Woolaston Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2026 at 8 PM
AT WOOLASTON MEMORIAL HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs Brown (Acting Chairman), Fairless, McElroy, Rowlands, Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: G Orchard Preece (Clerk), DCllr J Lane, 5 member of the public

113/26 In the absence of the Chairman the council elected Cllr Brown to chair the meeting.

114/26 Apologies. Apologies were received from Cllrs Riches and Greenslade.

115/26 Co-option of new Parish councillor. The council welcomed Cllr Oliver Wright, who was coopted at the parish council meeting on 9 Jul 2026, to the parish council.

116/26 Declarations Of Interest.
Councillors confirmed that there were no declarations of interest related to matters on the agenda.

117/26 Minutes From the Previous Meeting.
The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting on 9 July 2026, which were previously circulated to councillors, were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

118/26 Public Open Forum.
A resident raised concerns about the deteriorating condition of the concrete and stone-surfaced pavement area outside their property. They reported that the surface has become uneven over many years, with loose stones and significant changes in level creating trip hazards for pedestrians, visitors and children using the area. The resident described incidents involving family members, including an elderly relative using a walking aid, to highlight the health and safety risks.
The resident explained that the Highways Regional Manager had visited the site and advised that the concrete areas formed part of the original development's design feature and were not part of the adopted highway, and therefore would not be repaired. The resident expressed disappointment at the lack of action and noted that similar concrete features elsewhere had been replaced with block paving. They asked the Council to support efforts to have the area reinstated to a safe and consistent standard, and specifically stated that they did **not** want concrete bollards installed as a means of restricting access.
The Council noted the concerns raised and agreed to place the matter on the agenda for the next meeting if it remained unresolved.

119/26 Report from County / District Councillors.
Written reports were received from CCllr McFarling and DCllr Lane before the meeting and circulated to councillors. Cllr Brown noted the comment relating to the lower receipts green waste licences and asked whether this could be attributed to the high increase in costs. DCllr Lane reported that this has been raised to him by residents and he has fed this back to the district council.

120/26 Clerk Report. The Clerk report had been circulated to councillors before the meeting. All items for discussion were listed separately on the agenda.

121/26 Planning Applications since the last meeting. The council noted the following planning applications and responses submitted to the district council.

a. P0769/26/FUL | Alterations to the rear lean-to of Middleton Hall - **supported**
b. P0787/26/PQ3PA | Prior notification for the change of use and conversion of an existing rural building to one residential dwelling and building operations reasonably necessary for the conversion **– Not supported**
c. P0828/26/FUL | Change of use of land to tourism and siting of 2 holiday accommodation units, improved vehicular access, parking area with associated works **– Not supported**
d. P0870/26/AG | Prior notification for the erection of agricultural storage barn. Ashwell Grange **– No objections**

e. P0796/26/FUL | Erection of a dwelling and alterations to the existing dwelling including erection of a single storey extension and demolition of the chimney and existing rear conservatory. The Roses Severn View Road **– Not supported**

f. P0868/26/FUL | Replacement and raising of existing roof by 675mm with addition of rear pitched roof dormers to facilitate a loft conversion to provide additional bedrooms. Erection of a single storey rear extension with roof terrace above, and associated works. | Keynsham Farm **– No objections**

g. P0887/26/FUL | Erection of a single storey rear extension, new dormer window to front elevation, new pitched roofs to dormer windows on rear elevation and erection of Garage/Workshop | Conefields Spout Hill **– No objections**

h. **Notification of appeal -** New House, Woolaston - 6012389 & 6012390 – PC agreed to ask FODDC to suspend enforcement action until the planning application is decided.

122/26 Planning Applications

a. P0894/26/FUL | Erection of detached garage, retaining wall, hardstanding and change of use of land to residential (part retrospective) | New House Woolaston Common Woolaston Lydney GL15 6NU

The Council considered the above planning application. It was noted that the earlier application for a double car port and store was not supported due to the proposed change of use from agricultural to residential land, the height of the structure, and its proximity to the road. That application was refused by the District Council and subsequently went to appeal which was dismissed. Councillors recently undertook a site visit following the applicant's appeal against enforcement action and agreed to request that the District Council suspend enforcement until the current application is determined. The Council discussed the part-retrospective nature of the proposal and noted that the new application includes modifications: the footprint is smaller, the height has been reduced, and the building has been reconfigured further from the road and closer to the house. Given these changes, the Council considered that a different response is justified. Although the Parish Council normally opposes the encroachment of agricultural land into residential use, the significantly reduced area now proposed is acceptable, and the Council resolved to support the application.

b. P0930/26/FUL | Erection of single storey side extension to storage building to provide additional storage, creation of extended driveway and associated works. | Funeral Directors Highcroft House Station Road Woolaston GL15 6PN

The above planning application was supported.

