

ST BRIAVELS PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

held on 13th July 2026 at 19:00 at St Briavels Assembly Rooms

PRESENT

Cllrs Robinson (Chairman), Stuart, McFarling, Burley, Parry-Watson, Beard, Watson and Denison.
Also in attendance: Clerk (Ellen Hopper), plus 4 members of the public.

1753 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No Apologies had been received. Cllr Collins was absent.

1754 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 Burley	Ref 1763.4 re SBAR invoice payment	Other Interest	SBAR Trustee
Cllr Watson	Ref 1763.4 re SBAR invoice payment	Other Interest	SBAR Trustee

1755 DISPENSATION REQUESTS – none received

1756 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD

1756.1 With no amendments it was **resolved** to accept the minutes of the Extra Council Meeting to sign off of the AGAR held 23rd June 2026s as a true and accurate record.

1756.2 It was **resolved** to amend the previously approved June 8th minutes to correctly reference timing of deferral and add a post meeting note:

>
From “1736 noted INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT 2025/26 – deferred to next month’s meeting as report not received”
To “1736 noted INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT 2025/26 – deferred to extra meeting as report not received (post meeting note - later deferred to July meeting)”

1757 CLERK’S REPORT

Previous Actions & Admin items of note:

- 2025/26 AGAR sent off to External Audit ahead of deadline and public notices displayed. Receipt confirmed.
- External correspondence:
- Agreement requested by St Briavels PCC re new noticeboard in the churchyard -Clerk asked to send PCs formal agreement
- Comments that had been received re Revised Draft Local Plan 2025-2045 consultation available to view online - see Forest of Dean District Council Local Plan consultation pages.
- Now been advised FoDDC has withdrawn the Revised Draft Consultation Version of the FoD District Local Plan 2025-2045.
- Barriers by castle bus stop – GCC confirmed are due to construct a new manhole over the culvert that has been exposed
- More parishioner comments received re overgrown roadsides and concerns re safety. Also
- ...County Councillor briefing to add to the web/FB/ newsletter re landowners’ responsibilities
- Transport team at GCC – completing a survey of local FoD businesses and organisations to understand their transport needs re public transport and the Robin on-demand bus service
- Due to be considerable M48 Severn Bridge Closures starting in August re resurfacing trial - to add details to the website
- Other Road works and Footpath info added to website / FB and live on GCC Highways
- All other updates included in relevant Agenda Items

1758 REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLOR – Chris McFarling

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

1759 REPORT FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR – Chris McFarling

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

1760 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ITEM

- 2 parishioners asked about overgrown hedges causing narrowing of lanes and paths, causing scratches to vehicles, reduced visibility and risk of accidents. > All property owners are responsible for maintaining their boundaries and must check for nesting birds prior to any cuts The PC has no formal powers to enforce landowners but will continue to impress on owners and the county council the problems and need for action. Residents should report offending hedges and obstructions to the county using “Fixmystreet”. A hedges article and Newsletter mention will be published in the Village News and media.
- The owner/applicant of the Planning Application for Montcalm provided information and answered Councillor questions

1761 PLANNING

1761.1 FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL – the following application responses were **resolved**:

	Reference	Location	Proposal	Response
1761.1.1	P0748/26/TCA	Green Meadows High Street St Briavels	Lift crown of Sweet Chestnut to 5 metres above ground level over the roadside and to 3 metres above ground level over the adjacent footpath and garden areas. Remove all dead wood throughout the crown.	No Objection
1761.1.2	P0697/26/FUL	The Bungalow, Little Hoggins, The Bearse, St Briavels	Removal of occupation condition from F.3504/c	No Objection
1761.1.3	P0671/26/FUL	Wathen Cottage, Lower Meend, St Briavels	Erection of single storey extension and associated works	No Objection
1761.1.4	P0744/26/FUL	Montcalm, The Rocks, St Briavels	Demolition of existing single-storey bungalow and erection of a replacement self-build two storey dwelling designed to the Passivhaus standard, together with associated works and updated drainage.	In Support

