

Woolaston Parish Council

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9 JULY 2026 at 8 PM AT WOOLASTON MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs Riches (Chairman), Fairless, Brown, McElroy, Rowlands

IN ATTENDANCE: G Orchard Preece (Clerk), DCllr J Lane, 1 member of the public

95/26 Apologies. Apologies were received from Cllr Greenslade.

96/26 Declarations Of Interest.

Councillors confirmed that there were no declarations of interest related to matters on the agenda.

97/26 Minutes From the Previous Meeting.

The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on 11 June 2026, which were previously circulated to councillors, were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

98/26 Public Open Forum.

There were no comments.

99/26 Co-option of new Parish councillor. The council considered the application received for the parish council vacancy and resolved to co-opt Oliver Wright to the parish council.

100/26 Report from County / District Councillors.

Written reports were received from CCllr McFarling and DCllr Lane before the meeting and circulated to councillors. It was clarified that the £2m held in FOD District Council reserves is not protected and will be included in the funds when the authority becomes a unitary. CCllr also confirmed that the survey feedback requested to the Biosphere letter may be as a council or as individuals. It will be useful for local councils to join together for the presentations.

101/26 Clerk Report. The Clerk report had been circulated to councillors before the meeting. There were no comments or questions – all items for discussion were listed separately on the agenda.

The Chairman handed the meeting to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning & Development Control Committee.

102/26 Planning Applications. There were none

102/26 Planning Applications Received Since The Publication Of The Agenda.

a. [P0769/26/FUL | Alterations to the rear lean-to of Middleton Hall in order to facilitate the practical use of the first-floor accommodation and heritage enhancements | Middleton Hall Woolaston Grange Woolaston Lydney Gloucestershire GL15 6PP](#)

As the planning application had arrived on the day of the meeting, councillors had not had the opportunity to study the application and resolved to forward any comments to the Clerk in time for submission before the closing date (30 July 2026).

103/26 FODDC Planning Decisions Since the Last Meeting

a. [P0426/26/FUL | Demolish existing Garden Store building and erection of a new two storey building for use as a Home Office and Gym. | Nethercourt Netherend Woolaston Lydney Gloucestershire GL15 6NN](#) – granted permission 8 Jun 2026.

b. [P0284/26/PQ3PA | Prior approval for the conversion of 2no. agricultural barns into 4no. dwellings](#)

The parish council noted the above planning decision made by FODDC.

104/26 Planning Correspondence

a. The council noted the email from Planning Enforcement confirming that an enforcement case EN/0136/26 has been raised to allow officers to carry out a compliance check at Plusterwine Biogas to see if the conditions of Planning Application P1764/20/FUL have been met, following the parish council's enquiry at the last meeting. Officers have not yet visited the site, and therefore no enforcement findings have been made and no enforcement action has been taken to date.

Station Road residents have continued to report odour emissions, dust and flies coming from Plusterwine Biogas. Although the Operations Manager (Heidi Bradley) has been included in the correspondence, residents have not received any response from her, although she had agreed to be a point of contact following resident meetings in November 2025 and early 2026. Residents also reported that there has been no response from the Environment Agency, however they have received acknowledgement from Chris Ball at FODDC, and that two officers have visited Plusterwine Biogas and identified that the odour was not agricultural.

The council asked the County Councillor to contact the Environment Agency, and asked the Clerk to write to the local MP on behalf of the parish council.

Action: Clerk

b. Severn Trent Water follow-up actions. The council noted the email update from Severn Trent Water updating the progress to date, and confirmed the pump causing the sewage leak outside the school is Two Rivers responsibility. The back gate is still locked and the clerk will write to Two Rivers asking for a further update and emphasising the issues of health and safety and traffic chaos. DCllr Lane will also write to Two Rivers.

Action: Clerk

c. The council noted the withdrawal of the Draft FODDC local plan 2025-2045 and the commencement of work on a replacement plan following the government Gateway process. DCllr Lane explained that there was a lack of political consensus regarding building of two new settlements in the countryside or the dispersal of new homes within the district. He clarified that the target of 12,000 new homes for the Forest of Dean will remain.

The Chairman resumed the Chair of the PC Meeting.

105/26 Standing Items

a. Policing Issues

i. The council noted that the crime statistics accessed via the national UK link are still not up to date. The figures show there has been no recorded crime within the last four months.

b. Highways and Footpaths.

There were no new issues.

c. Maintenance

i. Parish Maintenance Volunteer group. There has been a positive response to requests for volunteers to join a maintenance working party. Cllrs McElroy and Brown met with 3 volunteers and completed the necessary paperwork and have set up a dedicated WhatsApp group. There are another 2 potential volunteers. They will begin with the alleyway between Pinedale and Birchwood Road. Councillors noted that an urgent area is the hedge behind the dog bins on Birchwood Road. Cllr Fairless will deliver the new dog bin to Cllr Brown to replace the broken dog bin.

