

**MINUTES OF BRIMSCOMBE & THRUPP
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AND ANNUAL MEETING
HELD AT THE WEST SUITE, BRIMSCOMBE PORT MILLS, BRIMSCOMBE,
STROUD, GL5 2QG
ON TUESDAY 11th June 2024 at 6.00pm**



Present: Cllr Gwen Grant Chair
Cllr Bob Tyler Vice-chair
Cllr Brian Castle
Cllr Bill Harvey
Cllr David Haydock
Cllr Alex Middle
Cllr Greg Pilley

Apologies: Cllr Tim Harris
Cllr Martin Whiteside
Beki Aldam (District Councillor)

In attendance: Hannah Warren (Clerk)
Penny Starr (Assistant Clerk)
County Cllr Chloe Turner
Four members of the public

1. **Apologies:** To receive and accept apologies and note absence
Apologies were received from Cllrs Harris and Whiteside and accepted by Council.
Apologies were received from District Councillor Aldam
2. **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 Pilley raised a Declaration of Interest for Agenda item 8.3.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting:** To **approve** and **sign** the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 14th May 2024.
The Minutes were **approved** and signed as a true record [**ACTION: Clerks** to update on website]
4. **Public participation:** An opportunity for the public to raise issues relating to the Parish.
 - A member of the public spoke in favour of her submitted planning application.
 - 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. They explained how and why the work was being carried out and that they were taking advice from ecologists to protect the biodiversity. [**ACTION: Clerks** to co-ordinate a separate meeting with the Parish Council and Canals Trust].

- A member of the public spoke against a submitted planning application and how it would have an adverse effect on her property.

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

(a) County Councillor – Cllr Turner

Cllr Turner submitted a written report ahead of the meeting ([Appendix 1: County Councillor's Report](#)). Cllr Turner was in attendance and invited any questions from the attendees. There were concerns raised about the number of potholes in the area and Cllr Turner explained how different environmental materials have been tried out and that the County Council has invested in a new bit of machinery.

(b) District Councillor – Cllr Aldam

Apologies were received from Cllr Aldam who was unable to attend the meeting. See report submitted ahead of the meeting ([Appendix 2: District Councillor's Report](#)).

(c) District Councillors – Chalford Ward

Apologies were received from Chalford Ward District Councillors who were unable to attend the meeting.

(d) Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

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

6. Planning applications:

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

- **S.24/0940/TCA** – Land North of Gussage Mill, Toadsmoor Road, Brimscombe, Stroud. The Council agreed to 'No Comment' on this application. Stance: Neutral

- **S.24/0760/HHOLD** – 37 Thrupp Lane, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire. The Council agreed to 'No Comment' on this application. Stance: Neutral

- **S.24/0950/VAR** – 68 Thrupp Lane, Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire
The Council agreed to the following comments on this application: "The Parish Council objects to this application on the following grounds: The proposed development would have an over bearing impact on the neighbouring property "Solstice"; It is extremely similar to a) the proposal that was submitted in 2017 and was withdrawn following the recommendation of the planning officer Sarah Carruthers and b) the proposal that was submitted in 2023 and subsequently withdrawn; Two earlier applications were approved and represent a compromise that would be acceptable; The proposed development would negatively impact the existing visual topography. The Parish Council request that the application be brought in for consideration by the Development Control Committee."
Stance: Object

(b) To **receive** application received since the posting of the agenda, **consider** and **agree** any comments to be submitted by the Parish Council
No additional applications were received

(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: June 2024

	Payee	Details	Payment method	Amount
1	Clear Councils	Insurance renewal (approved at May meeting, min ref. 8.8)	BACs	£775.24
2	Charlea Community Gardens C.I.C.	Grant towards purchase of land behind Queen's Court (approved at May meeting, min ref. 8.3)	BACs	£20,000.00
	TOTAL			£20,775.24

Accounts for approval and payment: June 2024

No.	Payee	Details	Payment method	Amount
3	GAPTC	Internal Audit Service	BACs	£245.00
4	Hannah Warren	Expenses - MS office	BACs	£20.64
5-6	Salaries	Salaries – June	BACs	£1,791.11
7	NEST	Pensions – June	DD	£240.51
8	Rory Boden	Maintenance work	BACs	£484.00
9	Thrupp School	Contribution to cost of installation of defibrillator for community access	BACs	£800.00
10	HMRC	HMRC payment due for the first quarter of the tax year (due b/n 5 - 19th July)	BACs	£577.62
11	PATA	Payroll services (April/May/June 2024)	BACs	£77.10
12	Hannah Warren	Refreshments for meeting	BACs	£6.83
13	WaterPlus	Allotment water fee	DD	£59.41
	TOTAL			£4,302.22

The accounts were approved for payment.

