another part of the Joint Action Plan required by the Planning Inspectors.

Design and costing of improvements to a junction is only the first step in the process, and additional work would need to be completed, and national level funding secured by National Highways to deliver any future junction improvements.

Appointment of a Monitoring Officer (Council Legal Officer)

Hayley Sims is appointed to replace Claire Hughes with effect from 1 May 2024 for an initial period of one year. Claire has secured a full-time role as a Director at Cheltenham Borough Council. Hayley was previously the Deputy Monitoring Officer. Hayley has lots of experience as a local government lawyer and will be employed by SDC via the One Legal partnership (SDC is a member of the partnership). Hayley will work part time for Stroud DC as monitoring officer (2.5 days per week) and the rest of the week as a senior lawyer, specialising in Commercial and Property at One Legal.

Stroud District Council Organisational Changes

Following Claire's departure as a Strategic Director, her other roles at Stroud DC (not related to the Monitoring Officer function) are being shared out amongst existing staff. This includes the Data Protection Officer role and responsibility for Corporate Governance. Council also agreed that a Deputy Chief Executive will be appointed from the three remaining strategic directors.

Gloucestershire City Region Board

Council agreed to the establishment of the new board, the Gloucestershire City Region Board (GCRB) which will replace the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee. This board is the public forum for all the Gloucestershire local authorities to work together. It also serves to administer the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) which is a Gloucestershire-wide fund set up from the Business Rates Pool.

County 'Devolution Deal'

The Government is expected to announce soon that a 'County Deal' has been agreed for Gloucestershire and some other authorities. There is very limited impact expected of this so-called 'devolution deal' on Stroud District Council. The main change is that the adult education budget (of approximately £10m) will be transferred from central Government to Gloucestershire County Council to administer. The deal also gives the county council strategic oversight of the Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and provides land assembly and compulsory purchase powers, which are shared between the local planning authority, county council and Homes England.

Council agreed to support a Memorandum of Understanding about this deal, which confirms that existing funding allocated under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will continue to be administered by Stroud DC, and that in relation to any work on land assembly or Compulsory Purchase Orders, the County Council would seek the agreement of the relevant district council prior to working on land assembly in their area.

Council motion on managing contaminated land

The motion proposed by Cllr Beki Aldam (Green) and seconded by Cllr Chloe Turner (Green) concerns support for dealing with contaminated land. The Council will write to the Government to request the funding and resources necessary for the efficient undertaking of the proposed principles of 'Zane's Law'. This seeks to address the crisis of contaminated land in the UK, reinstating legislative provisions removed by successive governments from the 1990 Environment Protection Act, and to increase national government funding and support to local authorities to manage contaminated land. Beki and Chloe both spoke about contaminated land in their own wards. Particularly mentioned was the site in Brimscombe Valley where both are working with residents to address numerous issues, including concern over the covering of a stream, closed footpath, and numerous detritus blighting the valley and causing possible contamination problems.

Swedish Timber Houses – Redevelopment Sites

Following the decision by Housing Committee to progress redevelopment of three sites, in Stinchcombe, Uley and Wotton, the Council agreed to the additional budget required to finance the

redevelopment to deliver new council owned, energy efficient, affordable housing. The redevelopment would still be subject to obtaining planning permission, and a further report to Housing Committee. Copies of the draft layouts can be found here ([item 8a](#))

Visitors Car Park Ebley Mill

Following the committee recommendation, council agreed to change the visitors only car park at Ebley Mill to a public (charging) car park. This is being undertaken in response to requests from local residents and

businesses to access the car park.

Cotswold Canals Connected Project Update

Good progress is being made on the environment and community programmes of the project with a plan of further works for 2024. By December 2025 an additional section of the canal from Stonehouse to Eastington is expected to be completed. The final phase to connect the Stroudwater canal to the national network at Saul Junction is unlikely to happen before the end of 2027 as additional funding needs to be secured for two infrastructure aspects: the GCC owned road bridge (Walk Bridge) and the crossing under the M5 (working with National Highways). Restoration of the canal will bring significant environmental, community and economic benefits to the local area.