Action: Cllrs McElroy & Brown

ii. Tree responsibility. The clerk clarified that the parish council are responsible for trees on parish council owned land (closed churchyard, corner of Woolaston Common and Birchwood Road. The clerk will forward an updated map of PC trees when the new report is received from TrunkArb. It was noted that some areas that the PC have included in the Grass Cutting contract are not PC responsibility, but have been maintained historically. **Action: Clerk**

iii. Community Orchard. The volunteer group has met and completed the necessary paperwork and have decided to initially work on the stone fruit trees between July and September. The council also noted the email from N Taplin acknowledging the information regarding the purchase of trees and his comment regarding mowing the grass. The clerk will respond to inform him that the plan is to leave the grass until the autumn but will provide footpaths to each tree to enable residents to access the fruit. The clerk is still waiting for a response regarding the original plan for the map from the school, and the group will consider ways to engage the children. **Action: Clerk**

d. Churchyard and Cemetery

i. Health and safety issues re long grass and grass cutting contract. The council discussed the legal and health and safety implications of reduced grass-cutting in the churchyard, and noted the council should be mindful of trip hazards, uneven ground and public health. The Clerk confirmed that public liability insurance remains valid provided the risk assessment is updated to reflect the maintenance schedule. The current schedule is 4 cuts per year, however councillors are considering reducing cutting to one cut per year and agreed to explore safety measures, including cutting defined paths from the four footpath entrances, access to the tap, displaying warning signs, providing volunteer support between cuts, and leaving the remainder as a wildflower meadow. The Cemetery Working Group will identify proposed paths and other ways to make it safe, ahead of the scheduled review of the contract in October 2026. Cllr McFarling offered to ask an ecologist to visit. Parish Councillors were grateful and looked forward to the ecologist input.

Action: Cemetery Working Group

106/26 Financial Matters

- a. Financial Report.
 - i. Council received the financial report, approved the bank reconciliation and noted the balance of accounts as of 30 June 2026 (Current account - £1,916.77 / Deposit account - £25,816.72).
 - ii. Council approved the payment of accounts for July 2026 in accordance with the Financial Report and noted receipts and payments since the last meeting which were made under delegated authority.
- b. Council noted the transfer of £1,000 from the Deposit account to the Current account to cover scheduled monthly payments.
- c. Council noted the quarterly Budget Monitoring Statement and Budget v Spend report as at 30 June 2026. The clerk confirmed that the projection for the annual insurance (£247.44) was correct as this is a fixed cost payment (year 3 of a 3 year agreement).

107/26 Correspondence

The list of correspondence circulated to councillors before the meeting was noted. The following items were highlighted for discussion.

- a. FODDC's letter – UNESCO Biosphere Status Update June 2026. Council agreed to respond as a council as well as individually. Councillors agreed that it would be involved in engagement and to be included with neighbouring councils. The clerk will forward the council response. **Action: Clerk**
- b. GALC AGM 26 Sep 2026 – Call for motions. The council noted that it had no motions for the AGM Agenda on 26 September 2026. As no members will be available to attend, the Clerk will send apologies. **Action: Clerk**

108/26 Other Matters

- a. Woolaston Friendship Group. The Chairman will contact the volunteers who have agreed to assist with the group. **Action: Chairman**
- b. The Community Bench has been delivered. The clerk will contact M Rose to ask if he can secure it in place, and will liaise with members before it is secured to confirm the correct position. **Action: Clerk**

- c. Council noted the clerk will be on annual leave from 1 – 17 August 2026.

109/26 Risk Assessment. The risk assessment has been updated as of 30 June 2026 and reflects the current grass cutting schedule / maintenance programme of the closed churchyard.

110/26 Councillors Reports/ Items For The Next Agenda.

- a. Cllr Brown reported that following the Annual Parish Meeting where it was requested that the Smart and Clayton charity be utilised more than it currently is, he and the clerk will meet to discuss options and will report back with recommendations at the September meeting. Council noted that there is limited funds (£313.54) and it will not be feasible to provide donations to individuals.

Action: Cllr Brown/Clerk

- b. It was noted that there are no road markings from the new development at Old Dairy Way onto Netherend and road users appear to consider that they have the right of way. The council has received complaints of vehicles driving out without care. It was also noted that the roads and footpaths are not complete. The council had previously been informed that road marking is scheduled for completion this summer, the clerk will chase Highways for a time schedule.

Action: Clerk

111/26 Next Meeting. The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Thursday 10 September at 8pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 2058.

Signed: Date: