



**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council
held Monday 16th February 2026 at the Town Hall**

Present:

Councillors: Councillors: John Callinan, Debbie Curtis, Marcus Dixon, David Drew, Carol Kambites, Simon MacGregor, John Parker (Chair of Council), Val Randell, Keith Terry, Carol Trim and Theresa Watt

In Attendance: Carlos Novoth - Town Clerk and a Representative of the Cotswold Canal Trust (CCT), a member of the public and County Councillor Dean Botterill.

Attendees were reminded that the Proceedings of the meeting could be filmed photographed or recorded.

Public Questions

A member of the public raised the following issues:

Dog fouling along the footpath at Meadow Park Playing Field and the High street - in his opinion this was becoming an increasing problem and that in tackling the problem it would be helpful to have the occasional presence of the Dog warden on site. The Clerk stated that the dog warden's presence had been requested in the past and that there had been a good level of interaction with dog walkers. The town council will monitor the situation going forwards

The Lime Trees by the Memorial Green either needed to be pollarded or removing; the sap from the trees was inhibiting the use of the benches on Memorial Green by the general public. The Chair of Council stated that he was in ongoing discussions with Glos County Council on the matter. The Chair thanked the member of the public for his input.

A representative of the Cotswold Canals Trust (CCT) attended the meeting to provide an update and overview of the development of the canal to date and to highlight some of the issues being considered by a working group consisting of Cotswold Canals Trust, Stroud Valleys Canal Company, Stroud District Council Officers and Members along with the Clerk of the Town Council. Currently volunteers referred to as 'lengths persons' are dealing with daily issues along the canal towpath and the wider infrastructure along the canal corridor, mainly in the Stroud and Stonehouse sections - they include the presence of dog faeces, damage to CCT's machinery, cyclists on occasions paying little mind to pedestrians, graffiti on bridges and underpasses and dogs not kept on leads resulting in pedestrians especially older people feeling concerned and anxious whilst walking. He highlighted the need to engage all towns and parishes bordering the canal to encourage them to take an active role in ensuring the canal is developed into an open space that can be enjoyed by all; he mentioned

that this was ever more important in light of discussions around the Local Government Review.

Councillors accentuated the importance to fully engage with all relevant town and parish councils as there was much they could do to support the efforts of the canal trust, a key element of which is to apply pressure on SDC to take more direct action on anti-social behaviour. Councillors asked about signage along the canal and in particular highlighting the need to direct canal users to Stonehouse from other major points such as Stroud and Saul Jct.

The main point of contact for the canal trust is Chris Mitford Slade. Progress can also be driven through the town council's Mayor, John Parker as he is currently on the canal Board.

Cllr Theresa Watt raised the issue that signage is needed along the canal and key canal points to direct visitors to Stonehouse.

The Chair thanked the representative for his update.

TC3559 To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Keren Capeling, Keith Crieghton and Stephen Hunter

TC3560 To receive declarations of interest

As a safeguard, a declaration of interest was raised by Cllr Marcus Dixon in relation to agenda item TC3570 as he was leading the council's working group in the development of the Ship Inn site. Whilst the Clerk stated that this was not necessary, it was agreed that the Clerk would write to the District Council's Monitoring Officer to confirm the situation for future reference.

TC3561 To approve the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 19th Jan '26

Council **APPROVED** the minutes as a true and accurate record of the meeting subject to clarification on the minor confusion created by referencing both GALC (Glos Association of Local Councils) and GAPTC (Glos Association of Town and Parish Councils) - the Clerk stated that both acronyms refer to the same organisation - the minutes would be amended.

TC3562 To note and officially welcome the newly elected Member to the town council

The Chair welcomed David Drew to the town council - Councillor David Drew thanked the Chair and stated that it had been a shame that he was filling a space unfortunately left by his predecessor Neil Gibbs as he had been an important part of the council in improving the town

TC3563 To note Matters Arising

The Chair thanked Officers for the new format of the support papers. Council **NOTED** the Clerk's update

TC3564 To receive reports from Chair of Town Council and town councillors

Cllr John Callinan mentioned his huge disappointment at the last minute adjournment of the case scheduled to be heard by the Magistrates court re the removal of the dismantled caravan and associated debris littering

Verney Fields being adjourned at the last minute; he felt aggrieved for the many people involved in the case including those giving evidence, representatives of various blue light services and others who had given up their time to play a key role in the hearing. A new date for the case to be heard was set for 13th April '26; there is suspicion that the minimal action taken by the owners of Verney Fields to rectify the problem may cause the key tests for establishing the need to bring the case to court to fail.

