

# ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 19:00 at St Briavels Assembly Rooms

### PRESENT

Cllrs Robinson (Chairman), McFarling, Burley, Stuart, Collins, and Watson  
Also in attendance: Clerk (Ellen Hopper), plus 7 members of the public

### Chairs Welcome

Cllr Robinson recorded Thanks to former Cllr Paul Lounds & former Cllr Dianne Stadhams for all their hard work and efforts, following their resignations from the parish council in December. The process to replace them is later on the Agenda

**1205 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllr Thomas absent

### 1206 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Declarations made per Code of Conduct and defined regulations, or voluntary statement added for transparency:

Cllr	Minute	Interest	Reason
Cllr Robinson	1221 re Christmas event costs	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Proposed recipient of reimbursed funds
Cllr Burley	1221 re Christmas event costs	Disclosable Pecuniary Interest	Proposed recipient of reimbursed funds

**1207 DISPENSATION REQUESTS** – none received

### 1208 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD 29th NOVEMBER 2023

With no amendments it was **resolved** to accept the minutes as a true and accurate record.

### 1209 CLERK'S REPORT

- The Monitoring Officer has issued and requested members are reminded re personal legal obligations re Council Tax and Budget setting
- The council's Bank has fully updated the mandate urgently as requested and their speed appreciated and noted
- The Returning officer has formally advised that no Election has been called and therefore Co-option for the 2 Casual Vacancies can be carried out by the parish council. Initial formal notification has been published since 5<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> December. (see later Agenda item)

### 1210 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – Chris McFarling

The circulated report to members was noted and briefed, (to be added with Minutes on the web), and question taken re new Recycling vehicles.

### 1211 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR – Chris McFarling

The circulated report to members was noted and briefed, (to be added with Minutes on the web), and question taken re the Councils Plan.

### 1212 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ITEM

- Residents from the Fence at Mork urged the council to progress appropriate installation of the defib unit, provided useful contact information and prompted debate > > the council assured options for suitable siting and power supply are being investigated following withdrawal of a resident's previous offer to host the unit, and that required access, registration and profile-raising will be actioned

- A Resident made detailed representation against the current major planning application at Forest & Wye Valley Campsite, Barse. He explained his grounds for strong objection included Major development within AOB, meets Dwelling House criteria re applicable policy, access and traffic issues conflict with Core Strategy, increased vehicle usage, and incongruous development will inflict significant harm on rural landscape – concluding is contrary to both local and national planning policies and is not sustainable development, and should be refused.

**1213 PLANNING**

1213.1 FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL – Applications responded in December were **noted** : (ref Min 1182.2)

	Reference	Location	Proposal	Response
1213.1.1	P1527/23/FUL	5 Barrowell Lane	Reconstruction of fire damaged house back to its original form with the addition of a double storey side extension and single storey rear extension. (Part Retrospective)	No Objection - would like the applicant to design in the best energy efficiency measures feasible to help reduce carbon emissions and decrease energy bills
1213.1.2	P1484/23/FUL	New Field Gate, Land At Hilgay , Hilgay Road, Brockweir.	Relocation of field gate access and installation of wooden field gate	No objection - would like trees either side of the gate to be able to canopy over the gate at height so as to improve lesser horseshoe bat use

1213.2 FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL – the following application responses were **resolved**:

	Reference	Location	Proposal	
1213.2.1	P1682/23/TCA (Time extension granted)	The Court Pystol Lane St Briavels	T1 - Beech, reduce branch near building to give 2-2.5m clearance. T2 - Holly, reduce branches near building to give a 1.5-2m clearance from building.	to <b>Support</b>
1213.2.2	P1659/23/FUL	Oak Cottage, The Common, St Briavels,	Removal of Condition 4 (restricted operating period) relating to planning permission P1927/19/FUL to enable the business to operate all year round	to <b>Support</b>
1213.2.3	P0308/23/FUL  (Closing date 30/1)	Forest And Wye Valley Campsite The Barse St Briavels	Change of use of land to tourism and for the siting of 41 holiday (caravan) lodges in lieu of 60 touring caravan and glamping pitches and the demolition of all existing facilities buildings with environmental improvements throughout.	to <b>Object</b> on the following grounds: - Too large a development with an all year permanence which conflicts with the qualities of the Wye Valley AONB (National Landscape) - Risk of lighting and noise disturbing bat flight paths. - Likelihood of increased vehicular traffic - Visual incongruity for walkers passing through the development in a protected landscape in the open countryside. - Risk of recreational pressure and irreversible harm to the unique tufa travertine dams and wildlife of the Slad Brook SSSI situated less than 100m away. - concerns over sewage discharge - lack of onsite manager