1762 GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED CHANGES TO PUBLIC FOOTPATHS:

	Location	Proposal	Response
1762.1	Proposed diversion of part of FSB 116, extinguishment of FSB 23 and creation of new footpaths at Close Turf Farm, St Briavels	Glos CC's statement of reasons relates to an application made by the owners of Close Turf Farm, St Briavels and Gloucestershire County Council under Sections 118, 119 and 26 of the Highways Act 1980 ("HA80") and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 53A(2) to divert part of public footpath FSB 116, extinguish footpath FSB 23 and create a new footpath to replace FSB 23 and create a new additional footpath connecting with FSB 116 in the parish of St Briavels. The application is made in the interest of the owners of the land crossed by the footpaths, FSB 116 and FSB 23 to move the footpaths as shown on the Definitive Map away from the immediate vicinity of the farmyard and fields. Close Turf Farm is a busy mixed farm with frequent movement of farm machinery, vehicles, and livestock, particularly within and around the farmyard. <i>Individual responses also to be encouraged and submitted direct to Glos CC. To be advertised accordingly.</i>	No Objection - the proposed changes are considered practical and safer for users

1763 FINANCE – INCOME & EXPENDITURE

1763.1 INCOME RECEIVED: **noted Total £20,786.95** 30/6/2026 (being £19,925 50% Precept + £730 BA + £131.95 interest)

1763.2 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT: It was **resolved** to authorise the following payments:

Ref	Payee	Purpose	Auth (LGA 1972, or)	Net £	VAT £	Payment £
26/028	E Hopper	June pay + Allowances + Reimburse Norton Licence	s.112 (2), LG(FP)A1963s.5	654.10 27.33 79.99		761.42
26/029	HMRC	Tax & NI (incl NEW 'ers NIC)	s.112 (2)	223.47		223.47
26/030	Handyman Contractor – Chris Nichols	Handyman inv re June 26	LG(MP)A1953 s.4/PCA 1957 s.1, OSA 1906 s.9(b)	472.50 29.99		502.49
26/031	Complete Landscape Gardeners	Grass contract Inv-0281 re June 26	HA 1980 s.96	700.00	140.00	840.00
26/032	GALC (prev GAPTC)	Inv 1748 2025/26 Internal Audit fee	s.111	250.00		250.00
			Subtotal	2,437.38	140.00	2,577.38
26/033	SBAR	Inv 313 re extra 23/6 + inv 317 re 13/7/26 mtg	s.134 (4), s.150(2)	13.00 36.00		49.00
			TOTAL TO PAY	2,486.38	140.00	2,626.38

1763.3 Transactions 26/028-26/032 totalling **£2,577.38** were **resolved**.

1763.4 Transaction 26/033 for **£49.00** re SBAR was **resolved** (Cllrs Burley & Watson excluded from the vote)

1763.5 FINANCIAL CONTROLS: It was **agreed** Cllrs Stuart & Watson would action these bank transactions as Authorising Councillors asap.

1763.6 FINANCIAL CONTROLS - It was **noted** the completed cumulative bank reconciliation for June had been checked and verified by Cllr Watson and he confirmed all was in order.

1764 QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT

1764.1 The Clerk presented the Quarter 1 income & expenditure budget monitor report ie to 30/6/2026 including a brief overview of the spend timing profile anticipated.

1764.5 It was **noted**:

- there were no issues or major concerns presenting at this early stage,
- the project budgets re Biodiversity, Parish Plans and Road Safety/Speed Reduction had no spend so far,
- an in house safety “tilt test” and review of the Churchyard and Cemetery will be carried out in August, so no cost likely,
- the churchyard wall repairs had been funded by its set aside earmarked reserve, and now only a low value retention to pay.

1765 INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT 2025/26

1765.1 The circulated Internal Auditors report for year ending 31st March 2026 was briefed and **noted** that the council fulfilled and evidenced **all** requirements. with **no negative responses** – importantly including the new Assertion 10 compliance.

1765.2 The auditor provided a few general notes:

- General Reserves are reasonable and Earmarked Reserves very clearly set out
- A newer NALC staff contract template is available (PC & Clerk agreed the current version fine and use new for next clerk)
- As an improvement the complete asset register should be published and replace the previous “Land & Buildings” list used
- Ongoing work to enhance accessibility of the council’s website and its comprehensive Accessibility statement was noted
- Councillors and staff have received basic data protection awareness and IT security training
- Recognition this council is demonstrating its commitment towards Assertion 10 and already broadly met new requirements

1765.3 A Minute of Thanks be recorded recognising the Clerks hard work to achieve another faultless Audit in particular for successfully navigating the new Assertion 10 requirements introduced which required extra work, time, new policies and training provided to members.

1766 VILLAGE GATEWAYS & PLANTERS UPDATE

1766.1 Cllr Beard had met with the Handyman to discuss ideas and best way forward for this project following confirmation from Highways there are cables below soil level, and the signs can’t be exact matched due to speed thresholds and safety sightlines.