Councillor Carol Kambites stated that she and several town councillors attended the consultation event held at the Douglas Morely Hall to discuss the design of the planned new care home at Elm road Both Councillor Carol Kambites and Theresa Watt recently received very good GDPR training organised by Stroud District Council. They recommended that others also attend the next session

Councillor Simon MacGregor provided an update on the highways issue at Avenue Terrace stating that GCC have assessed the safety of the pedestrian crossing and are in the process of establishing an action plan to deal with the key safety issues.

TC3565 To receive reports from County and District Councillors

County councillor Dean Botterill had provided the meeting with a written update.

Councillor John Callinan thanked County Councillor for his report; he understood that Glos County Council (GCC) had identified a wish to provide a level of support for youth work around the county having removed itself from funding youth activities at a local level back in 2011 resulting in Stonehouse Town Council having to fund youth work in Stonehouse at a high cost. County Councillor Dean Botterill understood that GCC are looking to support youth work - some grass roots funding will be made available for the use for The Door's work.

Councillor Botterill updated the meeting on other work within the community commenting there were very few potholes in High street; local roads had been inspected roadworks including the recent works to the A419 stating that the standard of repair was not acceptable and that he would take this matter up with Highways. Councillor Botterill also met with town councillor Marcus Dixon re Ship Inn site - he stated that the project meets criteria for GCCs grass root funding and that any shortfalls in the fund's spending can be directed to Ship Inn site Councillor Botterill thanked town councillor Simon MacGregor for his correspondence re the Avenue crossing - he will be contacting GCC officers on this. Cllr Simon MacGregor mentioned that state of disrepair to roads with specific reference to the High Street immediately outside the Fig Tree and other areas and that Bath road needed resurfacing Ward Councillor Carol Kambites provided the meeting with a written update and also commented Stroud District Council had now reported on all Town and Parish precept amounts.

TC3566 To receive RFO's budget report and bank reconciliations for Jan '26

Council **NOTED** the budget report detailing total 'Actual Net' Income of £445,848.49; Total 'Actual Net' Expenditure of £433,512.04 and Reserve movements of £52,709.32.

Council also **NOTED** the Bank Reconciliation for January '26 with a closing balance of £59,286.69.

TC3567 To approve the latest payment lists

It was noted that transaction 4840 on the payment list showed zero amount; the Clerk stated this was in error. Council **APPROVED** the latest BACS payment list totalling £5884.25.

Council **RETROSPECTIVELY APPROVED** Debit Card payments totalling £0.50

Council **NOTED** Direct Debit Payments and Standing Orders for the past month totalling £4,642.16 and £10,875.36 respectively

The Chair asked that future payment agenda items detail the various payment lists.

TC3568 To approve the renewal of the council's current 3 year financial software supplier and support contract with 'Edge IT Systems' to take effect from financial year 2026

Discussion took place based on the information provided by the clerk in his support papers. A cllr stated that it would make sense to remain with the current software provider even though it was a little more expensive as staff were fully au fait and doing so would create the least amount of disruption.

Council **APPROVED** the renewal of the 3 year financial software supplier and support contract with 'EDGE IT Systems' at an annual cost of £1,282.90 plus vat (£3,848.70 plus vat over three years)

TC3569 To receive draft minutes of Business Committee meeting of 2nd Feb '26 and approve the following recommendations:

Council received and **NOTED** the draft minutes

1. B/970 To approve the town council's new 'Sickness Absence Management' policy

The final draft of the document presented to full council had been considered and recommended by Officers, HR Sub Committee and Business for approval by full town council. It was acknowledged that the council did not have a sickness policy and as a result, the council's HR advisors recommended it should

Council **APPROVED** the 'Sickness Absence and Management' Policy

2. B/968 To approve the award of a new rolling 12 month contract to website hosting and design company, 'Aubergine' for:

- a. the website Migration, Hosting and Support (incl training) for year one, commencing with immediate effect, at a cost of £999 plus vat and

- b. the website Hosting and Support (incl Training) at a cost of £399 plus vat for subsequent years**

Members understood the need for the change as it directly related to Assertion 10 requirement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2025/26. Assertion 10 related to the need to ensure up to date data and digital compliance. Compliance with the standard required a redesign of the council's website and host.