**1214 REVIEW & APPOINT REPLACEMENT LEAD COUNCILLORS (until May Annual Meeting 2024)**

1214.1 VICE CHAIR – Cllr Roger Stuart was appointed

1214.2 HIGHWAYS (Cllr McFarling providing temporary cover) – Cllr Chris McFarling was appointed

1214.3 AMENITIES (Handymen & Assets) (Cllr Burley providing temporary cover) – Cllr Dot Burley was appointed

**1215 FINANCE – INCOME & EXPENDITURE**

1215.1 It was **Noted** INCOME RECEIVED (to 31/12):

**Total £27,368.18** (£24,648 Precept, £621.24 PROW Refund, £1,050 BA, £228.64 Highways grass, £820.30 interest)

1215.2 ACCOUNTS PAID: Delegated payments **made** in December (no meeting) authorised by Cllrs Robinson and Stuart (ref 1189.7), were **noted**.

Ref	Payee	Purpose	Auth (LGA 1972, or)	Net £	VAT £	Payment £
23/069	E Hopper	Salary re Nov + NALC Backpay award Allowable Expenses	s.112 (2), LG(FP)A1963s.5	918.65		918.65
23/070	HMRC	PAYE & NIC	s.112 (2)	239.18		239.18
23/071	Ben Hillary	Handyman inv SB0017 re Nov 2023	s.111, HA 1980S.96(5), PHA 1936S.260(1)	120.00		120.00
23/072	James Smith (Mr Maintenance)	Handyman inv 23/409 re Nov 2023	s.111, HA 1980S.96(5), PHA 1936S.260(1)	458.02		458.02
23/073	Mr P Blignaut	Handyman inv STB01 re Nov 2023	s.111, HA 1980S.96(5), PHA 1936S.260(1)	345.00		345.00
23/074	SBAR	Inv1553 Nov Budget 29/11	s.134 (4)	22.00		22.00
23/075	GAPTC	Cllr Training inv 256	s.111	35.00		35.00
23/076	St Briavels School Association	Grant - Childrens Choir	s. 145 (1) (d)	450.00		450.00
		<b>TOTALS PAID RE</b>	<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<b>2,587.85</b>		<b>2,587.85</b>

1215.3 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT: It was **resolved** to authorise the following payments:

Ref	Payee	Purpose	Auth (LGA 1972, or)	Net £	VAT £	Payment £
23/077	E Hopper	Salary December Allowable Expenses	s.112 (2), LG(FP)A1963s.5, s.111	635.63		635.63
23/078	HMRC	PAYE & NIC	s.112 (2)	152.20		152.20
23/079	James Smith (Mr Maintenance)	Handyman inv 23/418 re Dec 2023	LG(MP)A1953 s.4/PCA 1957 s.1	120.00		120.00
23/080	SBAR	Inv1570 Bio+1571 15 Jan	s.134 (4)	49.50		49.50
238081	CardiAid	2 yr Maintenance SBAR Defib to Dec 2025	s.112 (2), exp LG(FP)A1963s.5 s.111	279.00	55.80	334.80
23/082	SLCC	Clerks 2024 Subscription	s.111	148.00		148.00
		(Note: Total corrected)	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,384.33</b>	<b>55.80</b>	<b>1,440.13</b>

1215.4 Transactions 23/077 totalling £1,440.13 were **resolved**. (Note - total corrected from £1,437.13 to £1,440.13).

1215.5 FINANCIAL CONTROLS: It was **agreed** Cllrs Robinson & Watson would action these bank transactions as Authorising Councillors asap.

1215.6 FINANCIAL CONTROLS: It was **noted** the completed cumulative bank reconciliation to end of December had been checked and signed off by Cllr Watson with no issues.

1215.7 FINANCIAL CONTROLS: the verification of in-house controls and checks carried out by Cllr Watson were all found to be satisfactory, and his confirmation was **noted**.

**1216 RESERVES POLICY UPDATE**

It was **resolved** to accept the draft Reserves Policy wording updates suggested and circulated by the Clerk, and adopt a policy requirement for General Reserves to be maintained at approximately 50% of Net Revenue Expenditure as a guide (as amended from former policy of 50% of Precept). This fits with the best practice level of General Reserves to be held by the Council being equal to between three and six months of predicted expenditure.