Other items approved by Council:

- Ubico Five Year Vision and Business Plan 2024/25
- Updates to the Constitution as proposed by the Constitution Working Group

Development Control Committee – 9th April

- Javelin Park, Bath Road, Haresfield, Stonehouse S.21/2579/OUT
Hybrid planning application for employment development for B8 (Storage or Distribution) Uses, ancillary offices, energy centre, landscaping, fitness trail and amenity areas and new access.
 - i. Outline for whole site (with all matters reserved except access) – Permitted
 - ii. Full application for Units 1, 2 for B8 (Storage or Distribution) Uses and the energy centre (all matters submitted). **Permitted**
- Former Orchestra Works Site, Walk Mill Lane, Kingswood, Wotton-Under-Edge S.22/2473/FUL
Demolition of Orchestra Works and Associated Buildings, and development of no.32 new Zero Carbon dwellings, access from Walk Mill Lane, highways, open space, landscaping, drainage, and associated infrastructure. **Permitted**
- Land Off, School Lane, Whitminster, Gloucestershire S.21/0236/OUT
Residential development (up to 100 dwellings), associated infrastructure, ancillary facilities, open space and landscaping. Construction of a new vehicular access off School Lane. **Refused**
- Land Off, School Lane, Whitminster, Gloucestershire S.22/0423/OUT (Pages 191 - 228)
Residential development (up to 45 dwellings), associated infrastructure, ancillary facilities, open space and landscaping. Construction of a new vehicular access off School Lane. **Permitted.**

Planning and Enforcement Key Performance Indicators were noted. This data provides application number and performance statistics up to February 2024. The report shows the numbers of planning applications received and the percentage of applications determined against government targets. Information on enforcement statistics and notices issued is also included.

Audit & Standards Committee – 16th April

Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit Report

The Head of Service of the Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit forms part of the core Multi-Agency Approach to Fraud (MAAF) group. The core group consists of attendees from Gloucestershire Constabulary Economic Crime Team, Trading Standards, Victim Support, NHS and colleagues from Gloucester City and County Councils. The MAAF has been set up to discuss fraud trends, victim care and communication of fraud scams across Gloucestershire. Through collaborative working the main purpose is to raise awareness to minimise and disrupt fraud. A new website is being set up to be accessible to residents and council staff to provide guidance and advice on fraud. It aims to educate communities and help to reduce the stigma and increase reporting.

As previously reported, matches from the fraud initiative work relating to 2021/22 data sets, resulted in increased Council Tax revenue of £142,959 and 74 Civil Penalties, totalling £5,180, being applied.

The Unit continues to support the Council in tackling tenancy fraud. The overall remit is to prevent, detect and deter abuse of public funds and social housing. Housing and tenancy fraud remains as one of the top four areas of fraud and abuse within the public sector. This takes many forms but the two most significant areas are Right to Buy and Illegal Subletting.

Draft Internal Audit Plan

The draft plan for 2024-25 was shared with the Committee ([link](#)) which sets out priorities and assurance requirements for the year ahead.

Internal Audit Progress Update Report 2023-24

The Council's Internal Audit service is provided by Audit Risk Assurance (ARA) under a Shared Service agreement between Gloucestershire County Council, Stroud District Council and Gloucester City Council. An assurance level of substantial or acceptable was given for the audits undertaken up to October 2023.

Other reports

The Committee notes or approved the following documents:

- Information Governance Framework
- Safeguarding Audit - Management Update
- Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy
- Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit Fraud Risk Strategy
- Corporate Risk Register Update
- External Audit Plan for year ended 31 March 2024
- Treasury Management Quarter 3 Report
- Internal Audit Plan

- Update on Annual Governance Statement Action Plan

Other news

No Mow May

Stroud District Council will be leaving almost 100,000 square metres of grass uncut as part of the national environmental campaign No Mow May and is hoping residents will follow its lead. In the council's latest resident survey, 82% of people in the Stroud district said they were in support of No Mow May.

The national campaign, led by charity Plantlife, encourages grass to grow and wildflowers to bloom during May, which in turn enhances and protects wildlife and cuts carbon emissions.