1766.2 It was **resolved** that the speed safety budget of £600 maximum be used to fund materials and Handyman labour costs, and the project can start immediately to clear overgrowth, clean signs and salvage or upgrade the planters and replant, then maintain PC owned planters going forward. Clerk to record costs separately and email confirmation to the Handyman, copy in Cllr Beard as project lead.

1767 FOREST OF DEAN BIOSPHERE CONSULTATION

Cllr McFarling had circulated a briefing of the deeper engagement plans to better inform communities and further consultation now being carried out by FODDC for the biosphere initiative. It would give a badge of international recognition to support the Forest of Dean as a special and unique place, protect Biodiversity, protect its traditions and practices, culture and heritage. Also to support sustainable development, enjoy an economic boost and enable research and education. Protection of the Forest of Deans name and unique identity will be key when the District Council becomes part of greater Gloucestershire UA. Meetings being planned for Parish Council groups and public. PC dates to be confirmed but potentially 15th September.

1768 COUNCILLOR UPDATE REPORTS

1768.1 FINANCE – Cllr Watson - nothing further to report

1768.2 STAFFING & GOVERNANCE – Cllr McFarling – nothing to report

1768.3 HIGHWAYS & FOOTPATHS – Cllrs McFarling Watson & Denison - nothing to report

1768.4 PLANNING – Cllr Denison – nothing to report

1768.5 AMENITIES – ASSETS, GRASS CUTTING, CEMETERY, HANDYMEN –. Cllr Burley – minor Grass cutting issues being addressed. Definition of Churchyard cuts may require adjustment when contract renewed as PCC applying to be an Eco Church and want more natural areas. Cemetery safety and space survey to be carried out and report in October. Positive feedback received from parishioners re good work by the Handyman.

1768.6 SNOW WARDEN – no report

1768.7 DEFIBRILLATORS – Cllr Stuart – all inspected, registered and ready

1768.8 WM & PLAYING FIELDS COMMITTEE – Cllr Parry -Watson – Carnival 13th June well supported and good surplus made. Play equipment is currently being fixed. Grateful thanks to PC for grant for new tables arriving soon.

1768.9 DEMENTIA ACTION ALLIANCE – no report

1768.10 GLOUCESTERSHIRE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER ADVOCACY – Cllr Stuart – public concerns raised re not manning police stations and hanging up after waiting over an hour on the phonenumber. Group not met for months and due update

1768.11 BIODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP PROJECT – Cllr McFarling – Grassland Moth survey event successful and very well attended so planning another date.

1768.12 ARMED FORCES NETWORK - Cllr Stuart – Last network meeting 28th June poorly attended with no one from St Briavels. Flying the flag for Armed Forces Day and obtaining an emblem flag to be investigated.

1769 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.

- Financial Checks – September
- Remembrance Sunday preparations - September
- Christmas Lights Switch-on planning – September/October
- Churchyard & Cemetery Review
- Review Emergency Planning documents and arrangements
- 20mph Working Group & GCC Initiative response update
- Review Parish Priorities Plan
- Community Asset Working Group Update
- Investigate PC Payment Card for Purchasing
- Grass Tender Procurement
- Insurance Renewal Comparison Exercise

1770 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

2026/27 Schedule - Any changes will be advertised.

Dates 2026/27 Electoral Year	Time	Meeting	Venue
14 th September	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms
12 th October	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms
9 th November	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms
11 th January	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms
8 th February	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms
8 th March	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms
12 th April	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms
10 th May	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Assembly Rooms

Request to Councillors to Please adhere to necessary strict deadlines:

Agenda Items - draft requests to Clerk no later than midweek prior to the fixed deadline of 10 days prior to meeting

Written Reports for circulation - 10 days prior to meeting

Requests for Amendments to Previous Minutes – Friday prior to the meeting

Dispensation requests - ideally 3 days before meeting please

1771 DATES & ROTA RE IN HOUSE CONTROLS AND CHECKS 2026/27

Councillors Checking	Meeting to Report	Period Covered
FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS:		
Cllrs Watson and Parry Watson	Sept	April, May, June, July
Cllrs McFarling and Stuart	Jan	August, September, October, November
Cllrs Beard and Denison	April	December, January, February, March
ASSETS INSPECTION:		
Cllrs Robinson, Collins and Burley	March	Biannual Agreed now Annual Review

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

The meeting closed at 8.34 pm