**1217 QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT**

The Quarter 3 budget variations as circulated were presented and key points **considered and discussed**:

- Budgets for income, staffing, and office admin are closely on track for the period with no concerns

- Community budgets currently have low spend re Defibrillators, Property Maintenance, Cemetery maintenance, however all are actively progressing and will update or require decision at February's meeting. Selection of Contractors re Bus shelter roof replacement and major tree works anticipated.
- Community grants underspend – 1 application expected in February. Previously "approved in principle" £500 grant re Heritage Trail will now not be paid due to partner PC Brockweir & Hewelsfield objection. Clerk asked to write to withdraw this councils offer.
- Specialist help being investigated re the Cemetery wall project to identify permissions still required, costs, phasing, and specification of works for tender- details to come to February meeting.

#### 1218 FINANCE - BUDGET 2024/25

1218.1 It was **resolved** to approve the draft budget presented and it be adopted for 2024/25 – summary table below:

<b>ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL - 2024/25 BUDGET SUMMARY - APPROVED</b>			
<u>2023/24</u>		<u>2024/25</u>	
<u>BUDGET</u>		<u>BUDGET</u>	
	APPROVED INCOME & EXPENDITURE:		
-£ 2,232	Income (excluding Precept)	-£ 2,232	
£ 16,388	Running Costs (staff/office/admin)	£ 14,464	
£ 21,471	Community Costs (events/maintenance)	£ 19,630	
£ 1,000	Project Costs Funded in year and from EMR	£ 2,480	
£ 36,627	TOTAL NET SPEND TO BE FUNDED	£ 34,342	
-£ 11,979	TOTAL USE OF RESOURCES TO FUND NET SPEND/ DEFICIT	-£ 2,524	
<b>£ 24,648</b>	<b>SHORTFALL WHICH NEEDS TO BE FUNDED BY PRECEPT:</b>	<b>£ 31,818</b>	

1218.2 It was **resolved** to set the level of Precept for 2024/25 at £31,818. This equates to an annual charge of £52.40 per Council Tax Band D equivalent, or £ 30.65 per Elector (weekly charge of £1.01 and £0.59 respectively).

1218.3 It was **resolved** to authorise the Clerk to issue the Precept demand for £31,818 to the Forest of Dean District Council by the official deadline.

#### 1219 CASUAL VACANCY CO-OPTION POLICY

It was **resolved** to accept and adopt the draft Casual Vacancy Co-option Policy circulated by the Clerk to comply with best practice and facilitate imminent co-options. It was agreed the 2 vacancies will be advertised and promoted widely in the parish using prepared advert and direct contact as appropriate. Application forms and documents available from the Clerk with strict closing date of 4<sup>th</sup> February for co-option process on the February agenda.

#### 1220 GRIT BIN REPLACEMENT

Following discussion of optimum size, factors re colour and product experience learnt from other parish councils obtained by Cllr Collins, it was resolved the Clerk be delegated to purchase up to 10 smaller Grit bins based on researched information to be provided by Cllr Collins. Procurement to be within budget of £500 for 2023/24.

#### 1221 CHRISTMAS TREE & CELEBRATIONS

*(Cllr Robinson handed the Chair to Cllr Stuart for this item as an interest had been declared)*

1221.1 It was **resolved** a donation of £20 be made to Cllr Burley for electricity costs for tree lights, and reimbursement of catering costs of £68.75 to Cllr Robinson, plus £9.00 to parishioner who provided sausage rolls. *(Cllrs Robinson & Burley excluded from this discussion and vote)*

1221.2 Payments to be added to the schedule for immediate payment, and the outstanding Christmas tree invoice – estimated at £300-400 - to be chased up.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT: re CHRISTMAS EVENTS: **resolved** during meeting *to be added* for immediate payment:

Ref	Payee	Purpose	Auth (LGA 1972, or)	Net £	VAT £	Payment £
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23/083	Cllr Lucy Robinson	Reimburse re Christmas event	s.144	68.75		68.75
23/084	Mrs J A Duggan	Reimburse re Christmas event	s.144	9.00		9.00
23/085	Cllr Dot Burley	Donation – Tree hosting	s.144	20.00		20.00
			<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>97.75</b>		<b>97.75</b>

**1222 COUNCILLOR UPDATE REPORTS**

1222.1 FINANCE – Cllr Watson - no further report

1222.2 STAFFING – Cllr McFarling – no report

1222.3 FOOTPATHS – Cllr McFarling – potential unlawful footpath diversion re fallen tree near Offas Dyke /Deanhurst Birch Hill Rd /Windward track previously complained and investigated has been raised again and Footpaths officer contacted.