The council is responsible for approximately 90 square kilometres of maintained grassland in parks, housing estates, closed cemeteries and on roadside verges which it cuts on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council. By leaving a proportion uncut, grassland will flourish, encouraging the growth of wildflowers - a valuable food source for pollinators - and providing shelter for invertebrates, small mammals, and reptiles.

Further measures to enhance wildlife in the district were set at an Environment Committee meeting on 21 March when it was agreed that new initiatives would have a positive impact on at least 25% of the council's total grassland. These include reducing the frequency of cutting grass around the base of the council's 1,500 trees to once a year to improve the health of trees and create an additional 18,000 square metres of wildlife habitat.

Spring bulbs and wildflower seeds will be planted at the base of trees to aerate the soil and increase biodiversity and further opportunities to cut grass less frequently will be assessed throughout the year, with new areas of wildflower meadows being created.

Support available to schools to encourage healthy eating

Stroud District Council is appealing for schools in the Stroud district that have a high percentage of pupils that have free school meals to apply for free-of-charge teachers' food education training. The council has successfully bid for funding from NHS Charities Together to finance the professional training by food educators TastEd for teachers and support staff.

TastEd will provide one hour of training and resources to enable teaching staff to deliver a range of taste education lessons that are closely tailored to the National Curriculum. The sessions help to demystify food education by using a simple and effective training model that has been shown to help children have a positive relationship with food as they try, talk, and write about food.

The lessons are highly engaging and provide children with positive experiences of fruit and vegetables in the safety of the classroom. Educators have found that, when surrounded by their peers, children will often try, and enjoy, a wide variety of new foods.

Research shows that 79% of children in the UK eat fewer than 3.5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, with one in four children eating three or more unhealthy snacks a day. Teachers at Cam Everland school who took part in TastEd training reported that the experience was: "very interesting," "gave me different ideas I hadn't thought of," and the programme as "simple but effective."

SDC can fund three schools to receive a training session, and would particularly like to receive applications from schools with a high percentage of pupils who receive free school meals, or those which would like to focus on providing more food education.

Interested schools can apply for the training by contacting David Rawlings, Stroud District Council's Children & Young People Development Officer at david.rawlings@stroud.gov.uk

More information about TastEd can be found at www.tasteeducation.com

Leisure centre and museum closures in May

Three Stroud District Council-owned public buildings will close for a short time in May to as part of the installation of a renewable heating system.

Stratford Park Leisure Centre in Stroud will close on Monday 13 May and Friday 24 May, The Pulse Leisure Centre in Dursley will close on Thursday 16 and Friday 17 May and The Museum in the Park in Stroud will close from Tuesday 14 May to Friday 17 May, and Friday 24 May.

The £5 million project is replacing ageing gas boilers with state-of-the-art renewable heating systems. Most of the work at the centres has taken place behind the scenes with no impact to visitors. However, the final phase will cause considerable disruption to public areas with the loss of mains power, therefore cannot take place while the buildings are open to the public.

The closures have been planned so one leisure centre will be open every day with swimming, gym and exercise classes. There are public transport links between Stroud and Dursley with buses 65 (Stagecoach) and 65a (Cotswold Green) travelling between the two towns daily from Monday to Saturday. Leisure centre and museum members have been contacted about the closures.

Once complete, the project will save hundreds of tonnes of carbon emissions every year from the three buildings. Read more about the project here www.stroud.gov.uk/salix

Local News

On Friday 17th May, Cllr Beki Aldam will be visiting Nu-Pro and meeting with the team there to discuss residents' concerns over noise and light interference. Please contact Beki with any concerns and these can remain confidential.

Beki will be meeting with residents of Gunhouse Lane to discuss concerns about the maintenance of the lane and surrounding trees. Please contact Beki with any concerns around this, which can remain confidential.

On Tuesday 4th June, there will be a Public Meeting held upstairs at the Brewery from 7pm to discuss concerns in Brimscombe Valley, along by Swells Hill. Please contact Beki for further information.