Council **APPROVED** the Award of a new rolling 12 month contract to website hosting and design company, 'Aubergine' at a cost of £999 plus vat for the first year and £399 plus vat for each subsequent year.

TC3570 To receive draft minutes of Environment Committee meeting of 9th Feb '26 and approve the following recommendations:
Council received and **NOTED** the draft minutes

- 1. E/1013 To delete the following Earmarked Reserve headings**
 - a. Replacement Vehicle**
 - b. Mowers and Equipment**
 - c. Underwrite Rev Budget**
 - d. Laburnum Recreation Field Trees and Wildflower Seed Memorial Fund**
 - e. GCC Build Back Better Fund**
 - f. Welcome Back Funding**
 - g. Major Projects Support**
 - h. Kings Coronation**

The earmarked reserves identified above relate to headings that are no longer used.

Council **APPROVED** the deletion of the above unused Earmarked Reserves from the council's list of Reserves

And:

- i. to move the remaining reserve held for the Canal Spring Festival to the General Fund**

Council **APPROVED** the movement of earmarked reserve of £2,000 from the Canal Spring Festival to the General Fund

- 2. E/1015 To RESOLVE to make an application to Stroud District Council for a Certificate of Lawfulness for the building design/site plans, proposed for the Ship Inn Community Space**
Council recognised the need to secure the certificate of lawfulness in order to ensure that the town council's plans could be progressed without delay and interruption. The certificate would allow the council to implement its current plans within its permitted development rights for the site. There was concern about the potential costs of securing the certificate through Stroud District Council's planning department and so an

amendment to the substantive motion was put forward and seconded that approval be given subject to the cost of doing so did not exceed £400

Council **RESOLVED** to make an application to Stroud District Council for a certificate of lawfulness for the building design/site plans, proposed for the Ship Inn Community Space providing the cost of doing so did not exceed £400

3. **E/1014** To approve the reserve allocation of £20,000 to the Ship Inn Community Space project to cover the anticipated funding shortfall anticipated over the next three years should Stroud District Council formally transfer the land to Stonehouse Town Council: Year 1 - £5000, Year 2 - £7,500, Year 3 - £7,500

It was proposed that the agenda item did not wholly reflect the decision at Environment committee's meeting on 9th February. The draft minutes of the meeting of the 9th incorrectly stated that a reserve allocation was on condition of the land being transferred to the town council and whilst there was discussion on this matter, a proposal was put forward to base the reserve allocation solely on securing a *Certificate of Lawfulness from Stroud District Council*'. The proposal was seconded. It was therefore agreed that the full recommendation would read as follows:

Full Council approve the reserve allocation £20,000 to the Ship Inn Community Space project to cover the anticipated funding shortfall anticipated over the next three years: Year 1 (April 2026)- £5000, Year 2 - £7,500, Year 3 - £7,500, on condition that the Certificate of Lawfulness for the building design and site plans Ship Inn Community Space has been obtained from Stroud District Council planning department.

Details of the reasoning behind the need for a Certificate of Lawfulness were given, as detailed above and that ownership of the land need not be a condition of the reserve allocation as it would only be needed if the transfer took place. It was also noted that the reserve allocation would only be needed if the land was transferred to the town council.

Council **APPROVED** the revised recommendation as follows:

Full Council approve the reserve allocation £20,000 to the Ship Inn Community Space project to cover the anticipated funding shortfall anticipated over the next three years: Year 1 (April 2026)- £5000, Year 2 - £7,500, Year 3 - £7,500, on condition that the Certificate of Lawfulness for the building design and site plans Ship Inn Community Space has been obtained from Stroud District Council planning department.

TC3571 **To note the date of the next town council meeting 16th March '26**
Council **NOTED** the date of the next meeting