1222.4 HIGHWAYS – Cllr McFarling – icy weather accelerates pothole deterioration and size so encourage reporting on the GCC Highways website “Fix My Street” – ask to add a photograph and use “What 3 Words” app. The more who report these issues the better chance of getting works done and faster.

1222.5. PLANNING – Cllr McFarling – Government is introducing massive changes to National Planning Framework, also delaying biodiversity net gain

1222.6 EMERGENCY PLANNING / SNOW WARDEN – Cllr Collins – no further report

1222.7 CEMETERY – Cllr Burley – need to get someone in to cut back bushes. Cllr McFarling – repairs to boundary wall – identified heritage and conservation expert willing to help with permissions and schedule of works re tender specification, and then manage and oversee works. Costs would be considerable and circumstances re financial regs being clarified, with intention to bring details to February meeting.

1222.8 GRASSCUTTING – Cllr Burley – no report

1222.9 AMENITIES – Cllr Burley – Not much work for Handymen apart from sweeping leaves due to weather - VAS battery life is short and needs frequent changing – this now being looked after by Ben. Cllr Stuart confirmed may not mount Mork Defib unit and box under notice board due to potential damp issue and will investigate streetlight for power but for now will remain at Offas Mead.

1222.10 GOVERNANCE – Cllr Stuart – work to update Risk documents to be progressed with Clerk

1222.11 PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE – Cllr Watson – projects progressing to improve energy efficiency eg lighting replacement and tennis court wall being rebuilt in spring. Applying for Wind Turbine Community Fund for grant for solar panels. The 2024 Carnival will be 15<sup>th</sup> June, and the McMillan Mighty Hike will again be hosted 7<sup>th</sup> September. National Cyle charity event 9<sup>th</sup> September to be confirmed if pit stop hosting as it goes through St Briavels.

**1223 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS – (updated by Clerk post meeting to include latest information – subject to change)**

To progress to Agenda, Cllrs contact the Clerk. Fully formed motions must be agreed with Clerk by strict Agenda deadlines.

- Co-option re 2 x Casual Vacancies (Feb)
- Bus Stop shelter (The Common) roof replacement (Feb)
- Churchyard wall repairs (Feb)
- Churchyard & Cemetery Tree works (Feb)
- Appoint Auditor (Feb)
- Review of Risk Management Policy (Feb/March)
- Memorial Bench Request
- Phone Box renovation project
- GRCC Survey - Housing Needs Assessment
- Review Parish Plan
- Biodiversity Working Group - Initial Outline Report

**1224 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

2023/24 Schedule - Any further changes to these details will be advertised. Please adhere to necessary strict deadlines.

Dates 2023/24	Time	Meeting	Venue	Final <u>Agreed</u> Agenda items & Report Deadlines
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<b>Electoral year</b>				<b>(&amp; Dispensation requests) by:</b>
12 <sup>th</sup> Feb	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms	2 <sup>nd</sup> Feb (9 <sup>th</sup> Feb)
11 <sup>th</sup> March	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms	1 <sup>st</sup> March (8 <sup>th</sup> March)
8 <sup>th</sup> April	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms	28 <sup>th</sup> March (5 <sup>th</sup> April)
13 <sup>th</sup> May	19.00	Annual Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms	3 <sup>rd</sup> May (10 <sup>th</sup> May)

\* Last date for submission of agreed finalised agenda items, written reports for circulation, proposed amendments to previous minutes – 10 days prior to meeting. Initial draft requests to Clerk asap before midweek to work with and meet this fixed deadline. Dispensation requests ideally 3 days before meeting please

**1225 DATES & ROTA RE IN HOUSE CONTROLS AND CHECKS 2023/24**

<b>.Councillors Checking</b>	<b>Meeting to Report</b>	<b>Period Covered</b>
<u>FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS:</u>		
Stuart & Robinson	April	December, January, February, March
<u>ASSETS INSPECTION:</u>		
Burley & Collins	March	Biannual - February

IMPORTANT - Any Councillors unable to conduct their checking should arrange a swap with another Councillor and advise the Clerk.

**The meeting closed at 9.15 pm**