123/26 Planning Applications Received Since The Publication Of The Agenda. There were none.

124/26 FODDC Planning Decisions Since the Last Meeting

a. Appeal Ref: 6005801 - Swan House Tea Room, Cone Valley, Woolaston, Lydney GL15 6AD (Application P1500/25/PIP) Appeal dismissed 20 Jul 2026.

b. P0870/26/AG Ashwell Grange Prior notification for the erection of agricultural storage barn – Not required

c. 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 – Granted permission

d. P0519/26/DISCON Netherend Farm Discharge of condition 13b (completion report) and 13c (completion report certificate) for Plots 1 - 7 and Plots 16 – 24 pen space relating to outline permission P1995/18/OUT (revised description) – Granted Permission.

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

125/26 Planning Correspondence

a. The council noted that Planning Enforcement has not reported any further on the recently raised enforcement case (EN/0136/26) of Planning Application P1764/20/FUL. However following an email from the parish council to the environment agency, and environmental health, asking for following up action as a result of station road reports of odour emissions, dusts and flies, environmental health, environment agency have visited the site, and spoke to the owners.

b. Swains Field Pumping Station. The clerk reported that this issue is no longer a planning issue and any updates will be reported under correspondence. The council noted the email update from Two Rivers and the report from Woolaston School (noted in the clerk report). Two Rivers' contractors are continuing to empty the pump station on a regular basis while they investigate the cause for leaking. The back gate has

now opened twice daily, over the summer, to enable access to children and parents, thus removing additional traffic on the roads.

126/26 Standing Items

a. Policing Issues

The council noted the crime statistics reported received from the PCSO. They also noted that the council were disappointment that the police had received reports of abusive behaviour from residents regarding an abandoned vehicle in the village.

b. Highways and Footpaths.

The Council noted that the overgrown footpath previously reported had been identified for the GCC PROW schedule, but due to funding constraints it is unlikely to be completed. Councillors queried whether the footpath is a County Council responsibility or part of the neighbouring property. Cllrs McElroy and Brown will contact the owners and seek confirmation. If it is a Highways matter, it will be added to parish maintenance tasks; if privately owned, the owners will be asked to address it.

Action: Cllrs Brown & McElroy

c. Maintenance

i. Parish Maintenance Volunteer group. There has been a positive response to maintenance carried out, the broken dog bin on Birchwood road has been replace, and the one on the playing field will be swapped with one used less often. **Action: Cllrs McElroy & Brown**

ii. Tree Survey. The council noted the Tree survey report carried out by TrunkArb and the list of recommended actions. Council agreed to seek quotes for crown reduction of the trees identified for work in the next six months. **Action: Clerk**

Cllr McElroy suggested that maintenance working party could clear the areas around the base of the trees. Council queried whether the trees on Netherend are the responsibility of the parish council or the home owners. .

iii. Community Orchard. The Council received an update that the volunteer group has attended to the orchard trees, clearing deadwood where required and cutting a path to the fruit trees to ensure public access. As access is now sufficient, and noting that the cost of mowing the wider orchard area is £638, Councillors considered that this expenditure could be better directed to other parish priorities. The Working Party recommended that the orchard be left for wildlife over the winter, both to support biodiversity and to avoid unnecessary cost. Having considered differing views within the community, the Council resolved **not** to cut the orchard this season and instructed the Clerk to inform the contractors accordingly. The clerk will also add a note to Facebook to remind residents that the fruit is available to all. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk reported that no response had been received from the school regarding the original map proposal. The Working Group will consider alternative ways to involve children. A resident has volunteered to lead the project, and the Council agreed they may contact the school and printing companies on the Council's behalf and report back at the next meeting with progress and costings. With approximately £150 remaining in the budget, the resident will be asked to seek sponsorship or external funding. The Clerk will inform the resident of the Council's decision. **Action: Clerk**

d. Churchyard and Cemetery

i. Cllr McElroy reported that the closed churchyard appears well maintained, with the grass recently cut, but noted potential health and safety concerns if the grass were allowed to grow unchecked. It was suggested that, rather than stopping cuts entirely, the number of cuts be reduced from four to two or three, with the volunteer maintenance group ensuring pathways are kept clear from the four footpath entrances and to the tap, while retaining an area as a wildflower meadow. Cllr McElroy and the Clerk will visit Tidenham Cemetery to review its layout. Ecologist input will still be sought.

ii. Following correspondence from Ian Watts & Son funeral director regarding the 12-month rule for re-fixing a headstone after a grave has been re-opened, and noting that another funeral director (P Blatchly) had re-fixed a headstone after six months; the Council confirmed that the 12-month requirement will remain in place. Both funeral directors will be informed that the 12-month period applies **only** where a grave has been re-opened. Where a headstone is simply being replaced and the grave has **not** been re-opened, a six-month period is sufficient. The rules have been updated accordingly.

Action: Cemetery Working Group

127/26 Financial Matters

b. Financial Report.

i. Council received the financial report, approved the bank reconciliation and noted the balance of accounts as of 31 August 2026 (Current account - £611.90./ Deposit account - £25,816.72).

ii. Council approved the payment of accounts for September 2026 in accordance with the Financial Report and noted receipts and payments since the last meeting (which included August payments) which were made under delegated authority.

b. Council noted the transfer of £4,000 from the Deposit account to the Current account to cover scheduled monthly payments in August and September 2026.

c. Council noted the completion of the Internal Control Checks and quarterly bank reconciliation for quarter Apr – Jun 2026.

d. Council noted the re-declaration of pensions compliance made to The Pensions Regulator under the Pensions Act 2008 on 29 May 2026 (Re-declaration is required every three years).

e. Insurance. The Council noted that the previously reported premium of £247.44 related to the final year of the former 3-year Long-Term Agreement (LTA), which has now expired. A new 3-year LTA is required. Community First has quoted an annual premium of £275.51 (an increase of £28). As the level of cover remains appropriate, and continues to meet the Councils requirements, and Financial Regulations do not require competitive quotations at this level of expenditure, the Council resolved to accept the renewal quote, including the administration fee, Insurance Premium Tax and legal expenses cover.

f. Council noted the award of the Clerk salary increase in accordance with NJC Local Government Services pay award for 2026/2027 with effect from 1 April 2026.

128/26 Correspondence

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

a. Council noted the Biosphere Engagement meeting 7pm on 17.9.26 in Woolaston Memorial Hall.

b. Council noted the invitation to attend Commoners Association public meeting at 7pm on 12.9.26 – Littledean Community Centre.

c. Council noted FODDC's Climate change People's Emergency Briefing Video Event – 5.45pm from 6pm on Wed 7 Oct 2026 at FODDC Council chambers and the Teams meeting on 15 October 2026

d. The Council considered the information relating to the Armed Forces Covenant and agreed to explore registering the Parish Council's commitment. The Clerk will review the suggested pledge options and draft potential pledges that are relevant to the Council's role and are realistically deliverable. A draft will be brought to the next meeting for consideration. **Action: Clerk**

129/26 Other Matters

a. Woolaston Friendship Group. No further information received; carried forward to the next meeting.

b. Council noted that the 364 day licence for the grass keep was renewed by D Haines and Z Guest with effect from 1 July 2026 at a fee of £310.

c. Expansion of the Smart & Clayton Charity. The Council considered the Trustees' report following residents' suggestions that the historic parish charity be expanded to provide assistance. The report outlined that the charity operates as a" heritage micro-charity", with approximately £314 capital, and a fixed and extremely limited income (a £1 historic levy, and minimal interest). Trustees advised that, to preserve capital, any annual benefit would be very small, potentially only a symbolic amount, and could risk causing offence rather than providing meaningful support. The Council noted that expanding the charity would fundamentally change its nature and introduce administrative, governance and reporting obligations disproportionate to its size. Having considered residents' views, the Council agreed with the Trustees that the charity should remain historic as a heritage micro-charity. Trustees will continue to meet annually, and review the policy, and report to the Council and parish at the Annual Parish Meeting

130/26 Risk Assessment. The risk assessment has been updated as of 31 August 2026.

131/26 Councillors Reports/ Items For The Next Agenda. There were none

132/26 Next Meeting. The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Thursday 8 October 2026 at 8pm.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 2107.

Signed: ..... Date: .....