(b)To **receive** and **note** monthly breakdown of income and expenditure
The Council received and noted a monthly breakdown of income and expenditure.

(c)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.

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

- (e) To **approve** the internal transfer of £10,000 between bank accounts, from the saving account to the Treasurers Account

The Council approved the internal transfer.

- (f) To **approve** additional bank account signatories

The Council approved to add Cllr Harvey and Cllr Haydock as additional bank account signatories

8. Items requiring a decision/resolution:

8.1 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), Internal Audit and accounts:

- (a) To **note** the Annual Internal Audit Report (blue form) and **minute** actions to be taken to address any issues.

The Council noted the Annual Internal Audit Report and there were no actions needed.

- (b) To **review** the more detailed Annual Internal Audit Report provided by GAPTC and **agree** actions to address points and recommendations raised or set a date to review and address this in more detail.

Council reviewed the more detailed Annual Internal Audit Report provided by GAPTC. Council noted actions already taken by the Clerk to address points and recommendations raised (as detailed below), and agreed the actions to address any outstanding issues (as detailed below):

Item 1.2 – Financial regulations to be reviewed at meeting in July 2024 [ACTION: Clerk].

Item 2.2 – Recommendations have already been addressed: Grants to be recorded under S137 in the cashbook from now on; power to spend is now recorded against each payment in the cashbook; power to spend is recorded in the minutes (see for example minute reference 8.3, 14th May 2024)

Item 3.1 – Recommendation has already been addressed: Council confirmed that the cover is still fit for purpose at the Council meeting on 14th May 2024 – minute reference: 8.8, and this was recorded in the minutes.

Item 3.3 – Recommendations have already been addressed:

- The method of asset valuation was noted at the annual review of the Asset Register at the Council meeting on 14th May 2024, and recorded in the in the minutes, minute reference: 8.7b

- The total value of assets has been included in Box 9 of the AGAG section 2 Accounting Statement 2023-24 and the figure for box 9 for 2022-23 restated. The Clerk has confirmed with GAPTC that the purchase value figure is the correct one to use (rather than a depreciated figure).

Item 5.2 – Recommendation being addressed: Agenda item added to Council meeting on 11th June 2024 (minute reference 13) to consider and address implementation of incremental pay increases for Clerk.

Item 5.5 – Recommendation has already been addressed: Outcome of offer of pension to Assistant Clerk has been reported to Council at meeting on 14th May 2024, and reported in minutes (minute reference: 7i)

Item 7.1 – Recommendation has already been addressed: Data Protection Policy was updated accordingly before adoption by Council at meeting on 14th May 2024 (minute reference: 8.2i)

Item 8.1 – Recommendation has already been addressed: Minutes now record under the relevant agenda items that the Councillors declaring interests took no part in the discussion (see for example minute reference 8.3, 14th May 2024)

- (c) To **complete** and **approve** the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-2024.

The Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24 was completed and approved by the Council.

(d) To **approve** the bank reconciliation form.

The Council approved the bank reconciliation form

(e) To **approve** adjustments to accounts for 2022-23 to amend previous AGAR submission errors

Council approved the adjustments to the accounts for 2022-23 to amend previous AGAR submission errors, and approved the covering letter to PKF Littlejohn explaining this restatement of accounts.

(f) To **approve** the Accounting Statement for 2023-2024.

The Council approved the Accounting Statement for 2023-2024.

(g) To **approve** explanation of variances 2023-24 AGAR form.

The Council approved the explanation of variances 2023-2024 AGAR form.

(h) To **approve** the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights 2023-24.

The Council approved the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights 2023-24.

8.2 Grant Application: To **consider** a grant application from Brimscombe and Thrupp Football Club for £500 towards the refurbishment of the bar and kitchen.

The Council considered and approved the grant application [**Action: Clerks** to process grant].

8.3 Active Travel Fund Project and Application: To **approve** project plans and application to Active Travel Fund.

The Clerk provided a verbal update on this application. The Council approved the project plans to put in an application up to the value of £10,000. If successful, the Council agreed to take on the liability of any ongoing maintenance of equipment provided through this grant. [**ACTION: Clerks** to submit application].

8.4 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.

The Council reviewed and approved the agreement. [**Action: Clerk** to organise signing and sending to Brimscombe and Thrupp Football Club].

8.5 Asset inspection:

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

The Council received a progress report. [**Action: Councillors** to notify the Clerk of any items that need to be added to the asset register].

(b) To **review** the asset inspection carried out during May 2024 and **agree** actions to be taken and associated costs.

The Council reviewed the May 2024 asset inspection and no actions (other than usual maintenance) and associated costs were needed.

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

The Council received the monthly report from the Clerk and a verbal update at the meeting; which included a summary of the clerks’ hours and action table.

(b) **Port Community Hub Committee:** To **receive** an update

Cllr Grant informed the Council that no meeting has taken place since the last meeting. [**Action: Clerk** to send SDC possible meeting dates]

(c) **Green Space and Biodiversity Working Group:** To **receive** an update

No meeting has taken place. Next step is to have a tree survey on the wild field next to the Playing Field [**Action: Clerk** to set up a meeting with GSBDWG to include Cllr Harvey]

(d) **Road Safety Working Group:** To **receive** an update

There has not been a recent meeting so no update was given.

(e) **Staffing Committee:** To **receive** an update

Nothing to report.

(f) **Party on the Playing Field:** To **receive** an update

In Cllr Harris’ absence Cllr Middle gave a verbal update – It is going well, the stage is sorted and volunteers are starting to come forward. **Action: Assistant Clerk** to notify Cllr Harris about the opportunity to borrow a 2m x 2m gazebo].

(g) **BATCOM:** To **receive** an update

Cllr Pilley gave a verbal update – a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) has been completed but an application form and fee should have been submitted, and this is now being progressed. A volunteer species survey (which could include the wild field) potentially will take place with the findings added to the CEMP report. Yateman’s are due to start work in September 2024.

10. Agenda items: To **agree** items for the next agenda or forward to Clerk by **Friday 28th June 2024**

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

CONFIDENTIAL AGENDA

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. Staff remuneration: To **review** and **approve** changes to staff remuneration

The Council reviewed and approved changes to staff remuneration to be backdated to 1st April 2024.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS
THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.34PM**

Signed:.....

Date:.....

Appendix 1: County Councillor's Report

County Council update

Do contact me any time on:

Chloe.turner@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Tel: 07710514689

And please report any Highways defects via

highwayscouncillors@gloucestershire.gov.uk (for parish councillors & clerk use only)

– feel free to copy me in if you'd like to – or via the Fix My Street app

GCC news:

- Local business leaders are being sought to join the new Gloucestershire Economic Growth Board. Applications have been sought from:
 - Future of Communications (cyber as was)
 - Agri-Tech
 - Construction
 - Engineering
 - Finance and professional services
 - Energy
 - Tourism/place making

I'd also like to encourage applications from those in leadership roles in the voluntary and community sector, the small and medium sized business sector, the food and regenerative farming industry (not just agri-tech), tertiary education and green skills (including retrofit).

<https://gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-may-2024/gloucestershire-economic-growth-board-recruitment/>

- In a similar vein, the County Council has released its vision of economic growth for the next 10 years. This has yet to be ratified by the district councils and is likely to be the subject of some vigorous debate! <https://gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershire-county-council-news/news-may-2024/blueprint-for-economic-growth-outlined-in-new-strategy/>
- The County Council is still in desperate need of additional foster carers for children in care. The Council has released this short film to illustrate the role of a foster carer https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0Gs1H_8WGM&feature=youtu.be All the information about how to find out more and/or apply is at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering
- The County's response to the Department of Transport's request for a Bus Service Improvement Plan has been submitted, copy here: <https://glostext.gloucestershire.gov.uk/documents/s99727/ForCabinetBSIP/CabinetReportMay2024finalCopy.pdf>

Appendix 2: 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.